

The Runic Solidus of Schweindorf, Ostfriesland, and Related Runic Solidi

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IN one of the more important runological publications of recent years Dr. Peter Berghaus and Professor Karl Schneider report on a new runic solidus, that of Schweindorf, Ostfriesland, discovered in 1948 and now in the Ostfriesisches Landesmuseum, Emden (PL. II, A, B).¹ This solidus bears one of the distinctive Anglo-Frisian characters, the rune *ac*. It comes from a region where runes had not previously been found and which lies between the area of the ‘Continental Anglo-Frisian’ inscriptions² and that part of south-Denmark/Angeln which supplies several of the early North Germanic inscriptions. Moreover it links with two other runic solidi, both rather mysterious, the *hada* piece from Harlingen, Friesland (PL. II, C, D), and the *skanomodu* solidus of unknown provenience, now in the British Museum (PL. II, E-G).³ In their monograph Berghaus and Schneider consider these three runic objects as a group, hoping thereby to cast light on the date of each, and on the meanings of their three legends. Though their paper is stimulating and publishes important new material, I think its form is in some ways unfortunate and I disagree with some of its conclusions. So I think it desirable, even at this early date, to act as *advocatus diaboli*, to examine the arguments the two scholars put forward and to define what I take to be their inaccuracies and weaknesses. Both numismatic and runic studies are specialized fields of work; there is always the danger that opinions expressed by experts in those fields on slender evidence will harden into an orthodoxy too readily accepted by people whose special knowledge lies elsewhere.

The monograph on the Schweindorf solidus divides into two parts, the first, by Berghaus, on the numismatic significance of the find, the second, by Schneider, on its runological aspects and on religious considerations which he believes are

¹ *Anglo-friesische Runensolidi im Lichte des Neufundes von Schweindorf (Ostfriesland)*, Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Heft 134 (Köln and Opladen, 1967).

² The phrase ‘‘Continental Anglo-Frisian’’ inscriptions is deliberately vague. I avoid the question of the language of these texts, and refer only to their geographical distribution.

³ The *skanomodu* solidus was part of George III’s collection, given to the British Museum in 1825, but we do not know how it came into his possession, whether by inheritance or gift, from his English or continental territories or farther afield. The manuscript catalogue, compiled in 1771 and checked up to 1814, gives no details of it, nor has any information been traced in the Queen’s Archives, Windsor Castle. Professor A. Aspinall tells me that he has found no mention of the solidus in George III’s correspondence.

bound up with them. These two parts are interlocking but each is to some degree independent, and this leads to structural weakness.

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Dr. Berghaus's section has two main themes. The first is a discussion of the relationships between the Schweindorf, Harlingen and *skanomodu* pieces, and between them and solidi from Uppsala and Wieuwerd, Friesland, and a number of coins of similar design. Berghaus establishes the dependence of the *skanomodu* piece upon late Roman coins, connecting the reverse specifically with a type from Ravenna. This gives him a *terminus post quem* of 402–3, the date of foundation of that mint. The reverses of Harlingen and Schweindorf derive from a similar design, though they are more remote. According to Berghaus the debased legend of their obverses links them to coins of Theodosius II (402–50). On typological grounds he puts the three runic solidi in order of fabrication, *skanomodu*, Harlingen, Schweindorf, and assigns them to the 6th century. Schweindorf must be somewhat earlier than the Wieuwerd hoard, buried 630–40, for that contains imitations of 6th-century gold coins, and a cast solidus, similar in many respects to Schweindorf, based on a later prototype. The runic solidi must be later than the two struck gold coins (from one pair of dies) from Kälder and Havor, both in Gotland, ascribed on archaeological grounds to the 5th century, and they are fairly close in time to some of the Scandinavian gold bracteates. This gives Berghaus a date in the last decades of the 6th century for Schweindorf, in the 3rd quarter of that century for Harlingen, and in its 1st quarter for *skanomodu*, which must be close to the similar Botes, Gotland, solidi, buried after 518.

It is hard for anyone who is not a numismatist to appreciate fully the validity of the arguments which an expert like Dr. Berghaus puts forward. Inevitably, the specialist bases his work on a mass of material known generally to himself and his colleagues, and which therefore neither needs nor gets detailed exposition, though it may be unknown to the stranger in the field. I do not go beyond my knowledge in attacking Berghaus's arguments, but content myself with listing those points on which I personally would like more detailed comment. Specifically, I would enquire into the connexions of *skanomodu* with Ravenna, and Harlingen and Schweindorf with Theodosius II. The sole evidence quoted for the Ravenna link is the inverted 'A' to the left of the standing figure of the *skanomodu* piece. This Berghaus thinks 'ein missverstandener Überrest des R-V der Münzstättenangabe RaVenna'. From conversation with Dr. Berghaus I understand that by this he means to derive the inverted 'A' from the Ravenna V, though the latter always appears to the right of the standing figure. To the novice in these matters it seems equally possible to regard inverted 'A' as a corruption of the initial M (to the figure's left) of Mediolanum (Milan), and this could allow an earlier date for the prototype of *skanomodu*. Berghaus favours Ravenna partly because of the large numbers of coins issued by that mint, but Mediolanum also had a substantial output. Dr. J. P. C. Kent draws my attention to two mints, active at about this time, whose mint-letters begin with A, Arles (A–R) and Aquileia (A–Q). Either of these could have provided the prototype for *skanomodu*, which would then invert

the initial mint-letter, but their coins are rare and Mediolanum remains more likely. Though Berghaus links Harlingen (and Schweindorf) with Theodosius II, H. Zeiss thought the former derived from a coin of Theodosius I,⁴ and certainly a specimen which J. W. E. Pearce ascribes to the first Theodosius looks to a non-specialist an equally likely original for Harlingen.⁵ Here again the size of the issue, larger for Theodosius II than for Theodosius I, is a relevant consideration, though not perhaps a decisive one.

