

Survey of medieval inscribed objects from Bergen:

Items other than wooden sticks or pieces of wood

This survey is a supplementary resource to the article “Runic Sticks and Other Inscribed Objects from Medieval Bergen: Challenges and Possibilities” (see *Maal og Minne* 2020). The survey is based on investigations of the Bryggen corpus, carried out mainly in the years 2013–18.¹ Own field notes and photographs have been complemented by information in runological or archaeological databases and publications (available per January 2020). The purpose behind the survey is twofold. For one, it demonstrates the variability of the corpus; it contains information on inscribed artefacts, which can be determined to represent something other than wooden sticks or pieces of wood. Secondly, the survey brings to the fore some of the interesting ambiguities in the study of inscribed artefacts, especially regarding wooden items. The table presents an overview of artefacts, which with some certainty can be identified as (parts of) sundry tools, vessels, implements and other functional objects. As such, they display alternative functionalities than primarily script-bearing objects. Artefacts made of materials other than wood are also included (marked in bold). The number of items may be subject to change depending upon the adjustment of classification criteria and the re-assessment of individual objects.² Uncertain instances regarding objects and their functions are indicated with question marks. The included descriptions on forms of writing (i.e. primary, secondary, and tertiary) follow the categories introduced by Franklin (2002) – presented in more detail in the article. Such assessments illuminate the diverse nature and

1. I am grateful to Professor Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide for her expert help in investigating the objects. I was able to consult with her concerning various artefacts included in this overview. The responsibility for any erroneous information and for the remaining uncertainties is fully mine.
2. The overview could be expanded by additional wooden artefacts that resemble (parts of) shafts, wedges, nails, pegs, pins or other tools and implements; currently such identifications have been deemed too uncertain. Other potential additions could be owner's tags and tally-sticks – if placing emphasis on their extended functionalities. The present study underlines the inherent ambiguities of such material as well as the fuzzy boundaries between different types of object.

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

dynamic boundaries of the evidence; they do not work as rigid groups. With some inscribed artefacts, the form of writing also remains uncertain.³

Signum/Accession NO.	Type of item	Additional info ³
1. B2/BRM?	wooden plate(?)	mentioned in a letter, lost(?); no identifiable runes?
2. B3/BRM 0/1102	turned wooden bowl (five pieces preserved)	deeply incised runes on the bottom; probably secondary writing, i.e. integral to the object
3. B4/BRM 0/3028	carved walrus skull	runes along one side of the skull, placed in between deep ornamental grooves; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
4. B5=N630/BRM 0/9241	wooden cross arm	runes on one side; secondary writing, integral to the object
5. B6=N642/BRM 0/7529	wooden cross	runes on one side, on both parts of the cross; secondary writing, integral to the object
6. B7=N622/BRM 0/9242	circular base of wooden stave-tankard (partly damaged)	double-contoured runes on the inside of the base, tops missing; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
7. B8/BRM 0/4450	fragment (upper part) of leather shoe	right shoe; double-contoured (decorative) embroidered runes; secondary writing

3. For information on the archaeological dating of the items (and on the content of their inscriptions), see the databases and publications listed among the sources in the article “Runic Sticks and Other Inscribed Objects from Medieval Bergen: Challenges and Possibilities”. Over the past years, work has been carried out on updating and corroborating the dating of the objects in connection with archaeological projects at the University Museum of Bergen. The dating of the Bryggen runic corpus has also been assessed by Professor Emeritus James E. Knirk, then at the Oslo Runic Archives.

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

Signum/Accession NO.	Type of item	Additional info ³
8. B9/BRM 0/8445	small wooden cup or ladle	bird-shaped; cryptic and ordinary runes on the bottom, upside down in relation to each other; secondary and/or tertiary writing
9. B26/BRM 0/10006?	shaft/handle of some implement (possibly knife)	material uncertain, most likely wood (some sources register bone); runes on three sides of the shaft, recording versions of <i>fupork</i> , on one side double-contoured; secondary or tertiary writing
10. B35/BRM 0/10554?	long wooden staff (c. 59 cm) with small head or handle	previously suggested function as measuring stick or rod uncertain; <i>fupork</i> -rows on two flattened sides, cryptic runes on the small head; secondary or tertiary writing
11. B39/BRM 0/10667	wooden pin or needle, flat rectangular head and one pointed end	possible function as pin for dress or hair, etc.; runes on two sides of the head; secondary or tertiary writing, inscription may be seen as a piece of crude gossip or (male?) boasting
12. B45/BRM 0/11477?	broken wooden peg or end/handle of some implement	uncertain function; head and shaft partly preserved; runes scratched on one side; possibly tertiary writing
13. B48/BRM 0/11835?	broken round haft or staff, in two parts (now c. 47 cm long)	uncertain function; sequence of runes on one side; secondary or tertiary writing, but may have even functioned as a primary object of writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

