

# JAAH 2014 No 11 Fischer *et al.*

## Log book

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An inscribed Silver Spoon from Ichtratzheim (Bas-Rhin)

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1 <sup>st</sup> Editorial Comments:	Reviewers are approached 2013-12-02.
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Editorial comment:	2014-02-27 Editors work in mysterious ways. Thus, it cannot be ruled out that in the present case the editors thought that the manuscript, in the form it was sent in to JAAH, would benefit from being commented upon in the open referee system applied by JAAH. Anyway, the process may be studied in this 'log book'. Published 2014-03-12

## Referee comments

### Martin Findell, reviewer

This is a detailed and invaluable report of a new find, which is highly significant for runic studies and for our understanding of Germanic settlement, culture and language in the Merovingian period. I would be happy to see it published as it stands, although I have some comments below which I hope will be useful for the authors to take into consideration.

#### Images

The drawings and accompanying comments indicate that the inscriptions are clearly legible; I would hope that photographs will be made available in the final publication, so that readers can see for themselves. The authors draw attention to the effect of restoration on the inscriptions, so it would be helpful to see photographs from both autopsies.

#### Inscription B

The description of **p** states that “[t]he main staff is slightly tilted forward.” Should this read “backward”? The stave seems to lean to the left, relative to the other characters.

I wonder if the authors have overstated the case in support of **e=lahu** vs **ltahu** on the Pforzen buckle. I agree with the main point that **e** in two parts vindicates the **e=lahu** reading (in the sense that the gap between the twigs in the Pforzen inscription does not necessarily indicate that we are looking at two separate characters). However, the comment that the bindrune **e=l** is “by no means infrequent” ought to be explained further. A quick search of the Samnordisk Rundatabas yields 9 hits among the Older Fupark inscriptions, 8 of which are bracteates (IK 57,1; 57,2; 233; 365,1; 365,2; 365,4; 365,5; 365,6) with the inscription transliterated **ee=lil**. In this group of bracteates (representing 3 stamps), the identification of the second character as **e=l** is by no means secure. Krause’s reading **e=h** is retained in the IK; whereas Nowak (2003:135, 253) suggests that it might be a simplified form of a triple bind, **e=r=i** (and that the whole sequence is an abbreviated form of *ek erilaz*). The 9<sup>th</sup> example (IK 197) is an even more problematic form (see Nowak 2003:143-145, 184).

As for **ltahu**, examples of the sequence **lt** are not difficult to find, including some with a small gap between the characters (e.g., U 93 **ltu**). There are no direct parallels for Nedoma’s proposal that **lt** represents (*i*)**lt-**, with the initial vowel omitted; but this is an issue of interpretation, not reading. As the authors say, the Ichtratzheim character demonstrates that **e=lahu** is a plausible reading of Pforzen; but it does not undermine the **ltahu** reading.

#### Pre-OHG *lapela*

Regarding *a*-apocope, I am not sure whether Wremen **ksamella** should be relied on. I have not had access to the Schmidt/Nedoma/Düwel paper on Friestedt, but Düwel’s earlier view (in Schön et al. 2006:322) was that the terminal **-a** was carried over from the Latin, and did not represent Gmc thematic *a-*.

#### *abuda*

It might be worth adding some discussion – or at least mention – of Bad Ems **ubada** (usually assumed to contain an unrepresented nasal).

In the section on Celtic personal names, as well as forms like *Abudos*, there are also similar names with a nasal: AMBVDSVILVS (CIL 3.4724); AMBVDO (CIL 3.4941 = 11519). According to Evans (1967), the first element of these names is *ambi-* “around” (or with an intensifying meaning, “very”), cognate with OHG *umbi*, OE *ymbe* etc. The authors may have been too hasty in rejecting the possibility of Celtic

names in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. The survival of Celtic names need not imply survival of Celtic language in the region. Across the Rhine (although considerably further north) in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, we have the “Remico” stone at Goddelau am Rhein, which if Haubrichs’ analysis is correct (Haubrichs 2003) contains EGmc, WGmc and Celtic names in the same family. I am not familiar with the early medieval name-stock of Alsace, but the presence of Celtic names there does not seem beyond the realm of possibility.

#### References:

- Evans, Ellis. 1967. *Gaulish Personal Names: a Study of some Continental Celtic Formations*. Oxford.
- Haubrichs, Wolfgang. 2003. ‘Remico aus Goddelau. Ostgermanen, Westgermanen und Romanen im Wormser Raum des 5./6. Jahrhunderts.’ In *Runica – Germanica – Mediaevalia*, ed. Wilhelm Heizmann and Astrid van Nahl, RGA-E 37, 226-242. Berlin, New York.
- Nowak, Sean. 2003. *Schrift auf den Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit. Untersuchen zu den Formen der Schriftzeichen und zu formalen und inhaltlichen Aspekte der Inschriften*. Ph.D. Georg-August-Universität zu Göttingen.
- Schön, Matthias D., Klaus Düwel, Rolf Heine and Edith Marold. 2006. ‘Zur Runeninschrift auf dem Schemel von Wremen.’ In *Runes and their Secrets*, ed. Marie Stolkund, Michael Lerche Nielsen, Bente Holmberg and Gillian Fellows-Jensen, 315-332. Copenhagen.