These points of detail I regard of some importance, though they do not affect the main line of Berghaus's argument, since he nowhere uses them to determine the dates of his three solidi. At the most they reveal, perhaps, some lack of rigour in his argumentation. More important is a question involving method, and here I would ask: what degree of precision of dating does Berghaus claim for his group of three solidi (which show a good deal of individual variation) ordered on typological grounds between termini imprecisely established? Specifically, what limits would he set for the *skanomodu* solidus, dated with reference to two types (four specimens) found as far from the Anglo-Frisian area as Gotland?⁶ Were his opinions on dating assisted or confirmed by Schneider's findings on the runological and linguistic evidence?

Berghaus's second theme is the nature and purpose of these solidi. He concludes that they were not coins but amulets, and cites the following evidence: (i) they are cast, not struck like the coins they derive from, (ii) they were fitted with loops for suspension, (iii) their inscriptions are appropriate to amulets, (iv) two of them, Schweindorf and Harlingen, have in the neighbourhood of their inscriptions pairs of circles with dots at their centres (*Punktringel*) which he calls *Augenpaare*, and which he thinks have 'zweifellos eine apotropäische Bedeutung'.⁷ A tentative (v) is the relative position of obverse and reverse designs, the die-axes as they would be on struck coins. On the five related solidi in question, the three runic and the non-runic from Uppsala and Wieuwerd, these are either ↑↑ or ↑↓: 'Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, dass den Münzen damit magische Eigenschaften gegeben werden sollten.'

Point (i) needs modification. I have not seen Schweindorf, nor have I looked at Harlingen with this consideration in mind, but Dr. Berghaus has confirmed to me that he does not doubt that both were cast. The case of *skanomodu* is different. Several numismatists expressed doubt about Berghaus's judgement here, and the piece was sent to the British Museum Research Laboratory where it was examined by the X-ray diffraction back-reflection technique. The result showed that it was undoubtedly struck, not cast, so that it stands distinct in manufacturing method from Schweindorf and Harlingen. Even accepting Berghaus's submissions, his

⁴ H. Arntz and H. Zeiss, *Die einheimischen Runendenkmäler des Festlandes* (Leipzig, 1939), p. 259.

⁵ J. W. E. Pearce, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, IX (London, 1951), 84, pl. vi, 10.

⁶ Berghaus notes (*op. cit.* in note 1, p. 20) the late survival in England of early types, though he draws no conclusion from the observation.

⁷ Schneider also regards the circles as important, but gives a different explanation (*op. cit.* in note 1, p. 70). They are 'als Sternzeichen für Morgen- und Abendstern aufzufassen, und damit als Symbolzeichen für die beiden jugendlichen Götterbrüder, die im idg./germ. Glaubensbereich mit Morgen- und Abendstern zusammengebracht oder gar identifiziert wurden'. I am not clear how he regards one of these dotted circles when it appears alone.

conclusions are not sustained by the evidence he cites. As he himself notes, (i) and (ii) suggest that the solidi were not coins, but do not prove them amulets. They could be decorative brooches, pendants or medalets. (iii) I want to discuss extensively in considering Schneider's contribution to the monograph. Only (iv) and a tentative (v) remain for consideration at this point.

Before I go into (iv) in detail, a question of method presents itself. Out of the five solidi which Berghaus relates together, only two have *Augenpaare*, and it is reasonable to ask: even if *Augenpaare* were proved to have magical significance, would this necessarily imply that the three solidi without them were also amulets? Does the resemblance of design of the five pieces necessarily prove identity of function? I am not clear that it does, particularly as regards *skanomodu*, which is markedly closer to its prototype than the others. But in any case, are these particular *Augenpaare* magical, as Berghaus (iv) asserts? The circle with a dot at its centre is common enough in Germanic contexts where we might expect magic or an appeal to supernatural powers. Often it is connected with runes. There are several examples on the Kowel spear-head together with other symbols, including an elaborate swastika and a retrograde runic weapon-name. They appear on bracteates in company with such recognizably magical runic words as *laukar* and *labu*. The Hunstanton swastika-brooch with its rune-like forms has twenty. Berghaus himself does not cite strong evidence to show that his *Augenpaare* are magical, but is content with noting these dotted circles, sometimes singly, sometimes in pairs, on a number of 6th- and 7th-century coins from the Rhineland/Friesland area, concluding that these were 'Charonspfennig und Abwehrzauber zugleich'. He may be right, though this conclusion presumably derives from his assumption about the nature of *Augenpaare* and does not prove it. Moreover it is surely important to note that in these coins the dotted circles appear as individual characters in stylized copies of Roman legends, copies which are often nothing but collections of circles, semicircles and lines. They may represent Roman letters, nothing more.

