



Magical/Divinatory Runic Language

The runic alphabet is more than mere letters. It is a set of symbols, each of which holds depths of meaning. While most literate folk know only the name and sound of each letter, those skilled in magic and/or divination also have a greater or lesser degree of knowledge of the meanings. Those using the runes for divinatory purposes may also study stories and histories linked to each rune.

The runic alphabet is known as the futhark after its first six letters:

f	u	t	h	a	r	k
✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖

The complete Runic alphabet used in the Western Shores consists of twenty-four runes. These are divided into three 'families' of eight runes each, the numbers three and eight holding special significance. The three groups, known as aettir, are named after the gods Freyr, Hegl and Tyr. The three aettir are:

Freyr's Eight:	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖
Hegl's Eight:	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖
Tyr's Eight:	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖	✖

Fehu

Possessions
Nourishment
Cattle



Fehu is used when the target is in need of sustenance. Fehu can represent food and water, or can be used to affect items the target is carrying, whether for good or ill. It is also used in blessings for livestock of all kinds. Fehu is Freyr's rune, often borne by his worshippers, and vital in calling on his powers.

Freyr is the most renowned of the Æsir; he rules over the rain and the shining of the sun, and therewithal the fruit of the earth; and it is good to call on him for fruitful seasons and peace. He governs also the prosperity of men.

- Gylfaginning 24 from the Prose Eddas

Divination: Fulfillment, ambition satisfied. Fehu indicates the favour of the gods, and calls for a deep probing of the meaning of profit and gain in the querant's life. Fehu also calls for the querant to be mindful of his or her possessions. It urges vigilance and conservation of resources, especially when times seem good. Recklessness will lead to loss and failure. Fortune shared will bring the favour of the gods.

Reversed, it indicates frustration and loss, a warning of transitory gains leading to greater loss.

Uruz

Strength
Manhood, Womanhood
The Wild Ox



Uruz is the rune of raw primal power. Uruz lends strength and power, and is used whenever a spell is being charged up to give greater than normal effects. Uruz is the primary rune used in sex magick, and is important for rousing strong emotions in a target.

Divination: Terminations and new beginning. Uruz indicates that a life change is required. A descent into darkness may be required as part of the cycle of life, bringing new prosperity and opportunities.

The Querant should be on the lookout for upcoming problems, knowing that sacrifice and struggle will lead to triumph. Uruz is the symbol of the wild animal. Taming chaos and wildness is not a task for the faint-hearted. Adapting to the requirements of a difficult force requires understanding and creativity. A king must learn to serve if he wishes to be known as a great and wise ruler.

Reversed, Uruz warns of opportunities missed, a failure to take advantage of an opportunity.

Thurisaz

Gateway
Place of Non-Action
The God Thor



Thurisaz depicts an open gate, indicating a portal or path to power and/or wisdom. It creates a link between worlds, preparing the way rather than initiating the journey. Of all the runes, Thurisaz is the one most strongly linked to one of the gods. As Thor's rune, Thurisaz grants access to some of Thor's power, as Thor has invested himself in his rune. As such, Thurisaz can be used to affect the weather.

According to *Alvíssmál*, Thor's daughter, Thrud, was promised to Alvis, a dwarf. Thor devised a plan to stop Alvis from marrying his daughter. He told Alvis that, because of his small height, he had to prove his wisdom. Alvis agreed and Thor made the tests last until after the sun had risen--all dwarves turned to stone when exposed to sunlight, so Alvis was petrified and Thrud remained unmarried.

Divination: Thurisaz represent the frontier between the divine and the mundane. It is a symbol of readiness to confront the divine within yourself, to allow the purpose of your experience to shine through the form of your past. As a rune of non-action, Thurisaz indicates that a time of contemplation and reflection is called for. The gateway to transcendence is not to be crossed without understanding.

Reversed, Thurisaz indicates a time of accelerated growth and difficult passages. Hasty decisions may cause regrets. Be sure of what lies beyond before rushing headlong into danger.

