

Further Thoughts on the Tune Memorial

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The inscription on the Tune stone has been subject to a diverse and often uneven historiography. Usually held to include legal vocabulary, it has generally not been assessed in terms of collocations found in Old Germanic law codes. Yet the main arguments over the meaning of the memorial can be resolved through reference to early Germanic inheritance law and a closer examination of the semantic collocations that the terms in the inscription are found in more generally. The main points of semantic and etymological difficulty that have been the focus of recent scholarship can each be resolved by adopting a more empirical approach to the terminology found on the stone.

1 Introduction

The most crucial unresolved issue concerning the older-runic inscription on the Tune memorial has long been what to make of side B of the inscription. First described by the Norwegian antiquarian Peder Alfsson in 1627, the text on what remains today of the 1.92 m tall pink granite rune-stone features four controversial terms and is missing at least two others from the top of the ancient monument. Although the lost terms can only be guessed at, such is not the case with those from the more surely attested sections. The Tune inscription has often been approached, however, with insufficient consideration given to a range of basic linguistic considerations. These include a propensity to favour etymological reconstructions that are not well-paralleled empirically and a failure to consider the vocabulary attested in the text in terms of collocations evidenced in later (including Old Germanic legal) sources. Yet adopting a more empirical approach to the interpretation of the inscription makes its more difficult sections rather clearer.

The longest of the early Nordic rune-stone texts, Imer (2011: 205) dates the Tune inscription (based on the shape of its letterforms) to c. AD 375/400–520/30. The ancient Norwegian memorial was executed in a boustrophedon manner on two sides of the stone and its runes are usually taken to read (*NlæR* no. 1; Krause & Jankuhn 1966: no. 72):

- A1: ekwiwazafterwoduri
 A2: dewitaḁahalaiban:worahto·r[---]
 B1: [---]zwoduride:staina·[(---)?]
 B2: prijozdohtrizḁalidun
 B3: arbijasijostezarbijano

Side A of the memorial is fairly transparent, featuring a first-person fabricatory inscription of the typical early runic **ek** or “talking” type. The text on side B is more complex, however, seeming to feature some sort of additional comment regarding the erection of the stone in the first line (which appears to be missing a verb) followed by a description of an associated action by three inheritors of the estate of Woduridaz, the man who is mentioned twice earlier in the inscription in a benefactive manner.

2 Early Nordic ḁalidun arbija

Mees (2013a: 137–40) leaves the key issue regarding the two main interpretations previously proffered for the last two lines of side B of the inscription undecided – i.e. whether the alliterating memorial text makes reference here to an inheritance (with Bugge, *NlæR* no. 1 and Antonsen 1975: no. 27) or a funeral feast (with von Friesen 1918–19: 14, Marstrander 1930, Krause & Jankuhn 1966: no. 72, and Grønvik 1981). Thórhallur Eythórsson (2012, 2013) has not been quite as circumspect in his more critical assessment of the historiography regarding the controversial early Norwegian memorial, however, arguing in favour of a meaning ‘inheritance’ (rather than ‘funeral feast’) for the textually key term **arbija**. But the evidence that Eythórsson relies on seems two-sided. He assumes (with Bugge) that an *i*-rune has been omitted in his interpretation of the verbal form **ḁalidun** as *da(i)lidun* ‘shared’ (cf. ON *deila* ‘deal, divide, feud, quarrel, contend’) and argues that this is a superior interpretation to *dālidun* ‘prepared’ because a verb **dālijanan* ‘to do, to prepare’ is not securely attested anywhere else in Germanic.

Scholars such as Marstrander had simply argued the reverse, prioritising the empirical evidence of the monophthongal spelling **ḁalidun** over the lack of clear attestation of a verb **dālijanan* elsewhere in Germanic in light of Seip’s (1929) observation that *deila* cannot take *arfr* as a direct object and mean ‘divide an inheritance’ in Old Norse. Instead, a more convincing demonstration may be had by taking a closer look at Old Icelandic law. In the *arfa-pátttr* or

inheritance section of the *Grágás* there are a series of stipulations which outline the order and nature of inheritance in a range of situations, including a provision for when only distantly related women are considered the closest remaining relatives: *Ef konor ero nánastar, ok er þar ok deildararfr með þeim*, 'If women are closest, then in that case there is also division of the inheritance among them' (Finsen 1852-70: I.220, trans. Dennis et al. 1980-2000: II.4). This tradition seems to be directly reflected on the Tune stone. The description *deildararfr* is clearly much the same as the collocation *da(i)lidun arbija* and the **prijoz dohtriz** or 'three daughters' mentioned in the inscription seem to have been considered the *nánastar* or 'nearest' remaining relatives of Woduridaz, the man memorialised on the early Norwegian funerary monument.