The question naturally arises whether the *Augenpaare* on the two runic solidi can derive from prototype Roman legends. In fact they can.⁸ The reverses of these solidi copy at some remove an emperor facing right, holding a banner and the figure of Victory, and trampling upon a captive. Beneath this, in the exergue of the coin, the originals had the letters COMOB. This legend the Germanic copies reproduce in such blundered forms as COB on the Wieuwerd solidus and COIIOD on those from Botes (p. 13). Two of the struck coins quoted by Berghaus (his pl. v, 20 and 21) have OIO in the exergue, in one with dots in the circles, in one without, though Berghaus calls them *Augenpaare* in both. This so suggests the central part of COIIOD that it, too, must surely derive from COMOB. The Harlingen solidus has its runic inscription, *hada*, cut radially, bases inwards, at the position where the radial legend of the prototype begins. Scattered

⁸ I include the discussion which follows here for completeness. From conversation with Dr. Berghaus I understand that he accepts that the *Augenpaare* of Harlingen and Schweindorf derive ultimately from the O forms of the prototype legend COMOB. It is worth noting as a comparative example the dotted circle, deriving from the second O of THEODOSIVS on the obverse of the unprovenienced solidus of his pl. v, 21.

round the edge are a few rough attempts at other letters of the Roman original. In the exergue are the two circles of the *Augenpaar*, and between them formalized letters something like VC. I would have thought it probable that this group of symbols derives, like OIO, from COMOB. The Schweindorf solidus has the *Augenpaar* set at the edges of the exergue, the two circles separated by the retrograde runic legend *peladu* or *weladu*. According to the splendid Berghaus-Schneider photographs of this piece, the right-hand circle is poorly preserved, and neither has a very prominent dot at its centre. Perhaps these circles, too, could have their origins in the O forms of COMOB. However, a methodological difficulty arises here. The fact that these circles may derive from the prototype legend does not preclude their being interpreted as apotropaic by the copyist. In making an amulet he could have converted a Roman letter into a significant magical symbol. Yet this argument can work in both directions. The presence of dotted circles on amulets and on objects whose effectiveness could be improved by invoking supernatural powers does not prove that the circles themselves always had magical significance. They could decline from magical to decorative symbols. The difficulty is in assessing the intention of the craftsman who cut the circles, and this we shall never know for certain.⁹

One more piece of evidence requires closer scrutiny than Berghaus gives it. He quotes several examples of Roman solidi being mounted with loops for suspension, presumably so that they could be used as ornaments by members of the different Germanic peoples. Unmounted solidi of the same types occur in large numbers in hoards and scattered finds in the various Germanic provinces, while some of the mounted examples (his pl. iv, 10 and 11, for example) are heavily worn, as in the course of trade. There is no reason to think that the barbarians did not recognize these solidi as coins, and it would then be absurd to imagine that they believed them amulets as soon as they were mounted. The most ready explanation of the runic solidi is that they were Germanic copies of mounted Roman solidi, and this would suggest that they, too, were simply ornaments. There would be reason to believe them amulets if the native goldsmiths had made drastic changes in design deliberately to introduce apotropaic motifs. In fact they reproduce the iconography of the originals with varying degrees of precision, replace Roman legends by those partly in the native runic character, and partly barbarize them, changing some letters into purely formal arrangements of lines, and perhaps others into Germanic decorative patterns such as the dotted circle.

Finally, if the runic solidi are simply copies of mounted Roman prototypes, the individual Germanic craftsmen may have copied with different intents. Because, say, the maker of the Schweindorf or of the Harlingen piece recreated his original as an amulet, this does not mean that the man who struck the *skano-modu* solidus (which is closest of the three to its original) intended the same. To give confidence, an amulet must surely look like an amulet. Even on Schweindorf and Harlingen the *Augenpaare* are not prominent in the design. They are

⁹ There is an interesting instance of a dotted circle on the 10th-century censer-cover from Pershore (D. M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700–1100 in the British Museum* (London, 1964), no. 56). This has the inscription +GODRICMEWVORHT (= +Godric me worht(e)), the first O with a dot at its centre, the second without. There is no likelihood of magical intent here.

absent from the other two cast solidi and from *skanomodu*, and are not replaced by any other magical symbols, despite the fact that the Germanic peoples had quite a wide repertory of them, swastikas, crosses, triskeles, forms like several *t*-runes superimposed, all of which occur in the bracteates. Were there a very large sample of certain runic solidus amulets, we might conclude that a small group of similar objects which had no runes or apotropaic symbols were also amulets simply on the grounds of probability. But two, three or five are small samples to work with.

The mounted Roman coins may explain one more feature of the runic and the cast non-runic solidi which Berghaus (v) very tentatively suggests may have magical significance—the relative positions of obverse and reverse designs. His illustrated examples of these Roman pieces (his pl. iv, 10 and 11) show that they sometimes had die-axes ↑↑, sometimes ↑↓. Sometimes the Germanic craftsmen followed one exemplar, sometimes the other, but there is no reason to think that they attributed any significance to the different ways they set out their two designs.