Ansuz

Signals

Messenger Rune

Loki



Ansuz is the rune used when information flow is required. It enables communication. Ansuz can be used reversed to block messages and cloud attempts at scrying. As Loki's rune, Ansuz is used to call on his power, bringing the power of illusion and the ability to cloud men's minds.

Disguised as a giantess, Loki arranged the murder of Baldr. He used mistletoe, the only plant which had not sworn to never harm Baldr, and made a dart of it, which he tricked Baldr's blind brother Höðr into throwing at Baldr, thereby killing him.

When the gods discovered that the giantess had been Loki in disguise, they hunted him down and he was forced to flee. He hid by night as a salmon beneath a waterfall, and by day, perhaps trying to anticipate how the gods might catch him, he idly wove nets and burnt them. One day the gods found his fireplace at night, and found a net in the fire. From its design they created another, which they used to catch Loki.

Divination: Loki is the ancient trickster. He mocks Odin while giving gifts to humankind, but his blessings are a two-edged sword. Expect the unexpected and be wary of things that seem too good to be true. Ansuz can represent a timely warning or news from afar.

Reversed, Ansuz represents lack of understanding or failed communication. Consider the uses of adversity. A sense of futility, of blocked purpose, may be timely to future growth.

Raido

Journey

Communication

Union, Reunion



Where Ansuz concentrates on reception of information, Raido is concerned with two-way communication, the attunement of something which has two sides or elements, and completion of a journey. Ansuz can be used when two mages wish to speak to one another over a long distance, or to ensure correct alignment of objects in construction or magical workings.

Divination: Raido signals that the completion of a long journey or the end of a great task is imminent. Time should be taken to ensure the path you are on is the right one, as there is little time left to change directions.

Raido represents the journey towards self-healing, self-change and union between the mystical and the mundane. Raido contains the rune Wunjo and here it represents the joy of the imminent end of a long journey, the satisfaction gained at the end of a mighty task.

Reversed, Raido indicates possible problems with personal relationships. Ruptures are more likely and

attention should be paid to keeping friends in good humour. Reconciliations will be difficult. Desired outcomes may be elusive; the path may take control of your feet and steer you to a new opportunity

Kano

Opening

Fire

Torch



This is the rune of opening and renewed clarity. Illumination and the element of fire are affected by this rune. Thurisaz can create a gateway between worlds, but Kano must be used to open the portal.

A simple light spell is one of the simplest uses of Kano, while a more complicated spell might summon a fire elemental or open a gateway to another world.

Divination: Renewed clarity, a time for seriousness, concentration and focussed intent. Kano brings the light of understanding to relationships; veils should be dropped to allow the truth to shine free. No one can reach greatness through solitary travel, and only when companions are aware of each others' strengths and weaknesses can true partnerships be forged.

Reversed, Kano indicates a darkening of the light. A friendship may be broken; a marriage or partnership may no longer be achieving what is needed. This rune when reversed indicated the end of a lifestyle, the breaking of long habit. It calls for the querant to gladly give up the old and be prepared for a time of solitude, a time to build self-reliance and inner stability.

Gebo

Partnership

A Gift



Gebo is the rune of uniting and merging, and also the rune of sacrifice. In a working involving some form of sacrifice, Gebo will often be painted on the sacrificial items during high rituals.

Divination: Gebo signals that a partnership is at hand. Gebo warns the querant to stay whole within a partnership, and not to subsume themselves to the union. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link; only when all members of a union are strong and whole in themselves can a bond hold fast.

Gebo is formed of two Kano runes, one reversed, showing the need for both self-reliance and communication to make a strong bond. Since it is symmetrical both horizontally and vertically, it has no reversed meaning; it cannot be reversed, showing the power of a solid union.

Gebo also brings thoughts of union with the gods; it reminds us that the gods are in all things, and that magic and life are intertwined.

Wunjo

Joy



Light

Wunjo depicts a fruit-bearing branch. It represents the transformation of knowledge to understanding. Wunjo is also a rune of restoration. It brings happiness and satisfaction, and can be used to cause complacency and sleep. It can also be used reversed to bring pain and confusion.

