Abstract:

“A good word never broke a tooth”. The significance of the Brough of Birsay amulet, OR 11

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The well-known runic tooth pendant which was found in the late 1930s in the Brough of Birsay carries the opening of a Norse runic **fuþork** as described in detail by Michael P. Barnes and R. I. Page (2006 187-191). Due to the intriguing object itself, it’s a canine from a brown bear, there has been much speculation on how we should interpret the inscription. Does the **fuþork** imply a magic function or do the runes merely demonstrate an attempt to “try out a knife [or] to demonstrate literacy” (p. 191)? This paper wishes to launch yet another line of interpretation based on the implication of the double-lined runes which are used in the inscription.

Best wishes from Copenhagen

-Michael