As one not trained in numismatic disciplines, then, I feel that Berghaus's claim that the runic solidi are amulets is not substantiated by the numismatic evidence alone. His case requires more rigorous argument on that evidence, or alternatively needs the additional conviction to be gained from the epigraphy, and to this I now turn with much greater confidence in my ability to manage the material.

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Schneider's part of the monograph divides into two sections. The first discusses in turn the runes of Schweindorf, Harlingen and *skanomodu*, with their interpretations, and dates them on linguistic and runological grounds. The second considers the further implications of these pieces for the history of Germanic paganism. Schneider, too, begins with the belief that the three solidi are amulets, and this he supports by two arguments, (i) they had loops for suspension, (ii) Berghaus has demonstrated the amulet character from the numismatic evidence: hence Schneider's reading of the three sets of runes as invocations of magical or religious powers. The weakness of the composite structure of the Berghaus-Schneider paper is here revealed, for this argument of Schneider's does not support Berghaus's, but merely repeats it. Berghaus appeals to Schneider and Schneider to Berghaus; the argument becomes circular. The thesis is valid only if (a) Berghaus's point (iv) satisfies, or (b) Schneider's interpretations of the legends are overwhelmingly convincing, or (c) the two together seem to have more strength than either singly.

At this stage it becomes important to consider how Schneider deals with the inscriptions themselves. Fortunately none of them presents problems of transliteration. In common with most scholars I read Harlingen as *hada*, though some have thought it *hama*.¹⁰ The reading *skanomodu* has not been questioned, save by Dahl who believed, wrongly I think, that it was the Latinized *skanomodus*, the

¹⁰ See, e.g., Arntz and Zeiss, *op. cit.* in note 4, p. 260.

last letter set just within the exergue.¹¹ From the photographs there is no doubt that Schneider's readings *peladu* or *weladu* for the retrograde Schweindorf runes are correct, though the last letter is fragmentary or notably undersized.

The word *hada* has always been read as a personal name in the nominative. Schneider argues against this, but so elliptically that his statement must be quoted in full:

‘Da aber dieser Solidus, wie aus den verbliebenen Resten einer abgebrochenen Hängeöse zu folgern ist, genauso wie der Solidus von Schweindorf Amulettcharakter hatte, würde man erwarten, dass der Name, wäre er der Name des Münz- und Runenmeisters, etwa mit dem Zusatz “machte dies” oder “heisse ich” vorläge oder, sofern es sich um den Namen des Besitzers handle, dass dieser entweder im Dat.Sg. stünde, also *hadan* lautete—Bedeutung: “dem Hada (gehört dies)” —oder im Nom.Sg. mit dem Zusatz “besitzt dies” versehen wäre. Da aber all dies nicht der Fall ist, scheint es auf Grund des Amulettcharakters ratsamer und auch sinnvoller, in dem männlichen Namen einen Vokativ zu sehen und damit die Inschrift als *had(d)a!* aufzufassen.’¹²

In his footnotes 30 and 31 Schneider quotes maker and owner formulae used on bracteates: *ik Akar fahi*, ‘I, Akar, paint (the runes)’ on the Åsum bracteate, *Auþa þit eih*, ‘Auþa owns this’ on that from Overhornbæk. But this is scarcely proof that makers or owners must use some such formulae if their names were to appear on imitated solidi. There is, after all, a long series of runic personal names in the nominative on inscribed objects of various dates from early to late times, and it is at least likely that some of them give owners' or makers' names: *Harja* on the Vimose comb, *Hariso* on the Himlingøje I and *Widuhudar* on the Himlingøje II brooch, *Lepro* on the Strårup collar, *Sigadur* on the Svarteborg medalet, *Husibald* on the Steindorf sax. In Great Britain the Thames scramasax has the name ‘bêagnoþ’ and the Llysfaen ring the partly-runic ALHSTAn, and there is no need to imagine that either of these is in the vocative, while the existence of parallel non-runic examples in this country, the royal rings with +ETH/ELVVLFR/X and +EAÐELSVIÐREGNA and the ring with the expanded formula NOMEN CHLLAFIÐINXPO, suggests that there was probably a common practice of adding owners' or donors' names to objects of value. The most persuasive of the examples from England is the later 6th-century Leudhard medalet from St. Martin's, Canterbury, which has the obverse legend, LEV·DAR·DVS·EPS (= *Leudardus ep(iscopu)s*) retrograde.¹³ In appearance, in date and in text type this is close to the Harlingen solidus, and, as P. Grierson has suggested, the craftsman who made it might have been used to the runic character.¹⁴ The legend records a

¹¹ I. Dahl, *Substantival Inflection in Early Old English* (Lund, 1938), pp. xi–xii.

¹² *Op. cit.* in note 1, p. 50.

¹³ C. H. V. Sutherland, *Anglo-Saxon Gold Coinage in the Light of the Crondall Hoard* (Oxford, 1948), no. 1. Leudardus is identified with the bishop Liudhardus who accompanied the Frankish princess Berchta to Kent on her marriage to King Ethelbert.