Divination: New energy brings joy, the light of understanding pierces the veil of ignorance. This new clarity may call for a change of plans, ambitions and goals. Wunjo brings a blessing, either in material gain, social status, or personal well-being.

Reversed, Wunjo warns that things may be slow in coming to fruition. A crisis or difficult passage is at hand. Patience, clarity and perseverance will be needed, and an understanding that everything is a test. Greatness comes from continually testing oneself and knowing one's true abilities and limitations.

Hagalaz

Disruption
Elemental Power
Hail



Change, Freedom, liberation, destruction. Hagalaz is the rune of breaking. It represents destructive force, and is used to counter other magic as well as to destructively affect the mundane world. Hagalaz will undo runes of binding and can unenchant magical artefacts when used carefully by the wise.

Hagalaz also gives power to control the destructive forces of storm and wind, without dealing with Thor.

Divination: Events beyond control of the querant will impact them. Hagalaz is the great awakener, disruption should be expected, though the awakening takes many forms. Illusions may be torn suddenly away and the fabric of reality may be revealed to be totally different to what was previously understood.

Relationships may fail, plans go awry, a source of supply dry up. Only personal strength will provide strength and guidance when everything else is being challenged

The more severe the break from previous understanding, the greater the demands and opportunity for personal growth.

Nauthiz

Constraint
Necessity
Pain



Nauthiz is rune of binding and pain. Defensive wards and compulsions will usually utilise Nauthiz. Nauthiz reversed (a subtle distinction) can be used for curses, especially when creating a cursed artefact. Combined with Mannaz, Nauthiz can be used to cause pain to a target without a physical

mechanism. This is one of the darkest magics, used for torture and evil purposes.

Divination: Obstacles will present themselves. Holdups should be used to consider plans carefully. Old debts should be paid off and repairs undertaken to damaged equipment and friendships.

The role of Nauthiz is to identify your darker side, and see where you are limiting yourself. Do not project your weaknesses onto others; work with your dark side to discover what in your life is attracting misery and misfortune.

The need for restraint is unquestionable when Nauthiz appears. The querant should be willing to accept restraint with good humour and conquer their own demons.

Reversed, Nauthiz represents lessons borne of pain and difficulty. Only by seeing the bottom of the pit can we appreciate the light at the top. Nauthiz reversed is a command to face one's fears and conquer the inner demons as well as the hardships of one's path.

Isa

Standstill
Withdrawal
Ice



Isa is used to create barriers and stop movement. Unlike Nauthiz, Isa does not act on a target object, but operates independently. Shields created using Isa are independent things, able to be passed from one person to another, or locked in place.

Isa is often used to create magical armour.

Isa also harnesses the power of winter and ice. It can be used to counter fire and water magics.

Divination: Loneliness, sacrifice. The winter of the spiritual life. Entanglement in situations with no understanding of implications. Powerlessness. Positive achievement is unlikely when Isa features in a casting. There is a freeze on useful activity now and all plans will be forced on hold. The querant may experience an unaccustomed drain on energy and wonder why. A feeling of losing grip, of sliding out of control is likely

Usually, Isa requires a sacrifice of the personal. Direct help and friendly assistance cannot be relied upon. Submit and find the point of stillness on the treacherous ice. Forward movement will not avail. This is a time to bend, like a supple sapling to the wind of circumstance. To surrender to overwhelming force can be a display of courage and wisdom.

Isa holds a germ of renewal, the spark of life that, if nurtured, will bring rebirth after the winter. Trust in strength of character, and watch for the coming of spring.

Jera

Harvest
Fertile Season



One Year

Jera represents growing things, giving control over plants. It is commonly used by rural priests in combination with Fehu, Wunjo or Thurisaz to ensure good crops.

In its symbology of the turning of the seasons, Jera is also used to affect time. Powerful mages can speed, slow, stop or even reverse the flow of time through careful application of Jera.

