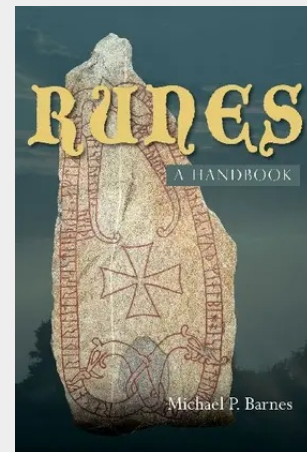


Runes: A Handbook

Offers a full introduction to and survey of runes and runology: their history, how they were used, and their interpretation. Runes, often considered magical symbols of mystery and power, are in fact an alphabetic form of writing. Derived from one or more Mediterranean prototypes, they were used by Germanic peoples to write different kinds of Germanic language, principally Anglo-Saxon and the various Scandinavian idioms, and were carved into stone, wood, bone, metal, and other hard surfaces; types of inscription range from memorials to the dead, through Christian prayers and everyday messages to crude graffiti. First reliably attested in the second century AD, runes were in due course supplanted by the roman alphabet, though in Anglo-Saxon England they continued in use until the early eleventh century, in Scandinavia until the fifteenth (and later still in one or two outlying areas). This book provides an accessible, general account of runes and runic writing from their inception to their final demise. It also covers modern uses of runes, and deals with such topics as encoded texts, rune names, how runic inscriptions were made, runological method, and the history of runic research. A final chapter explains where those keen to see runic inscriptions can most easily find them. Professor MICHAEL P. BARNES is Emeritus Professor of Scandinavian Studies, University College London.

A comprehensive guide to runes and runology, covering all aspects of the subject. It begins by discussing the origin of runes, their development in Europe (especially Scandinavia) and in Anglo-Saxon England, and the demise of traditional runic writing at the end of the Middle Ages. It then moves on to look at the different types of runic inscription and their context; cryptic runes; rune names; the use of runes in the post-Reformation era; the practicalities of how runic inscriptions were made and where they are to be found; and how runologists read and interpret inscriptions, together with a history of runology. A glossary of technical terms and essential information on speech sounds are also provided, while the numerous illustrations shed further light on the subject.



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