Marstrander (1930: 308, n. 1), however, rejected the evidence of *deildararfr* as *deila* always means 'contend' or 'quarrel' when it is used in legal contexts; cf. especially *arf delis* 'quarrel over an inheritance' in the *ærfþa balken* of the old Östergötland Law (Freudenthal 1895: 138). The division of inheritances is usually indicated in early Scandinavian sources by cognates of ON *skipta*, e.g. as *arf skipti* 'divide the inheritance' in the Old Norwegian Frostathing's law (Kaiser & Munch 1847: 205). Yet it is the Old English term *yrfegedāl* that translates the Latin concept of *familiae erciscundae* or 'division of an inheritance' in one of the Cleopatra glossaries (Rusche 2005: 453) and *yrfegedāl* seems so close to the Latin expression that it looks as if it may have been a calque (McGovern 1972: 107-8). The *actio familiae erciscundae* was a suit that could be brought in Roman law to have a judge divide a joint inheritance among the relevant co-heirs (Mousourakis 2002: 155-56). It is more common for ON *deila* to be used with a preposition *um* 'over' or *viðr* 'with' when it is used in the sense 'contend' and OE *scifian* can similarly be employed to indicate a division of an inheritance into parts. But the meaning 'quarrel' for *deila* is evidently a fairly young development, not attested for cognates such as OE *delan* 'to divide', and presumably reflects a received understanding that legal disputes often arise over property. Using the verb *skipta* must have become the usual way in which to describe the separation of an inheritance into shares in North Germanic only after *deila* had begun to be used of other sorts of legal disputes. There seems little doubt that the wording *da(i)lidun arbija* reflects a traditional early Germanic legal collocation used to express a concept which is also found in Old Roman law, and its appearance in the Tune memorial is entirely expected in a text of such antiquity.

3 Early Nordic (a)sijostez

Eythórsson also revives the contention of Löffler (1892) that the comparative **sijostez** (read by Marstrander as a haplographic (a)**sijostez**) which precedes the indication **arbijano** ‘of (the) inheritors’ should be connected with the Indo-European reflexive root **se* ‘self’ and the Old Frisian legal term *sia*. Given ON *siffar* (pl.) ‘affinity, connection by marriage’, Bugge (*NI&R* no. 1) had proposed that **sijostez** be corrected to **si·b·jostez**, and Löffler’s interpretation is clearly founded on the understanding that Germanic **sib-* (cf. OE *sib* ‘relationship, friendship, peace’, OS *sibbia* ‘relationship’, OFr. *sibbe* ‘peaceful, related’, OHG *sippa* ‘relationship, peace’, Gothic *sibja* ‘relationship’) represents a labial enlargement of IE **se* ‘self’ (cf. Greek σφός (pl.) ‘their’). Old Frisian *sia* is an expression of heredity which is attested in the fixed phrase *thredda sia* ‘in the third degree of relationship’ in the Emsiger laws and is semantically comparable to OFr. *thredda knia* ‘in the third generation’ where *knia* is a cognate of Latin *genus* ‘birth, origin, race’ (von Richthofen 1840: 236, Marstrander 1930: 313–14). The main problem with Löffler’s comparison, however, is that a form **sejo-*, Eythórsson’s **seijo-*, would have no cognates elsewhere in Indo-European and as Kauffmann (1895: 309) explained (and as was accepted by Jaekel 1906: 256 and Holthausen 1925: 92), OFr. *sia* seems most regularly to be taken as a cognate of OE *secg*, ON *seggr* ‘man’ < **sag^wja-* to IE **sek^u-* ‘follow’; cf. Lat. *socius* ‘sharing, kindred’ (adjective), ‘partner, comrade’ (noun) and OHG *beinsegga* ‘handmaid, *pedisequa*’. ‘Most closely related’ is indicated by *sibbista*, *sibbosta* or *suesost* in Old Frisian law. As such, Löffler’s etymology lacks any empirical support and hence is almost certainly wrong.