Divination: Jera is a rune of beneficial outcomes, and can apply to any activity or endeavour being undertaken. It does, however, warn that quick results are not to be hoped for. Some span of time is usually indicated.

The ground has been prepared, the seed planted. Now the crop must be cultivated with care. Jera offers encouragement of success after long labour, commending perseverance.

Jera counsels patience and vigilance, and warns against attempting to take short cuts to success.

Eihwaz

Defence
Avertive Powers
Yew Tree



Where Isa provides a barrier against hostile forces, Eihwaz is the power of avoidance. It is often used when enchanting shields and other artefacts which act to prevent the wearing being struck. Eihwaz is an active defence, not a passive one.

Representing the Yew tree, this rune grants power over the wild plants of the forest and affects archery, as the best bows are made from yew wood taken from the boundary of the heartwood and the sapwood. Great bowyers have a strong affinity with Eihwaz, and their possessions are often decorated with it. Magic bows will often have Eihwaz carved into the wood, but it is not uncommon to see it gracing weapons of more mundane quality.

Divination: Perseverance and Foresight are called for. The power to foresee outcomes before acting is needed to overcome the coming challenges. Avoid disasters through preparation. Intention is more powerful than action. Focused intent combined with intention makes action effortless.

Eihwaz counsels patience. The delay caused by the obstacles in your path may prove beneficial in the end. Do not lust after a desired outcome, for no one can control everything. A spring cannot be made to flow faster, nor fruit to ripen early. The correct path may turn out to be something not yet considered.

Perth

Initiation
Something Hidden
A Secret Matter



Used by the priesthood extensively when a novice takes his holy orders, Perth is also used as a

marker or warning of arcane lore.

The Eddas Skalds often place locking wards on books considered too dangerous for the uninitiated, and Perth is a component of those wards. Many mages utilise similar locking wards on their own collections of lore and materials.

Perth is also used to protect the contents of a message from falling into the wrong hands. Messengers can be enchanted to forget the message they carry until the correct activating phrase is spoken.

Divination: Deep inner transformations are at work, but achievements are not easily or readily shared. A secret is at the heart of the upcoming struggle, either to be defended or unmasked.

There may be surprise gains or rewards coming unexpectedly.

Perth is associated with the phoenix, consuming itself in fire and rising from the ashes. This rune is symbolic of the unknown, the great mysteries of the worlds beyond.

Reversed, it counsels against expecting too much, or expecting the usual. The world has changed and the querant must change with it. New methods, tools and/or knowledge is called for. Past understanding may need to be abandoned.

Algiz

Protection
Sedge or Rushes
The Elk



Algiz controls emotions and the subconscious. An adept can use Algiz to totally control another person's behaviour, while lesser mages can sway opinions or implant single suggestions.

Sedge is a mighty plant. It creates new land from water, and peat forms where sedge grows. When peat burns, the sedge remains, protecting itself from the flames with the very water it uses to produce the peat fire.

Depicting the sedge plant, Algiz has power over boundaries between disparate systems. Land to water, peat to flame, mortal to mystical. Algiz can be used to shift or affect existing boundaries.

Algiz also resembles and depicts the elk and other horned animals. It can be used for active defenses, which will usually feature some form of boundary.

Divination: Control of emotions is important. Intellect must triumph over emotion for success and glory. New challenges and opportunities are typical of Algiz, and with them may come dire influences or injustices.

Algiz serves as a mirror for the spiritual warrior, whose battle is with the self. Timely correct action and proper conduct is the only true protection. If pain is experienced it must be observed and absorbed, not avoided.

Reversed, Algiz warns of avoidable ill health and the need for self-responsibility. Beware of new associations who may have hidden motives. Practice temperance and courtesy.

Sowelu

Wholeness

Life Force

The Sun's Energy



A prominent part of mid-winter rituals, Sowelu is used to call back the sun and hasten the spring, releasing the frozen world from winter's icy grip. Sowelu is a rune of regeneration and growth, of rebirth. An important part of any spell used to reanimate a corpse, it should only be used with caution and knowledge.