Signum/Accession NO.	Type of item	Additional info ³
14. B62/BRM 0/12498	miniature wooden plane	miniature tool or toy; double-contoured runes on one side, upper parts missing, possibly caused by the shaping of the object; primary or secondary writing
15. B74/BRM 0/13775	fragment of wooden lid	inscription partly preserved, deeply incised runes placed inside curving lines; secondary writing, integral to the object
16. B75=N624/ BRM 0/13796	circular base of wooden stave-tankard (partly damaged)	runes on the inside of the base, placed in the middle; secondary or tertiary writing
17. B76/BRM 0/13946	circular base of wooden stave-tankard	runes on the outside of the base; secondary or tertiary writing
18. B79/BRM 0/14169	base of wooden stave-tankard (fragment)	sliver of wood that resembles a circular bottom piece of stave-tankard; parts of five runes visible on one side; secondary or tertiary writing
19. B81/BRM 0/14642	turned wooden bowl (in pieces)	deeply incised runes on the bottom; possibly secondary writing, integral to the object
20. B82/BRM 0/15049	wooden spatula	single runic signs and incised marks on both sides; one mark deeply incised; secondary and/or tertiary writing
21. B85=N621/ BRM 0/15301?	wooden pin, nail or tag(?), thick rectangular head and one sharply shaped pointed end	script-bearing item of uncertain function, previously suggested function as sausage stick not confirmed; runes on one side of the head; secondary or tertiary writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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22. B90/BRM 0/15912?	wooden pin or tag(?), flat rectangular head and one pointed end (broken), slightly curving	script-bearing item of uncertain function; previously suggested function as wooden nail not confirmed; one rune (f) on one side of the head; secondary or tertiary writing
23. B94/BRM 0/16181	stave of wooden vessel	runes on the inside of the stave; tertiary writing, possibly inscribed when the item was already broken/taken apart
24. B96/BRM 0/16219	circular base of wooden stave-tankard (three fragments)	one bigger fragment of circular shape, incised sign/personal mark on one of its sides; secondary or tertiary writing
25. B108/BRM 0/16945	turned wooden bowl or plate (small fragments)	one fragment displays two runes on the bottom, in between concentric lines; secondary or tertiary writing
26. B129/BRM 0/18093	fragment of animal bone	flat piece of bone; inscriptions on two sides; primary writing
27. B133/BRM 0/17379	fragment of carved stone (soapstone)	possibly part of (reused) grave cross; runes on one side; tertiary writing(?)
28. B134/BRM 0/18173?	wooden object of uncertain function, flat shaft and circular head (c. 30.7 cm long)	possibly cooking or baking utensil; traces of incised signs on the head and shaft; possibly tertiary writing
29. B143/BRM 0/18595	stave of wooden vessel, hole in one end	scratched signs of rune-like character on the outside; tertiary writing, possibly incised while in use
30. B147/BRM 0/18679	bottom part of turned wooden bowl (fragment)	upper parts of deeply incised runes visible on the bottom; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
31. B190/BRM 0/21425	fragment of animal bone	slightly curving rib-bone (according to the Oslo runic database Bos Taurus); inscribed on one side; primary writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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32. B228/ BRM 0/25604	fragment of pottery	rim fragment; runes scratched along the rim; probably tertiary writing
33. B231/BRM 0/25681?	shaped piece of wood, middle part heightened, with hole	uncertain function, possibly part of a small lid(?); incised signs (rune-like) on the bottom, partly damaged; secondary or tertiary writing
34. B240/BRM 0/26415	base of wooden stave-tankard (fragment with curving ends indicating circular shape)	partly damaged runic sign in the middle of one side; some incised lines on the other side; possibly combining secondary and tertiary writing/markings
35. B243/BRM 0/26900	base of wooden stave-tankard (fragment, one curving side indicating circular shape)	runes on both sides, partly damaged, seem to repeat an ownership formula; on one side a circular mark (accidental or intentional?); possibly combining secondary and tertiary writing
36. B249/BRM 0/27487?	long round staff (c. 50.5 cm) with small head or handle	script-bearing item of uncertain function; long (partly metrical) inscription; may have functioned as a primary object of writing
37. B250/BRM 0/28197	handle of pottery, broken	three runes cut onto one end; tertiary writing, inscribed when the item was not in use
38. B253/BRM 0/28524?	wooden block (nearly square), with notches	previously registered function as plug or bung uncertain; deeply incised runes of varying size on one side; possibly secondary writing, integral to the object
39. B264/BRM 0/29162?	wooden shaft, with round head and grip	previously suggested function as part of wooden toy sword uncertain; rune-like sign/personal mark on one side of the object; possibly tertiary writing
40. B274/BRM 0/29461	miniature carved wooden head	two parallel inscriptions on the back; secondary or tertiary writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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41. B276/BRM 0/29526	bottom part of wooden bowl (in pieces), possibly carved out of burl	upper parts of runes preserved under the bottom, deeply incised; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