Bjorvand (2008) instead seeks to link early Nordic **sijostez** and OFr. *sia* to IE **sh₂i-* ‘tie, bind’ (cf. Hittite *išhai-*, *išhi-* ‘to bind’), but again in a manner which lacks sufficient empirical support elsewhere in Germanic. The superlative ending **-ostez** is not expected in a palatal environment, but as Brugmann (1899) suggested, the usual dialectal allomorph *-ist-* probably replaced an earlier *ja-* stem suffix **-jōst-* (cf. Van Helten 1904) – Bjorvand’s invocation of a derivationally unparalleled (and morphologically unexpected) hiatus form **sīa-* is not required to explain the attested early runic ending. Reflexes of IE **sh₂i-* in Germanic are also typically restricted to physical or magical forms of binding, although the *grimmar sīmar* or ‘severe cords’ mentioned in the context of oaths in *Sigrdrífumál* 23 do suggest a legal usage of **si-*, *sei-* in early Nordic (Markey 2000). Yet the only morphologically comparable attested reflexes of **sh₂i-* are Latvian *sija* ‘supporting beam under a bridge’ and Lithuanian *sijà* ‘connecting beam, timber bridgework’, and a semantic ‘most closely bound’ or the like is not reflected in the inheritance sections of Old Germanic legal codes.

The use of *sibbosta* and *sibbista* in Old Frisian, however (e.g. in the legal expression *sibbosta sex honda* ‘six closest relatives’), might seem to support Bugge’s contention that the superlative at Tune should be understood as (a misspelt) **si·b·jostez** (von Richthofen 1840: 67). But inheritors are not described as ‘most closely related’ in Old Scandinavian inheritance law, only relatives are (cf. OFr. *allera swesost* ‘all most closely related’ to ON *nánasti niðr* ‘closest kinsman’; von Richthofen 1840: 67, Finsen 1852-70: I.218) – it is the most closely related relatives who become inheritors (as ‘next to inherit’, ON *næstir arfi*; Finsen 1852-70: I.219); grades of inheritors are not mentioned otherwise in sources like the *Grágás* or the Frostathing’s law. A collocation *sibbista erwa* ‘of the most closely related inheritors’ is known from the Old Frisian Opstalsboom statutes, but it appears in the context of the marriage of a minor *buta rede des mundis and dis sibbista erwa*, ‘without the agreement of the guardian and the most closely related inheritors’ (Steller 1928: 127). Marstrander’s haplographic interpretation (a)**sijostez** is better paralleled orthographically; and while the cognates he suggests (i.e. the Old English genitive plural *ēsa* and Jordanes’ Gothic *Ansis* ‘god, Áss’ < **ansi-*) are not attested with the requisite morphology otherwise in North Germanic, a more generic (and alliterating) superlative indicating that the daughters were ‘noblest’ or ‘godliest’ (cf. Homeric δῖα γυναικῶν ‘noblest of women’, literally ‘most divine’) makes better sense here (Mees 2013b). As Marstrander pointed out, the notion that Woduridaz’s lineage was considered to be *áskunnigr* or semi-divine may be being stressed in the inscription. Marstrander’s reading (a)**sijostez** cannot be confirmed by later collocations, however – and from this perspective Bugge’s proposed emendation **si·b·jostez** might be considered a more empirically justified solution with **arbijano** perhaps to be understood (somewhat loosely) as ‘of the kinsmen entitled to inherit’ given the lack of better-paralleled explanations in the historiography otherwise.

4 Lords and ladies

Nonetheless recently, Dishington (2009) has similarly questioned von Friesen’s (1900) interpretation of the epithet **witadāhalaiban** given to the memorialised on side A of the stone which had been accepted by most of his historiographical successors. Von Friesen had interpreted **witadāhalaiban** as ‘watching-loaf’ or ‘loaf-ward’, comparing the Old English formation *hlāford* ‘lord’, literally ‘loaf-ward’ or ‘bread-protector’. And as Brink (2008) points out there are a range of Old English terms of this type. Yet none of them represents a compound of as rare a form as does **witadāhalaiban** under von Friesen’s interpretation. Old

English *hlāfdige* ‘lady’ (literally ‘loaf-kneader’), *hlāfbrytta* ‘steward’ (literally ‘loaf-breaker’) and *hlāfēta* ‘servant’ (literally ‘loaf-eater’) all seem to share an understood semantic centred about the eating of bread, with the lord as guardian, the lady as maker, the steward as distributor and the servant the consumer of the bread. Compounds with OE *hlāf* ‘bread’ as their second element (e.g. *hyrstinghlāf* ‘crust’ or *peorflāf* ‘unleavened bread’) do not exhibit comparable meanings and von Friesen’s comparison of *witadāhalaiban* with a poetic compound such as ON *slongvandbaugi* ‘ring-thrower’ is criticised by Dishington for being morphologically unexpected. Moreover the participle *vitand* does not mean ‘watching’ in Old Norse; it instead means ‘knowing, witting’. Von Friesen’s interpretation is both empirically and morphologically suspect.