Sowelu governs creativity and awareness, and brings light to the darkest places.

Divination: The search for wholeness is the Spiritual Warrior's quest, though the quest is truly to become that which you already are. Sowelu advises self-knowledge and acceptance of the self. Open yourself up and let the light into a part of your life that has been a secret, shut away. This may require a profound recognition, admitting to yourself something long denied.

There is a caution not to give yourself airs. When everything seems to be going well, you still need the courage to take the correct action.

Although this rune has no reversed position, caution is required. Retreat from pressing situations may be required, in order to conserve energy and remain prepared for a greater threat. A strategic retreat to gain balance and position is a wise one.

Teiwaz

The Warrior

Tyr, the Sky God Teiwaz is the rune of warfare and swords, of courage and devotion. Any spell designed to enhance or limit battle prowess can make use of Teiwaz.



According to the Edda, at one stage the gods decided to shackle the wolf Fenrisulfr (Fenris), but the beast broke every chain they put upon him. Eventually they had the dwarfs make them a magical ribbon called Gleipnir from such items as a woman's beard and a mountain's roots. But Fenrir sensed the gods' deceit and refused to be bound with it unless one of them put his hand in the wolf's mouth. Tyr, known for his great courage, agreed, and the other gods bound the wolf. Fenrir sensed that he had been tricked and bit off the god's hand. Fenrir will remain bound until the day of Ragnarok. During Ragnarok, Tyr is destined to kill and be killed by Garm, the guard dog of Helheim.

The [Swords of Saexneat](#) hold Tyr especially favoured, and make heavy use of the Teiwaz rune, though it is also common for other human warriors to paint Teiwaz on their shields before battle.

Divination: Teiwaz embodies the power of discrimination, the ability to cut away the extraneous and reach the heart of the matter. It is associated with the sun and masculine energy. The urge for conquest is important, especially self-conquest. This is a rune of courage and dedication.

Reversed, Teiwaz calls for a careful examination of the querant's motives. Is self-conquest the goal, or domination over others? Answers are to be found within, and the task should be focused on, not the potential outcomes.

Berkana

Growth

Rebirth

Birch Tree



Berkana is the rune of spring, of ripening fruit, of the phoenix. It represents the growth part of the cycle of life. Knowledgeable use of Berkana can cause trees to bear fruit in winter or a vine to grow up to the distant clouds.

Divination: Growth in affairs of the world, family matters or personal understanding and self-awareness. Berkana is concerned with the flow of beings into their new forms. Its action is gentle, penetrating and pervasive.

Berkana calls for a time without distraction and obstacles. Modesty, patience, fairness and generosity is called for to cleanse the dark corners and allow unfettered growth.

Reversed, berkana warns that events or outlooks are preventing growth. Diligence is called for to acknowledge and examine what has taken place. The needs of others may have been subsumed to selfish desires.

Ehwaz

Movement

Progress

The Horse



Ehwaz is the rune of transit and movement; physical transition and shifts of awareness. It is used for magical artefacts and spells which confer great speed and for astral travel, but can also be used with great finesse to turn a rampaging mob against a new foe.

It can also be used to ensure steady progress, as to assist a climber or contain a flow of water into a channel. Ehwaz opposes Isa directly, but unlike Isa can be reversed. Used reversed, Ehwaz can block with movement by cancelling resistance. A treadmill does not prevent movement, only progress.

Divination: This rune's symbol is the horse, signifying the bond between man and his helper animals. Ehwaz says that progress has been made, and a measure of safety can be accepted. A new base camp has been established, and further progress can build on that foundation. Be prepared to share good fortune with others.

Reversed, Ehwaz warns that actions being taken are not achieving their goals. Great sound and fury, signifying naught is the hallmark of this position.

Mannaz

The Self



Mannaz relates to a person, either the caster or the target. Spells affecting people directly will always work Mannaz into them. The positioning of Mannaz in relation to the other runes indicates whether it relates to the mage or another person. The essence of Mannaz is water, so Mannaz may also be utilised to affect that element.

