



Runes



Runes are written symbols, like letters, which Norse people carved on wood, bone and metal. In the myths, Odin wins knowledge of them through a sacrifice he made, and uses them to cast magic spells. They were considered to have power, and may have been used by Norse seeresses (known as Volur) as part of their magic rituals. Here is the oldest set of runes, used from around the first to the seventh centuries. Below each is a note telling you their name and what they mean.



"FEHU"

Means: cattle,
or wealth



"URUZ"

Means: aurochs
(wild cow)



"THURISAZ"

Means: thorn,
or giant



"ANSUZ"

Means: mouth,
or god



"RAIDHO"

Means: wagon,
or journey



"KENAZ"

Means: torch,
or ulcer



"GEBO"

Means: gift



"WUNJO"

Means: joy



"HAGALAZ"

Means: hail
(weather)



"NAUDHIZ"

Means: need



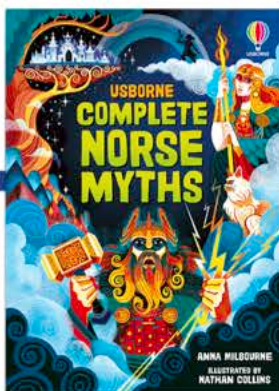
"ISAZ"

Means: ice



"JERA"

Means: year,
or harvest



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“EIHWAZ”

Means:
yew tree



“PERTHRO”

Means:
dice cup



“ALGIZ”

Means: elk



“SOWILO”

Means: sun



“TIWAZ”

Means: the
god Tyr



“BERKANO”

Means:
birch tree



“EHWAZ”

Means: horse



“MANNAZ”

Means: man



“LAGUZ”

Means: water



“INGWAZ”

Means: Ingvi
(another name
for Frey)



“DAGAZ”

Means: day



“OTHALA”

Means:
inheritance

Over time, runes were used for more everyday purposes – not just charms and spells, but record-keeping, legal documents, storytelling and even graffiti. Vikings explored and traded in places far beyond Scandinavia and Iceland – and carved their marks there, too.

There is lots of Viking graffiti inside an ancient stone tomb called Maeshowe in Orkney, Scotland. One inscription reads:

“Lif the Earl’s cook carved these runes. To the north-west is a great treasure hidden. It was long ago that a great treasure was hidden here. Happy is he that might find that great treasure.”



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THE NINE NORSE REALMS