A more straightforward approach would be to accept that *witadā-* is an early form of ON *vitand*. But a meaning ‘knowing loaf’ or even ‘the one who knows bread’ does not fit well into the semantic scheme sketched by Brink for OE *hlāford* and *hlāfdige*. Instead a more regular proposal might be to accept Munch’s (1856) association of *-halaiban* with Gothic *gahlaiba* and OHG *gileibo* ‘companion’, literally ‘the one with bread’, an agentive form of a common Germanic type which is usually assumed to have served as the model for the Vulgar Latin military description *compāniō* first attested in the Salic law (cf. Latin *pānis* ‘bread’). Marstrander defended von Friesen’s interpretation on the grounds that the Tune inscription alliterates and that *witadāhalaiban* may be deliberately poetic. Gothic *witan* ‘to watch’ is a class-III weak verb (cf. Lat. *videō, vidēre*) whose expected early Nordic present participle would be **witjand-* (Ringe 2006: 256–57), however, and a meaning ‘knowing-companion’ has a firmer empirical basis than does a morphologically more complex interpretation which invokes a verbal participle of a theoretical form not supported otherwise in Germanic.

Von Friesen countered that the Tune memorial is too early for **gahlaiba* to have lost its prefix **ga-* and it is true that there is no sign of a descendant of the term in Old Norse. Yet *witadāhalaiban* is clearly a nasal stem and Schulte (2003a,b, 2005) has questioned the usual dating of North Germanic prefix loss to the fifth century, arguing that prosodically light prefixes such as **ga-* were lost at a much earlier linguistic stage. Von Friesen’s objection to an interpretation of *-halaiban* as ‘companion’ has been undermined by more recent developments in the historiography.

Delle Volpe (2004), however, argues that Gothic *gahlaiba* is a calque of Wulfila’s which reflects the sacramental sharing of bread in Christianity and that the military use of *compāniō* is a Frankish/Gallo-Roman development. Yet she downplays the use of *gahlaiba* to translate συστρατιώτης ‘fellow-soldier’ in

Philippians 2:25 and her claim that OHG *gileibo* (first attested as a dative plural *kaleibon* ‘sodalibus’ along with a genitive plural feminine *kaleibun* ‘coaevas’ in the Reichenauer glossaries) may represent a loanword from Gothic seems to represent little more than an assertion. A more regular explanation would be to accept that **gahlaiban* is to be accorded a Common Germanic formation. Her association of *compāniō* with OE *hlāford* and the *panis militaris* of the Roman army (Junkelmann 2006) similarly provides an unduly fragmented explanation of the various descriptions; as Brink (2008) suggests the etymological references to bread in such terms (and cf., also, OHG *brōthërro* ‘lord, steward’) may more convincingly be connected with the function of the early Germanic *pater familias* as the lord of the household. Taking *witadāhalaiban* as ‘knowing-companion’ fits much better with the empirical evidence than assuming that the early runic description represents a poetic construction comparable to OE *hlāford* and that the morphological parallel shared by Gothic *gahlaiba*, OHG *gileibo* and early Nordic *-halaiban* is merely fortuitous.

Yet Dishington’s own interpretation of the early Norwegian style as containing three lexical elements *witad-aba-laiban* ‘whose estate is planned and certain’ suffers from the same morphological problem as von Friesen’s analysis, as compounds with three elements in them are extremely rare in Germanic. Dishington’s comparison of *witadā-* with ON *vitaðr* is also questionable given that this form is translated as ‘allotted’ by Eythorsson (2012: 10), it was connected by von Friesen (1900) to an Old Norse weak verb *vita* ‘to observe’ cognate with Goth. *witan* ‘to watch’ (cf. *sá er þeim vøllr of vitaðr*, ‘that field is marked out for them’; *Vafþrūðnismál* 18) and a cognate of Goth. *witop*, OLF *witut*, OHG *wizzōd* ‘law’, OFris. *witat* ‘host, consecrated wafer’, OE *witod* ‘appointed, ordained, certain’ and OS *witod* ‘certain’ would be expected to be spelt ****witoda-** in early Nordic. Old Norse *vitaðr* clearly has the meaning ‘certain’ when it appears in compounds such as *auðvitaðr* ‘obvious’ and *sannvitaðr* ‘known for certain’, however, and compounds such as ON *vitafe* ‘secure money, just payment’, *vitaskuld* ‘acknowledged debt’ and *Vitazgjafi* ‘Sure-giver’ (the name of a field in *Viga-Glúms saga* 7) seem to be paralleled by similarly constructed East and West Germanic legal terminologies such as Goth. *witodafasteis* ‘lawyer’ and OLF *witutdragere* ‘legislator’. Suitably onomastic compounds in *vitand-* ‘knowing’ (or ‘watching’) are not attested and the preposing of a term meaning ‘sure, (legally) certain’ to an agentive *-halaiban* ‘companion’ is reminiscent of later descriptions of members of a Germanic lord’s retinue. Yet Dishington’s assumption that some kind of medial shortening of an unstressed long vowel is to be understood in the first element of the Tune