¹⁴ P. Grierson, ‘The Canterbury (St. Martin's) hoard of Frankish and Anglo-Saxon coin ornaments’, *Brit. Numism. J.*, xxvii (1952–4), 41–2.

connexion between the medalet and one bishop Leudhard who may have been its owner or donor, or who may have used this type of medalet to honour the friends of the Christian church in Kent before the conversion. Need we believe that the personal name *Hada* had some quite different relationship to the Harlingen solidus? Schneider, arguing that the name *Hada* is related to OE *heāpu-*, 'battle', and so means 'zum Kampf Gehöriger, Kämpfer', refers it to the figure portrayed on the reverse of the solidus. This figure, he thinks, was interpreted by the Germanic craftsman as a supernatural being who should be invoked for help or protection. Such a reading of the legend makes the prior assumption that the solidus is an amulet: it does nothing towards proving it.

Scholars have commonly interpreted the legend *skanomodu* as a personal name, but to this Schneider objects because of the 'namenmorphologischen und auch sprachhistorisch-runologischen Schwierigkeiten' it presents. He prefers to read three words, *scan o modu*, the first one 3. sg. pret. ind. of *scinan*, 'shine, glitter', the second *o*, an emphatic form related to OE *a* (Gothic *aiw*), 'ever', the third instr. sg. of OE *mod*, 'courage, might': 'Er hat immer durch Mut (Macht) geeglänzt.' As with the Harlingen legend this is referred to the reverse figure of the solidus, a god or other superior being. The comment 'he has always shone by virtue of his power (courage)' is made because the owner of the charm hoped that this coruscation would continue for his own benefit. This interpretation needs a good deal of justification. The form *o*, 'ever', Schneider compares with the OFrisian emphatic negative *no*, 'never', but it is not clear if he regards the *skanomodu* example as an OE equivalent otherwise unrecorded, or as essentially Frisian —he calls it *Urfries*. The instr. sg. *modu* he justifies by comparing the *-u* instr. sg. in OS, OHG *o*-stems and the loc. sg. (doubtfully identified) of Westeremden B. The vowel symbol of *scan*, 'shone', derives from WGmc *ai* which should give OE *ā* and OFrisian *ē*. Schneider argues that in *skanomodu* the rune *ac* may represent *æi* (in accordance with the derivation of the letter form from the old *a*-rune + *i*) and that this could be an intermediate stage between Gmc *ai* and the recorded OE and OFrisian vowels. This is, of course, possible, for we know little of how the new Anglo-Frisian runes were created, nor have we any evidence of the intermediate stages between the Gmc diphthongs and their equivalents in OE and OFrisian. Yet there does seem a lot of special pleading required by Schneider's interpretation of *skanomodu*.

I think, moreover, that a more effective general mode of attack is possible. Is it likely that, in a text intended to encourage a god's future favours, it would be enough to describe elliptically his past activity without mentioning the god's name or title at all? In Schneider's version the god appears only as '(he)', contained within the verb form itself. In the surviving (North Germanic) pagan literature there is no sign that divine names or titles were avoided as tabu, and Schneider himself argues that god-titles are used on a group of bracteate amulets.¹⁵ Why be so cryptic on the *skanomodu* solidus? A clue ought to be given by other

¹⁵ *Op. cit.* in note 1, p. 65. Schneider seems to be referring to some sort of tabu when he speaks of the 'wohl aus religiösen Erwägungen verschwiegene Subjekt' of the Schweindorf and *skanomodu* legends (*ibid.*, p. 59).

magical texts within a similar context or date range, for, if Schneider's interpretation is correct, one or other of these should bear a structure something like *skan o modu*. Unfortunately it is hard to assess a runemaster's intention and to determine which texts are magical and which are not, save by applying the well-known epigraphical law that whatever is incomprehensible is magic.

Some runologists would suggest that the majority of runic texts are magical simply because runes were a magical script. Against this view I have argued in detail elsewhere.¹⁶ However, there are a number of objects, roughly contemporary with these solidi, which are commonly accepted as having supernatural significance. These are the Lindholm amulet and the various runic bracteates.¹⁷ The Lindholm amulet has two texts, the first announcing the name or title of the runemaster, *ek erilar sa wilagar hateka*, 'I, Erilar, am called "wise in sorcery"', the second a combination of runes incomprehensible to us, *aaaaaaaaARRNNN[.]bmuttt: alu:*. The last three letters comprise a magical word or rune sequence, for they are quite common on bracteates and elsewhere, as are other sequences of no obvious import, such as *lapu* and *laukar*. Some bracteates have curious groups of runes, each sequence evidenced only once, which are probably magical because they are pronounceable, not meaningful to us, and seem the right sort of words for magic: *luwatuwa*, *salusalu*, *tantulu*. There is an occasional pregnant phrase, *gibu auja*, '(I) give luck'. On some bracteates are rune sequences which have been taken as personal names, *Frohila*, *Niuwila*, *Houar*. Some have formulae naming the runemaster or the craftsman: *Hariuha haitika: farausa*, 'I am called Hariuha, wise in danger', *Uiigar eerilar fahidu uilald*, 'Uiigar, the erilar, inscribed (this) work of skill (? magic)', *wurte runor an walhakurne ... Heldar Kunimudiu ...*, 'Heldar made runes for Kunimu(n)d on the bracteate'. There are the *futharks*, always assumed to be magical, and a lot of jumbled and often blundered letter groups whose significance will probably never be known. And there are combinations of the various types of inscription listed above. But there is nowhere, to my knowledge, anything like 'he has always shone by virtue of his power'.