Divination: Mannaz counsels modesty and self-awareness. True self-knowledge is an important requirement to understand the oracle of a casting involving Mannaz.

If you cut Mannaz down the middle, it forms two Wunjo runes, one reversed as if in a mirror. Within ourselves we find both joy and despair, and we cannot truly know ourselves until we know both sides of our nature.

Reversed, Mannaz warns of the dangers of self-delusion and overconfidence. Look to the inner enemy to find what blocks progress.

Laguz

Flow

Water

That Which Conducts



Laguz controls the element of water and represents the flow of magic. Laguz represents fluidity and impermanence. Powerful mages can use Laguz to make metal flow like water or slow a mighty river to a mere trickle.

Human mages often use Laguz to indicate leylines on maps, considering them a geographic feature like rivers and mountains.

Divination: Laguz encourages us to truly experience life, without introspection or understanding. It speaks to the satisfaction of emotional needs, to the awakening of the intuitive side of our nature.

This rune often signals a time for cleansing: for revaluing, reorganising, realigning. Success lies in intuitive wisdom and inner knowledge.

Reversed, Laguz is a warning against reaching too far, of excess striving. It indicates a failure to draw upon the wisdom of instinct.

Inguz

Fertility

New Beginnings

Yngvi, the Hero God (aka Freyr)



In magic, this rune is used mostly for long-term enchantments and healing magics related to fertility

and birth.

Inguz is an important rune for many religious observations, since Yngvi is an older name for Freyr (a name which means simply lord) and Freyr is great among the Æsir.

Then Skírnir answered thus: he would go on his errand, but Freyr should give him his own sword-which is so good that it fights of itself;
- and Freyr did not refuse, but gave him the sword. Then Skírnir went forth and wooed the woman for him, and received her promise;
and nine nights later she was to come to the place called Barrey, and then go to the bridal with Freyr.

- Gylfaginning 37

Divination: Inguz may mark a time of joyful deliverance, of new life, a new path. It indicates that the time for completion of current tasks is at hand, allowing for new beginnings.

All things change; this rune signals emergence from chrysalis, a need to be free of old habits or relationships which are limiting growth.

Othila

Separation

Retreat

Inheritance



Othila is a rune that divides, that creates new branchings. It can cause disagreements or fight against them.

Othila is often used in coronation ceremonies, to ensure and prove that the new ruler is the true heir.

Divination: Othila is the rune of aquisition and benefits, associated with real property. The inheritance gained may require sacrifice. This rune announces a time of separating paths. Old skins must be shed, outmoded relationships discarded. Othila calls for submission and possibly retreat, as long as it is a well-considered retreat.

Reversed, Othila calls for adaptability and a critical examination of old habits and customs.

Dagaz

Breakthrough

Transformation

Day



Dagaz is the rune of chaos and change, favoured by followers of Loki. Dagaz brings change and transformation through abrupt breaks rather than gradual evolution. Dagaz forces change, but the change it brings is harder to control and shape than other runes of change. Use of Dagaz always holds a chance of misadventure.

Divination: Drawing Dagaz often signals a major shift or breakthrough in life. For some, the transition is so abrupt that they cannot continue to live as they did. Dagaz announces that the time for change has arrived, though the outcome may be unpredictable.

Great achievement and prosperity is often introduced by this rune. The darkness is past, a new day is dawning. Great work may be required to reach stability.

Odin's Rune

The Unknowable

The Divine

Odin

In every set of runes, there is a blank one, known as Odin's Rune. To the uninitiated, this rune has no use in magic. How can a blank be inscribed or formed? In truth, Odin's rune is the most powerful of all, and the mage who masters it will find few barriers to success.

Divination: Ends and beginnings. This rune can portend a death, though it usually has a more symbolic meaning. The blank rune calls for relinquishing control and employing total trust.

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Last update: **2015/01/26 19:25**