epithet **witadahalaiban** seems unlikely in light of the attestation of early Nordic spellings such as the Trollhättan bracteate's **laþodu** 'invitation' (Krause & Jankuhn 1966: no. 130). And it may simply be the case that ON *vitaðr* and early runic **witada-** never featured long vowels in their suffixes historically. Forms such as Goth. *witop* 'law' and OS *witod* 'certain' look as if they may be influenced by a weak class-II -verb **witōjanan* 'to observe, to determine' (cf. OE *bewitian* 'to observe') whereas the Nordic terms appear more like they continue the vocalism of the past participle of a weak class-III verb (Krahe/Meid 1969: 144).

5 Onomastic priests

The last etymologically contested element in the Tune inscription is the opening man's name **wiwaz**, that of the inscriber (if not merely commissioner) of the stone. Since Bugge (*NIæR* no. 1) **wiwaz** has generally been associated with ON *vígja* 'to consecrate' (< IE **ueǵk-* 'sift, separate') and hence a meaning 'priest, consecrator' (Peterson 1994: 147–49). Antonsen (1975: no. 27), however, preferred to translate **wiwaz** as 'darter' claiming that a connection with forms such as MHG *weigen* 'move to and fro' and OE *wigca* 'insect' was "just as plausible from a linguistic point of view" (Antonsen 2002: 193). Yet these forms are usually held to be related to ON *vagga* 'cradle' and to continue an earlier **weganan* 'to move', not IE **ueǵk-* (*ueǵk-*) 'to bend, to turn' as Antonsen assumed (Brok 1986, Watkins 2011: 98–99). The various attempts to derive **wiwaz** from cognates of *vígja* (cf. Müller 1968, Kousgard Sørensen 1989, Vikstrand 2009: 9–12) are clearly better founded than Antonsen's proposal.

The main difficulty with the etymology of **wiwaz** is how to explain its morphological formation, not its etymological root. Antonsen followed Krause in assuming a **-wa-* derivative with a reduction of **-gw-* > *-w-* in the same manner as occurs with early Nordic **þewaz** < **þeg-wa-* 'military retainer'; cf. Skt *takvá* 'quick'. Indeed given the **-g-* due to Verner's law, Grønvik (1987: 54–55) argues that the root vowel in **wiwaz** should also be expected to be short. But there is no direct evidence for a comparable zero-grade reflection of IE **ueǵk-* elsewhere in Germanic, a matter which suggests that the Tune form may feature the long vowel seen in more widely attested cognates such as ON *vígja* 'to consecrate' and its nominal derivative *víging* 'consecration'.

In fact the comparative evidence suggests that **ueǵk-* had a more complex derivational history than Grønvik allowed. There are clearly two attested verbal stems in Germanic – those reflected by ON *vígja* and Gothic *weihan*, the latter

a class-III weak verb which Dishington (1976) argues is a factitive derived from the adjective *weih-* ‘holy’. At the Indo-European level, **ueik-* looks to have featured a nasal present, however; i.e. based on the Sanskrit present *vinákti* ‘sifts, separates’, Kümmel (in Rix 2001: 670) reconstructs a present stem **ui-né-k-* ~ **ui-n-k-*. These reconstructed forms suggest in turn that the present stem inherited by Germanic was *wīh-* < **winh-* ~ **wing-*, with evidence of the nasal directly reflected in the Old Norse divine style *Vingþórr* (Mees 2013c). For the past forms, the Sanskrit participle *vivikváms-* ‘having chosen’ points to a reduplicated **wiwig-* < **ui-uik-* with the attested stem *wīg-* representing a form with its reduplicated syllable lost and its vocalism remodelled after that of the present stem *wīh-*.