On the other hand, if we take *hada* and *skanomodu* as personal names in the nominative, no contextual problems arise. If the solidi are not amulets, the names may simply be those of the owners, makers or donors. If they are amulets, *hada* and *skanomodu* could still be owner or runemaster names as *Frohila* and *Niuwila* on the bracteates, and they may, though personally I am sceptical about this, add the magic of the runic script to the might of the bracteate. There is no need to demonstrate the point in the case of *hada*, which, it is generally agreed, could be a nominative personal name. In the case of *skanomodu*, as Schneider implies, we must resort to hard arguing which looks uncommonly like special pleading. Presumably the first identification of this legend as a personal name derives from the belief that the solidus was a coin, for Anglo-Saxon coins commonly had the name of king and/or moneyer, and the runic specimens record 'pada', 'æþiliræd', 'lul', 'broþer', 'botred', 'wihtred' and others. Theoretically, at least,

¹⁶ 'Anglo-Saxon runes and magic', *J. Brit. Archaeol. Assoc.*, 3 ser., xxvii (1964), 14–31.

¹⁷ The texts cited are to be found in W. Krause and H. Jankuhn, *Die Runeninschriften im älteren Futhark* (Göttingen, 1966). There are occasional difficulties of reading, but none affects the present discussion.

this could still apply, for the solidus could be a coin, being struck and of an appropriate weight (4·35 g.) and material. At first glance *skanomodu* seems a likely dithematic name with a second element *-mod*, but there is difficulty about the quality of the unstressed vowels. The first element could be cognate with OE *Scen-*, recorded only in *Scenuulf* in the Durham *Liber Vitae*, and with OHG *Scauni-*. There is also a simplex *Sc(i)ene*, related to OHG *Scōnea* and to the OE adjective *scene*, ‘beautiful’, and this has been identified in such place-names as Shingay, Cambs. (*Sceningie* 1086), Shingham, Norfolk (*Siengham* 1198), Shinfield, Berks. (*Soanesfelt* DB, *Schinigefeld* 1167) and in the lost *Scynes weorp*, BCS 820. The mutated vowel of *Scen-*, the form of *Scauni-* and the declension of the Gothic cognate **skauns* or **skauneis* (preserved only in *skaunjai* and *-skaunjamma*) point to an *i*- or *ja*-stem which is hard to reconcile with the unstressed vowel of *skano-*. There may, however, have been an OE parallel unsusceptible to *i*-mutation: cf. OE *scean-* in the occasional compound *sceanfeld*. A similar form may be the ON place-name *Skaun* which Magnus Olsen regards as ‘nær beslektet med gotisk *skauns*'.¹⁸ An *a*-stem adjective used as a name element could give *skano-* with unstressed *o* (perhaps IE *o*) retained to a late date.¹⁹ O. v. Friesen's alternative is that the unstressed *-o-* wrongly anticipates the main vowel of *-modu*, which is possible, though it is methodologically weak to explain a difficulty away as an error.²⁰ The final vowel of *-modu* is a problem too, and one I cannot confidently solve. In OE *-mod* is not a *u*-stem, though v. Friesen, noting the ON genitive *-mōðar*, suggests that it may have been in this example. This is not a very satisfactory explanation. An alternative, also weak, is to point to a number of cases of aberrant final *-u* in Anglo-Saxon runic texts—Franks casket ‘flodu’, ‘giuþeasu’ are the most cogent examples—and to suggest that this vowel rune was occasionally used in early times as a space filler.

So far I have discussed *skanomodu* as though it were an OE legend, despite the lack of any confirmatory provenience. The use of the *a*-rune to represent Gmc *au* in *skano-* (if that is cognate with OHG *Scauni-*) suggests that the text is in fact Frisian. Final *-u* could then be an indefinite unstressed vowel, as it seems to be in *adugislū* and *gisuhldū* on the Westeremden weaving-slay.²¹ In this case *skanomodu* could simply be an oblique form of the personal name, perhaps with the meaning ‘for Skanomod’ as in the more explicit formula embodying the name *Kunimidiu* on the Tjurkö bracteate I (Jacobsen-Moltke, br. 75). Such a legend would be more appropriate to a unique piece cast from a mould than to one of a group struck from dies. The interpretation seems unlikely if the *skanomodu* solidus is a coin.

The words *hada* clearly, and *skanomodu* much less clearly, could be personal names recording people connected with these solidi. The Schweindorf solidus is a different case. From the photographs I would take its inscription as *weladu*, though *peladu* is certainly possible. Schneider reads *we ladu*, ‘Wir (haben) dies

¹⁸ M. Olsen, *Stedsnavn* (Stockholm, 1939), p. 52.

¹⁹ C. T. Carr, *Nominal Compounds in Germanic* (Oxford, 1939), pp. 271–2.

