

NUMISMATIC SECTION

By Serge Huard, numismatist and exnumist

VINLAND ISSUE A COIN-OF-TRADITION ILLUSTRATING THE VIKING "ALPHABET"

Vinland/ MidhgardhR will be issuing, within the next few weeks, its eighth issue in a series of commemorative coins-of-tradition on the North European mythology thematic.

The obverse of the 1998, the year 2248 in the Runic Era, 10 Fehu (equivalent to US\$10) coin illustrate the 16-runes of the Scandinavian Futhark, also known as the Nordic Futhark, and reproduce an historic Viking design.

Futhark is the name of the Runic "alphabet" of the Ancient North European peoples; it comes from its first six letters of the scripture system, that is F, U, Th, A, R, K.

The runes of the historic Viking Age are specifically those of the Scandinavian or Nordic Futhark, i.e.

F · U · Th · A · R · K · Y · X · I · J · H · N · G · B · P · M · L

and the phonetic value of each rune is as follow :

F; U (O, Ö, V, W); Th (Dh); Æ; R; K (G, Nk, Ng); H; N; I (E, J); A; S; T (D, Nd); B (P, Mb); M; L; -R (at the end of a word)

[Sources : *The Vikings* by Else Roesdahl and *A History of the Vikings* by Gwyn Jones]

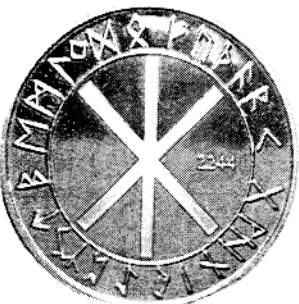
This European native "alphabet" was in use approximately from the year 800 to 1150 in the Northern part of Europe and in the lands invaded by the Viking. Around the year 800 of the C.E., when the language expended into a more complex phonetic system, the Vikings simplified their scripture system by reducing the number of runes from 24 as in the Elder Futhark to 16. An event without precedent in the history of the orthography. More, the form of some of these runes was also simplified.

They became, however, much more difficult to read and to understand because most of the characters denoted many phonetic values. For instance the rune Ûr can be read and understood as U, O, Ö, V or W and the rune Kaun can be read and understood as K, Nk, G or Ng. Today, many of these Nordic runic inscriptions are extremely difficult, if not impossible to understand.

The design above the Nordic Futhark depict an historic illustration of four Vikings warriors in a drakkar ship ready for battle.

The reverse, which is the same on all eight commemorative issues of Vinland, reproduce as central illustration the Valknutr, the Knot of Odin, the Viking god, with two Thor's hammers welded on its right and the rune Tyr, the symbol of an ancestral Viking god on its left. The inscriptions are : Vinland, above the Valknutr, the denomination (10 Fehu) and MidhgardhR (which can be translated "as the place where we live") below it.

As in previous issues of Vinland, the 1998 10 Fehu will be minted in nickel-silver in Proof quality, i.e. matte illustrations and inscriptions on a brilliant background.



Mintage figures are not yet known but are expected to be of only a few hundreds. This coin-of-tradition is issued at its face value which is equivalent to US\$10 and include postage.

Two previous numismatic issues of Vinland illustrate the other two Runic systems, i.e. the 24-runes Elder Futhark whose origins can be traced back at least two centuries before the Common Era and which was still in use in some parts of Northern Europe until the 19th. Century, and the 29-runes Anglo-Saxon Futhorc based upon the *Old English Runic Poem* which was written at the end of the 8th. Century and which was also still in use until the late 19th. Century. Please refer to the precedent page for the illustrations of each obverse of these numismatic back issues.

The reverse is, of course, identical on each issue of this special series of Native European scripture systems. Both Vinland back issues, also in nickel-silver and in Proof quality, are still available at the original issue price (face value).

[Any readers of *Atalaya* interested in these Vinland commemorative coins-of-tradition may contact the author of this article for information related to availability.]

IS THERE A REFERENCE BOOK ON COINAGE-OF-TRADITION ?

This is a question asked many times by readers of *Atalaya* who are interested by coins-of-tradition and "Cinderella" coins. There are many such reference books in several languages but the best buy is, without any doubt, the *UNUSUAL WORLD COINS* catalog by Colin R. Bruce II (ISBN: 0-87341-192-7). Published in the United States by Krause Publications, this +250 pages fully illustrated catalog is a must not only for the specialist but also for anyone interested in this particular field of numismatics.

In its Third Edition, the latest, published in 1992, are listed more than 600 issuing authorities from all over the world and many thousands of issues most of them with actual size illustrations, specifications as to which metal and its fineness in the case of precious metals, years of issue, reference numbers and related information. An estimated value for each piece is given in at least four grades of conservation, from good to very fine and Proof. Mintage figures, when available, are also listed.

Here is a small selection among the numerous issuing authorities listed in the Third Edition of the *UNUSUAL WORLD COIN* catalog :

Confederate States of America, Andorra, Araucania-Patagonia, Duchy of Avram (in Australia), Duchy of Bouillon (in France), Buck Islands, Universaro (California), Anticosti Island (in Canada), Celestia, Central American States, Confederatio Europea, Republic of Minerva, Croatia (in exile), Utopia, Hutt River Province Principality, Hawaii (Monarchist issues), Hungary (in exile), Knights of Malta, Liechtenstein, Order of St-John of Jerusalem, Mexico (revolutionary issues), Na-Griamel Federation, China (nationalist issues), Serbia and Bosnia, Tibet (in exile), Transvaal Republic, Universaro, Wikingland, Yemen (Royalist issues), Zuid Afrikaansche Republiik.

If interested to know more about this extremely interesting and instructive reference book, the best one in the field of coins-of-tradition and unusual coins in general, please contact the publisher at the following address : Krause Publications, "Unusual World Coins", 700 East State Street, Iola, Wisconsin 54990-0001, United States. Krause also publish the *Standard Catalog of World Coins*, the *Standard Catalog of World Gold Coins* and many other numismatic titles. A catalog is available free upon request.

A SCARCE COIN...

FREE TO ALL THE READERS TO ATALAYA

The Editor of the Numismatic Section of *Atalaya* recently acquired a very small quantity of the superb *Hutt River Province Principality* 1978 nickel-silver Proof 50c coins, the scarcest of the series of HRPP Half Dollars.

The total mintage is of only 500 pieces and, twenty years after issue, they are very scarce and difficult to obtain. In order to stimulate interest in numismatic among the readers of ATALAYA, I am offering these FREE on the basis of the first-come, the first served with a strict limit of one coin each reader. Please note that only a few are available and that this offer is valid within the limit of the quantity available.

Interested? Simply send your name and address with US\$2 (or 4 IRC) to cover the airmail cost to: Serge Huard, C.P. 402, Pointe-aux-trembles, Quebec, H1B 5K3, Canada