Germanic may well have developed a secondary thematic present stem **weih-* ~ *wig-* as did Sanskrit (cf. the 2nd sg. present *vivekṣi*) and Avestan (3rd pl. *ava-vaēceinti*). And onomastic **wiwaz** could have derived from an early zero-grade form comparable to Sanskrit *vivikváms-*. But the West Germanic cognates OHG *wihen*, OS *wīhian*, OFris. *wīa* ‘to consecrate’ and OE *wīglīan* ‘to prophesise’ seem to reflect the two verbal stems which are reflected in Old Norse *vé* (< **wīh-*) and *viging*, and it is less presumptive to assume that **wiwaz** was constructed directly from the actually attested Vernerised stem *wīg-*. Indeed Kousgard Sørensen (1989) has suggested more recently that **wiwaz** represents a reduplicated form < **wīha-wīhaz*, citing the Old Norse nominal *vé* ‘holy place’ and the common early Scandinavian onomastic element *-vé(r)*, *-vi(r)*, *-væ(r)* which he translates as ‘pagan priest’. The loss of **-h-* in North Germanic is usually dated to the period after that in which the Tune memorial was inscribed (cf. **dohtriz** to ON *dóttir*, **worahito** to ON *ortí*), but the verbal forms written **wiju** and **wija** that appear in earlier inscriptions suggest that Kousgard Sørensen’s derivation may not be phonologically anachronistic in this way. The expected development of **wīha-wīhaz*, though, would be ***wī-wīz*, not **wī-waz* – a **-wa-* derivative of **wiwig-*, *wīh-* or *wīg-* would be much more regular from a phonological perspective.

The existence of a similar Gothic name *Alavivus* borne by a fourth-century Tervingian king and that of *Vivila*, an eighth-century bishop of Passau, however, suggest that the early Germanic form **wiwaz** does not necessary indicate that the maker (or commissioner) of the Tune inscription was a pagan priest. Too much has often been made in past accounts of the literal meaning of the names which appear in runic inscriptions in reflection of a speculative antiquarian desire to make the early Nordic texts more suggestive than they have any genuine need to be. Nonetheless Wulf (1994: 36–38) takes this criticism

too far when he claims that **wiwaz** might be more regularly associated with ON *vega* and OSw. *vægħa* ‘to fight’ as although *a*-umlaut is not indicated for this class-I strong verb when it appears in the Codex Rantzovianus recension of the Old Norwegian Gulathing’s law, it is found in all the zero-grade reflections of **wiganan* attested elsewhere in North Germanic (Seebold 1966: 1–5, 1970: 544–45). As Kümmel (in Rix 2001: 670–71) notes, the Old Irish cognate *fichid* ‘fights’ suggests that ON *vega* (and OHG *ubarwehan* ‘conquer’) directly continues the inherited form of this verb in Germanic – nominal expressions such as ON *vígr* ‘warrior’ and *veig* ‘strong drink’ (and cf. their early runic onomastic equivalents **uuigaz** and **waiga**; Krause & Jankuhn 1966: nos 128 and 137) represent phonologically remade constructions – as do Gothic *weiħan* and OE *wigan* ‘to fight’. A *-wa*-formation of Germanic **wiganan* ‘to fight’ would be expected to appear as **Wewaz* in the Tune inscription, much as the spellings **worahto** and **dohtriz** indicate *a*-umlauted developments of **wurkjanan* and **duhtār*. Wulf’s objection represents special pleading, the traditional connection of **wiwaz** with *vígja* being a more regular comparison than *vega*.

6 Conclusion

Interpretations of older runic inscriptions are often disputed – indeed so much so that the runological literature can seem impossibly speculative. But what is clear philologically in the Tune inscription is that the first side features an alliterating record of who produced (or commissioned) the inscription and who the rune-stone commemorates, while the second side features a comment regarding who the inheritors of the memorialised man’s estate were. The early Norwegian inscription uses some terminology not found in other runic memorial texts, but which is paralleled later in old Scandinavian law codes, much as if the ancient Nordic monument served as a permanent record of the outcome of a legal dispute. Yet some of the forms recorded on the Tune stone can only be understood from a broader Germanic perspective, a matter which underlines how linguistically archaic, both phonologically and lexically, its older runic inscription is. The historiography of the analysis of the Tune memorial underscores at the same time, however, the lengths to which the linguistic researcher sometimes needs to go to produce rigorous and properly defensible interpretations of the less-well-paralleled aspects of early Nordic epigraphs.

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