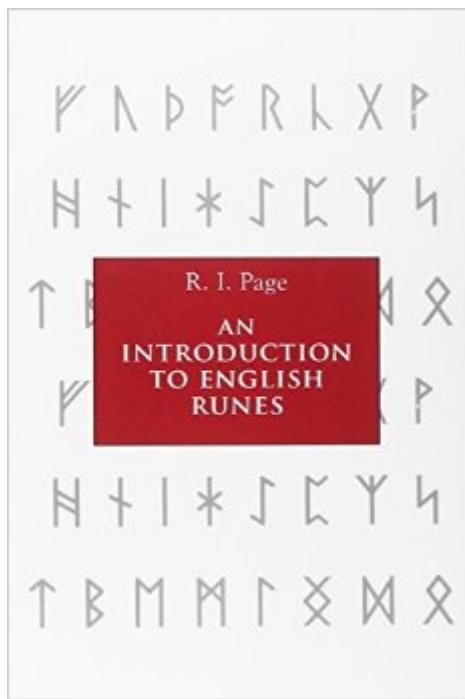


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# An Introduction To English Runes



## Synopsis

Runes are quite frequently mentioned in modern writings, usually imprecisely as a source of mystic knowledge, power or insight. This book sets the record straight. It shows runes working as a practical script for a variety of purposes in early English times, among both indigenous Anglo-Saxons and incoming Vikings. In a scholarly yet readable way it examines the introduction of the runic alphabet (the futhorc) to England in the fifth and sixth centuries, the forms and values of its letters, and the ways in which it developed, up until its decline at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period. It discusses how runes were used for informal and day-to-day purposes, on formal monuments, as decorative letters in prestigious manuscripts, for owners' or makers' names on everyday objects, perhaps even in private letters. For the first time, the book presents, together with earlier finds, the many runic objects discovered over the last twenty years, with a range of inscriptions on bone, metal and stone, even including tourists' scratched signatures found on the pilgrimage routes through Italy. It gives an idea of the immense range of information on language and social history contained in these unique documents. The late R.I. PAGE was former Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Cambridge.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For anyone serious about studying runes, whether academic or esoteric. This one deals particularly with the English branch of the runic traditions. It contains historical facts about the runes as they were used by the Anglo-Saxons, along with many excellent examples of inscriptions reflecting their daily use. Unfortunately, Page's books tend to be avoided by those interested in the esoteric side of

the runes, merely because he does not subscribe to the more speculative theories of rune magic. This is a great shame, and would-be rune magicians do not do themselves any favours by shunning the painstaking research and detailed knowledge that Page has to offer. Surely, we are better off building on a sound footing of verified fact than starting off our studies from the shaky speculations of New-Age Gurus & cultists. Once you know the basic facts, speculate for yourself, you will then be just as qualified as any esoteric "authority" on runes. Page's books should be an indispensable part of any serious runic library. *Sweyn* *The Rune Primer*

Considering the popularity of runes, the fact that this book has been in print for years, the fact that it is the second edition of a textbook that has been the standard of its subject for a quarter of a century, and finally its very high quality, I am amazed to be the first to review it. Well, it is excellent. R.I. Page of Cambridge is living evidence that specialization need not mean narrowness. He is surely the most specialized of specialists, not only a runologist, but one who spent all his life specializing in English runes - and I'll have you know that there are less than one hundred known English runic inscriptions! But Page's *AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH RUNES* is a golden textbook, wise, witty and far-sighted, not only an exemplary display of interdisciplinary methods, but also an education in critical thought for the student; that I do not agree with him on some points (especially on his rather negative attitude to the magical interpretation of runes) does not detract from my admiration of a great master on a small subject.

This author validates nearly everything he says. Clearly this world leading expert on runes considers their primarily use to have been as an alphabet. Page is very cautious concerning the magical use of runes but does define what evidence there is. Clearly he is not a fan of Thorsson and his opinion of Edred Thorsson is grim. This is a wake-up call for anyone who has read any of Flowers/Thorsson or other authors who dabble way too much in supposition. Runes were apparently carelessly scribed or carved in various ways; sloppy, upside-down, reversed, scrunched due to running out of space. There were regional differences in forms. Words were not always separated nor were sentences ended at the end of a word. Runes were scratched on small pieces of wood by husbands and wives communicating to one another; carved on monuments, walls, pottery, metal work; sometimes for decorative purposes only. They appear to have been a phonetic way for an illiterate society to communicate. This was a useful book to read but it is clearly an academic text book.

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