²⁰ O. v. Friesen, *Runorna* (Stockholm, 1933), p. 50.

²¹ *Op. cit.* in note 4, pp. 386–7. This weaving-slay is, however, ascribed to the 8th or 9th century (*ibid.*, p. 382), so its linguistic relevance to *skanomodu* is uncertain.

gemacht). (Es ist, bzw. dieser ist) Unterstützung, Hilfe, Verteidigung', or, *þe ladu*, 'Für dich bzw. dir (ist dies, oder: ist dieser) Unterstützung, Hilfe, Verteidigung'. He takes *ladu* as an early form of OE *lad*, 'leading, support, maintenance, sustenance, defence, way, journey'. I would like a more detailed semantic examination at this point, for, though *lad* could clearly mean 'leading, maintenance, sustenance, way, journey' and 'defence' in the specific sense of 'legal defence, exoneration', I am not clear from the authorities cited, Bosworth-Toller's and Clark Hall's dictionaries, that it could imply 'support, defence' in a general sense, or 'help'. Schneider rejects *we ladu* on the grounds that it uses the regal 'we', whereas runemasters elsewhere modestly use the singular form, but a stronger objection is surely the unhelpful nature of such a legend. That a craftsman or runemaster should sign his name is likely enough, but that he should be content with recording himself simply as 'we' is improbable in the extreme. Schneider's alternative suffers from a similar weakness. On a variety of objects runemasters name themselves and the person for whom the object was made. That they should record such a person as 'you' is unlikely too.

It is, however, hard to provide a convincing alternative. Examining the bracteate texts with their many obscurities, I am struck by the number of times they contain *l* and *a* in combination with *u*, *w*, and/or *þ*, sometimes with other letters too: *alu*, *laukar*, *alawin*, *jalawid*, *lalgwu*, *lapu*, *þpdul(u)*, *uldaul*. *þeladu* or *weladu* fits well into such a list. Most interesting of the bracteates in this connexion is that from Tønder, south Jutland (Jacobsen-Moltke, br. 4). This has a standing figure facing right and bearing a bow. Around it are various other, much smaller, stylized figures, some perhaps men, others animals. Radially and at the left edge is a retrograde runic text, *uldaul*, and radially below the figure where the exergue of a coin would be, a second retrograde legend, *þpdul(u)*, the last letter uncertain. Though this bracteate is not strikingly like any of the runic solidi, it bears a general resemblance in design, and it is interesting to remember that the standing figure on the non-runic Uppsala solidus also has a bow, though he handles it differently from the more competent archer of Tønder. The similarity of appearance is emphasized by some similarity of legends, Schweindorf's *þeladu/weladu* against Tønder's *þpdul(u)*. These two uses of a limited range of letters are striking and perhaps significant. Jacobsen-Moltke wisely left the Tønder bracteate text uninterpreted, and I am inclined to do the same with Schweindorf.

Some may feel that, in admitting to the discussion the resemblance between the Schweindorf solidus and the Tønder bracteate, I have tacitly accepted the likelihood that Schweindorf is an amulet, for the bracteates are often connected with religion or the supernatural, and many of their legends, particularly those containing *alu* or rearrangements of those three letters, are thought magical. This may be so, and I would not deny the possibility of Schweindorf being an amulet, but I would not hold it proven, nor do I even think it necessary to believe that Tønder is an amulet. Many of the bracteate inscriptions may be traditional groups of letters or combinations of rune-like forms no longer meaningful at the time they were stamped. Certainly, many bracteates have curious symbols which, though they point to an origin in the script, are no longer runes. Schweindorf could repre-

sent a similar decline from a meaningful to a meaningless group of characters. In any case, there is no reason to accept Schneider's interpretations of *hada* and *skanomodu*, nor to admit that these two runic solidi were amulets.

The final part of Schneider's contribution need not concern us here. It is a speculative discussion of the place of the cast solidi in the history of Germanic religion. Schneider argues that the runemasters responsible for the pieces looked upon their reverse figures as those of gods, and so added appropriate legends. He then suggests that the gods in question were the two youthful brothers whom Tacitus records as worshipped by the Naharvali, and whom he equates with Castor and Pollux. This thesis is argued with persistence and a wealth of comparative detail, but it is in a sense irrelevant to the rest of the article. It is an extension of Schneider's interpretation of the runic legends, but not a necessary one.

Finally, I must consider briefly the linguistic evidence for dating the three solidi. Schneider puts forward the following criteria for determining the *terminus ante quem*:

(i) The retention of *-u* after a long syllable in *ladu* and *-modu*. On Luick's authority this puts Schweindorf and *skanomodu* before 600.

(ii) The use of the rune *oepil* for *o* unaffected by *i*-mutation in *skanomodu*. This puts the solidus no later than c. 525, for Luick ascribes *i*-mutation to the 1st half of the 6th century, while the Franks casket, which Schneider dates c. 540/80, uses the rune for a mutated vowel.

The *terminus post quem* is c. 450 since:

(iii) The provenience of Schweindorf suggests a date after the migration of Anglo-Saxon units to Friesland, parts of which they occupied as a staging-post on their way to England.