Martin Findell,  
University of Leicester

## Anonymous reviewer

Review: ‘An inscribed silver spoon from Ichtratzheim (Bas-Rhin)’

This is certainly, at heart, a thoroughly sound and scholarly discussion of a find of undoubted importance and interest. That interest is, of course, primarily runological and linguistic, in terms of the glimpse into the use of literacy in an early period afforded by this find, and the unusually archaic ending of the word **lapela** on the inscribed spoon — the word itself simply labelling the object as ‘spoon’. At the same time, though, spoons themselves are sufficiently uncommon and potentially significant (with Christian associations?) in the material culture of this period that the find is of archaeological importance as well. I have some suggestions about how the article might be made more effective by judiciously providing more detail and explanation to help both archaeologists and linguistic scholars/runologists who might wish to understand more about this find.

I note that the covering letter received with the copy of the article notes a request for further illustrative material, such a location map(s), and I was actually a little surprised at the rather unfinished state of this draft in this and related respects. It seems very strange, for instance, that there is no image of the spoon itself as a whole object, and the drawing of the associated brooch (Ill. 1), which is crucial for dating the burial, is not of publication standard. In terms of presentation, on page 1 a comma is needed between “Fischer” and “Fossurier” (9 lines up), and an explanation of the acronym “MAN” (same line). Page 2, under “*Grave 108*—“, does “the allocation of the graves” mean “the alignment [or orientation] of the graves” (line 3)? Two lines below, were the bones only osteologically (“anthropologically”) examined in situ, and not subsequently? “Foodstuffs” (9 lines up) should be one word.

On page 8, final paragraph, the noun “desinence” is strangely Francophone where the term “ending” will do perfectly well; and the form quoted should be “-a”, not with a final hyphen. A sentence is then duplicated at the end of this paragraph.

Moving on to more substantive scholarly issues, on page 2, second paragraph (“*The Context...*”), it needs to be clear whether there is any other evidence for the “relatively late” settlement of this district other than the row-grave cemetery at Ichtratzheim. On page 1, we need information on what the dating evidence is that gives a date-range apparently continuing from the late 6th to the early 10th century for this cemetery. Besides the inadequacy of the figure of the brooch from grave 108, the presentation needs proper page references for Kühn 1974 and Koch 1998 (not 1988); at the same time, the brooch-type seems so close to the type (S-)Fib. 12.10 (*Bügelfibel mit rechteckiger Kopfplatte, mit verbundenen Knöpfen und ovaler Fußplatte*) of Siegmund 1998 (p. 54) and Müssemeier et al. 2003 (p. 31) that these chronological studies should be cited too. The latest edition of the Merovingian Period chronology of Legoux et al. is 2009, not 2006. Finally, archaeologically, the form of deposition of the extraordinary collection of meats from this grave deserves reporting too.

Under “*The Spoon*” on page 3, the weight of the spoon is discussed, but not given. I would also have appreciated a little more information on what the actual details are that identify this spoon to sub-group 4.2 and how strong the dating evidence is for that, in light of the surprisingly archaic form of the word **lapela**.

At the bottom of this page, the reference to the “wooden inscription” (presumably “inscription on wood”) from Neudingen-Baar grave 168 needs bibliographical references.

Pages 7-8: here it seems simply too curt to report that the sequence **lapela** can be identified as the word ‘spoon’ (modern German *Löffel*) and “defines the object itself”. The word is quite an interesting one, and since the ending **-ela** is of sufficient importance to be discussed in phonological terms, the derivation of the word, apparently from a verb *\*lapa-* (‘to drink from an open bowl’, ‘to drink with the lips?’) with an instrumentative suffix *\*-ilaz* is worth explaining; likewise that the development of this form to *Löffel* (by the end of the Middle High German period) is entirely regular in phonological terms, at least for an Alamannic dialect of German. This would, then, correspond better to the fuller discussion of the frustratingly obscure **abuda**. The only additional suggestions I would make here are that it should be

important to note that if we have an inscription with two nouns, not least when **lapela** is very plausibly in the nominative, a genitive case might be expected for the second; also that intervocalic **b** can = phonetic [v]. But that doesn't solve the problem.

I do hope these comments are taken in the constructive spirit in which they are intended, and prove helpful in giving the paper a final revision and polish for publication.

## Authors' comments

As the responsible author, I am required to reply to the peer-reviewers' comments.

First of all, I would like to point out that the rough draft I submitted last year was meant for the JAAH editor to see if the latter was interested in having an article of its kind submitted at all. Much to my surprise and embarrassment, the rough draft was promptly dispatched off to peer-review by the editor.

Meanwhile, the research team, dispersed in five cities in three different countries, was still busy writing and drawing while discussing back and forth in two different languages on how to write in a third language foreign to us all. We have also benefitted from the help of two other experts in yet two more cities in a fourth country.

We are all very pleased with the work of the two peer-reviewers. Theirs was constructive criticism, indeed. None of the co-authors have any major objections to the helpful suggestions offered. We have attempted to follow up on the advice as far as possible. We hope to have achieved this goal and sincerely wish for the peer-reviewers to be satisfied with the article in its present form.

Svante Fischer