

REVIEWS

Urnordisch: Eine Einführung. By Michael Schulte. (Wiener Studien zur Skandinavistik 26). Vienna: Praesens Verlag, 2018. Pp. 154. Paperback. €19.40

doi: 10.1017/S1470542721000167

Reviewed by MARC PIERCE, *University of Texas at Austin*

While a number of handbooks of the language of the Scandinavian runic inscriptions are available (for example, Krause & Jahnkuhn 1966, Krause 1971, and Antonsen 1975), an up-to-date work on the topic has long been a desideratum in light of the numerous developments in the field, such as the discovery of new runic inscriptions and the reinterpretation of older readings of some inscriptions. The volume reviewed here is just such a study, one which considers runic material and secondary literature that appeared up until 2017. Its author has a number of relevant publications (Schulte 1998, 2015, 2020, etc.) and over 20 years of engagement with the field under his belt, meaning that most readers will approach this book with high expectations. Fortunately, such expectations are met, as the volume is a concise, snappy, high-quality work.

The book contains seven thematic chapters, each of which addresses an aspect of *Urnordisch* (to avoid potential terminological issues, I use this term here). Chapter 1, *Einführung* (pp. 13–37), lays out the chronological and terminological aspects of *Urnordisch* (for example, *Urnordisch* versus Proto-Norse versus Ancient Nordic, etc.), the runic corpus, the position of *Urnordisch* within the Germanic language family, the comparative method, variation in *Frühurnordisch*, and some of the linguistic aspects of *Urnordisch* (some of which are North Germanic, others of which are Northwest Germanic). Chapter 2, *Phonologie des Urnordischen* (pp. 38–64), first describes the vowel (stressed and unstressed) and consonant systems of *Urnordisch* before turning to some of the most prominent phonological phenomena: umlaut, breaking, and syncope. In each of these sections, Schulte lays out the evidence carefully, reviews previous approaches to the problem, and then offers

© Society for Germanic Linguistics

his own solution. For instance, in his discussion of *i*-umlaut, Schulte looks at the periodization model proposed by Axel Kock (1888, 1911–1916) and the criticisms of it in Hesselman 1945, and eventually proposes an account linked to prosody (compare here the earlier discussion of this idea in Schulte 1998). Chapter 3, *Morphologie des Urnordischen* (pp. 65–81), addresses the morphological system, with sections on nouns, verbs, derivational morphology, and Sievers' Law as a morphological phenomenon.

Next come three relatively short chapters. Chapter 4, *Syntaktische Variation und diachrone Entwicklung* (pp. 82–84), gives a very brief overview of *Urnordisch* syntax (brevity is to be expected, given the limitations of the available data in this regard). Chapter 5, *Wortschatz des klassischen Urnordischen* (pp. 85–90), presents some remarks on *Urnordisch* vocabulary (for instance, that there are a few loans from Celtic or Latin, and that some of the vocabulary does not appear in the modern Scandinavian languages). Chapter 6, *Eine Auswahl älterer Runeninschriften* (pp. 91–101), presents some of the runic inscriptions. In this chapter, Schulte provides a number of inscriptions, first giving information on the artifact, then the (transliterated) inscription, a translation, and some commentary. Schulte generally gives inscriptions that are not found in Krause & Jahnkuhn 1966. Fifteen such inscriptions are presented and discussed in the chapter. The volume closes with a useful chapter commenting on some of the relevant literature and databases (chapter 7, *Weiterführende Literatur*, pp. 102–106), followed by an extensive list of references and various appendices (a list of abbreviations, a glossary of technical terms, etc.).

My list of questions, suggestions, and corrections is very short. The main question has to do with the intended audience: Schulte includes terms such as *Erste Lautverschiebung*, *Mora*, and *Passiv* in the glossary, and explicitly distinguishes umlaut from ablaut (p. 51), which indicates that maybe the book is intended for beginners; yet it requires a high level of scholarly sophistication, meaning that it is not for beginners (Lieberman 2019:593 makes the same point). Other minor comments include the following: Geminatio is indeed found in North Germanic, albeit to a much more limited extent than in West Germanic, contra the statement on p. 37; the case for Sievers' Law as an Indo-European phenomenon is messier than the flat description of it as “Dieses indogermanische Lautgesetz” [this Indo-European sound law] indicates

(p. 78); and Koivulehto 1986 is missing from the references (and a reference to Ruppel 1999, a volume of Koivulehto's collected papers, would also have been valuable, as Schulte cites several of Koivulehto's studies, all of which are collected in that volume). An additional reference would occasionally be useful, for example, Markey & Mees 2014 on *alu* (p. 88).

In sum, *Urnordisch* provides an excellent introduction to the subject at quite a low price. The discussion is clear and precise, the data are presented and treated carefully, and Schulte never buries the reader in detail. The book will be of value to more advanced students and scholars of the subject, and I look forward to more publications by Schulte in this area.

REFERENCES

- Antonsen, Elmer. 1975. *A concise grammar of the older runic inscriptions*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Hesselman, Bengt. 1945. *Omljud och brytning i de nordiska språken. Förstudier till en nordisk språkhistoria*. Stockholm: H. Geber.
- Kock, Axel. 1888. *I-omljudet och den samnordiska förlusten af ändelsvokaler*. *Arkiv för Nordisk Filologi* 4. 141–162.
- Kock, Axel. 1911–1916. *Umlaut und Brechung im Altschwedischen. Eine Übersicht*. Lund: Gleerup.
- Koivulehto, Jorma. 1986. Die Sieversche Regel im Lichte der germanisch-finnischen Lehnbeziehungen. *Germanic dialects: Linguistic and philological investigations*, ed. by Bela Brogyanyi & Thomas Krommelbein, 249–294. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Krause, Wolfgang (mit Beiträgen von Herbert Jankuhn). 1966. *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.
- Krause, Wolfgang. 1971. *Die Sprache der urnordischen Runeninschriften*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Liberman, Anatoly. 2019. Review of Michael Schulte, *Urnordisch: Eine Einführung*. *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 118. 592–593.
- Markey, Thomas L., & Bernard Mees. 2014. Early Nordic *alu* and **al-* 'to nourish'. *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 42. 1–17.
- Ruppel, Klaus. 1999. *Verba mutuata. Quae vestigial antiquissimi cum Germanis aliisque Indo-Europaeis contactus in linguis Fennicis reliquerint*. Helsinki: Finno-Ugrian Society.

- Schulte, Michael. 1998. *Grundfragen der Umlautphonemisierung. Eine strukturelle Analyse des nordgermanischen i/j Umlauts unter Berücksichtigung der älteren Runeninschriften*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Schulte, Michael. 2015. Runology and historical sociolinguistics. On runic writing and its social history in the first millennium. *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics* 1. 87–110.
- Schulte, Michael. 2020. On the history of the dotted runes and the connexion to the British Isles. *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 142. 1–22.

Department of Germanic Studies
University of Texas at Austin
2505 University Avenue, C3300
Austin, TX 78712-1802
USA
[mpierc@austin.utexas.edu]