(iv) The form of the rune *cen* in *skanomodu* is an Anglo-Frisian intermediary between the equivalent Germanic rune and the common Anglo-Saxon type.

Objections can be brought against each of these. In (i) and (ii) Schneider fails to distinguish between OE and OFrisian sound-changes, and assumes that the chronology appropriate to the one necessarily applies to the other. But Luick's dates may not apply if these solidi are Frisian. Moreover, Luick prefaced his dating of the OE sound-changes (as opposed to his placing of them in chronological order) by a strong warning of the weakness of the evidence, and the uncertainty of its application in the same way to different local dialects.²² (i) depends on Schneider's interpretations of the two inscriptions. If we reject *ladu* as an early form of OE *lad*, we need not believe its main vowel long, and so need not assume early loss of *-u*. If *beladu/weladu* is a magical or arbitrary word, it may not undergo the same sound-changes as common words. The ending of *-modu* is a problem, and I would hesitate to use it as a dating criterion. (ii) ignores the possibility of a conservative spelling tradition, retaining the rune *oepil* for the unmutated vowel after *i*-mutation had taken place or at least begun. We do not know how the

²² K. Luick, *Historische Grammatik der englischen Sprache*, 1 (Leipzig, 1914–21), § 291.

runemasters learned spelling methods, or how tenaciously they stuck to them. Few people would put the Franks casket as early as 540/80. To me it is clearly no earlier than the 7th century, and late in the century at that.²³ Despite this, (ii) may contain a valid point. The Chessell Down scabbard-plate has the text 'æco: þ ceri', seemingly using *oepil* where the vowel is liable to *i*-mutation, but *os* where it is not. This inscription was probably cut c. 550. Its spelling practice might confirm an early date for *skanomodu* if the two runemasters used the same runic conventions. Unfortunately we do not even know if they belonged to the same race. (iii) may be right, though we knew less than we would like about the relationship between Anglo-Saxon and Frisian runes, and the routes by which the script came both to this country and to Frisia. The weakness of (iv) is our ignorance of the forms in which the various runic characters were introduced into these two countries. England has three 'c' types, < on the Loveden Hill urn 61/251 (and also on the 'Bateman' brooch, British Museum 93, 6-18, 32, which may have been inscribed on the continent), h commonly, and the intermediate λ of Chessell Down, which is also the *skanomodu* shape. This last Schneider takes as Anglo-Frisian, presumably because it also occurs on the Hantum, Frisia, bone plate. But a similar, though smaller, type appears quite often in Denmark, in such early inscriptions as the Kragehul spear-shaft, the Vimose plane and the Lindholm amulet, and very recently a full-length form, exactly equivalent to Chessell Down and *skanomodu*, has turned up in Norway, on the Eikeland, Rogaland, brooch.²⁴ This makes it uncertain whether the *skanomodu* 'c' type is specifically Anglo-Frisian. It could be a common Germanic variant whence derived the orthodox Anglo-Saxon type.

Summing up, I think there is reason to believe that the *skanomodu* text is early because of its similarities with Chessell Down (and its archaic 's' rune, otherwise found in England only on the Ash (Gilton) pommel, is an additional piece of evidence),²⁵ but on the linguistic and runological material I would hesitate to ascribe it to so precise a period as the 1st quarter of the 6th century. In my opinion Harlingen and Schweindorf have no runological and linguistic features which enable us to date them with any closeness at all. The dates suggested by Berghaus may be correct, but they must be reached on numismatic grounds alone.

In this 'review article' I have tried to give the grounds on which I hold unproven Dr. Berghaus's contention that these three runic solidi are amulets. I have given reasons why I am sceptical over the interpretations which Professor Schneider gives to their legends, and over the dates he supplies. Of course,

²³ Opinions have differed as to the date of this object, but many scholars accept c. 700. To me such a date seems likely on the linguistic and runological evidence, while R. L. S. Bruce-Mitford has reached a similar conclusion on the evidence of art-history.

²⁴ A. Liestøl, 'Runeinnskrifta på Eikelandspenna', *Frá haug ok heiðni* (1965), pp. 155-8. It is fair to admit that the base of the rune seems to be damaged, so there is perhaps some doubt as to its exact form.

²⁵ For the runes of the Ash (Gilton) pommel see S. C. Hawkes and R. I. Page, 'Swords and runes in south-east England', *Antiq. J.*, XLVII (1967), 3-4, 11 and pl. i, and V. I. Evison, 'The Dover ring-sword and other sword-rings and beads', *Archaeologia*, CI (1967), 70, 88 and fig. 10a, with a detailed account of the inscription and a discussion by J. M. Bately, pp. 97-102. Schneider is surely wrong in saying (*op. cit.* in note 1, p. 57) that the 's' of *skanomodu* is a three-stroke form z, as indeed Berghaus transcribes it (*ibid.*, p. 23). The coin shows clearly z, with the lower stroke almost certainly intended as part of the rune (PL. II, 6). Four-stroke s-forms occur elsewhere in early inscriptions.

dealing with small samples of material or small numbers of objects, we cannot get statistical or absolute proof, and must be content with a weight of evidence for or against a thesis. I do not think that weight has been demonstrated in the present case.

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