42. B305/BRM 0/30649	small decorated wooden case	possibly needle case; runes under the bottom, together with some incised lines of decoration; sides covered with decorative elements; secondary or tertiary writing, runes not necessarily made as part of other carvings
43. B315/BRM 0/30913	piece of leather	double piece of leather, stitches along the edges; runes cut on one side; secondary or tertiary writing
44. B354/BRM 0/32033	round and curving wooden handle, ends broken	runes along the flat inner side, partly damaged; secondary or tertiary writing
45. B362/BRM 0/32303	bottom part of turned wooden bowl, with a distinct foot (fragmentary)	two deeply incised runes on the outside of the bottom, placed in the middle; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
46. B385/BRM 0/35283	head of pin, made of bone or antler	possibly used for dress or hair; previously registered function as spoon shaft not confirmed; inscription on one side, incised (decorative) lines on the other; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
47. B392/BRM 0/36360	handle of some wooden vessel, with two rounded ends	inscriptions on two sides; possibly tertiary writing
48. B395/BRM 0/36917	bottom part of turned wooden bowl (in two pieces)	runes and cross on the inside of the bottom, placed within the area marked by circular lines; secondary or tertiary writing/markings
49. B400/BRM 0/37046	wooden utensil, shaped like (half of) spade	possibly for skimming and stirring cheese; runes on one side, placed in between the shaft and the blade, tops of runes damaged; secondary or tertiary writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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50. B405/BRM 0/37277?	long rounded wooden staff (c. 64.5 cm), with one wider part	script-bearing item of uncertain function, resembles cue stick/baking stick; two sequences of runes on the wider part of the object, upside down in relation to each other; secondary or tertiary writing
51. B422/BRM 0/37957	turned wooden bowl (in several pieces)	deeply incised runes on the outside of the bottom, one cross mark on the inside; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
52. B423/BRM 0/38244	wooden whistle	inscription on the upper part of the object, clearly cut; secondary writing, integral to the object
53. B447/BRM 0/42000?	irregular wooden stock (c. 42.8 cm long), with a round plug that goes through one (wider) end	uncertain function, possibly a construction detail; runes along different sides, possibly tertiary writing
54. B453/BRM 0/42375	upper part of leather shoe	runes embroidered on the upper part; secondary writing, integral to the object
55. B466/BRM 0/43163	decorated wooden knife	runes on the back of the shaft, carved ornamentation on wide sides; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
56. B483/BRM 0/44851	fragment of whale bone	irregular piece; two runic signs and some additional lines scratched on one side; possibly functioned as an object of primary writing
57. B484/BRM 0/44995	pin/needle of bone or antler, with perforated head	possibly pin for dress or hair, etc.; signs of rune-like character next to the hole; probably tertiary writing
58. B490/BRM 0/46440	fragment of animal bone	piece of shoulder bone, according to the Oslo runic database sheep or goat; runes on one side; primary writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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59. B494/BRM 0/51203?	fragments of thick wooden circular disc or plate with handle	possibly baking utensil; runes in two lines on the same side of the item, the lower line appears bigger and more deeply cut; secondary or tertiary writing
60. B502/BRM 0/52560	fragment of animal bone	piece of rib-bone; runes or rune-like signs on one side; primary writing
61. B512/BRM 0/54086?	wooden implement of unknown function, one end wider and thicker, with a small handle, hole reaches through the item	previously suggested function as scabbard or sheath uncertain; runes on one side, along the wider end, decorative band around the same end; secondary or tertiary writing
62. B517/BRM 0/58575	turned wooden bowl or plate (numerous small fragments)	signs of rune-like character under the bottom of one piece; secondary or tertiary writing
63. B521/BRM 0/60182	bottom part of turned wooden bowl or plate (fragment)	runes on the outside of the bottom, big and deeply cut; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
64. B526/BRM 0/61423?	wooden nail/peg(?), big square head	incised line runs around the head; runes scratched on the narrower part (shaft) of the item; probably tertiary writing
65. B540/BRM 0/64079	bottom part of wooden bowl (fragment)	runes on the inside of the bottom; on the outside decorative carving consisting of circular and radial lines; probably secondary writing/markings, integral to the object
66. B541=N638/BRM 0/65550	strip of lead	personal amulet; covered with lines of runes; secondary writing
67. B544=N635/BRM 0/68384	golden finger-ring	inscription that mixes runes and roman letters; secondary writing
68. B545/BRM 3/809	circular base of wooden stave-tankard (damaged)	various signs, personal marks on both sides; probably tertiary writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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69. B552/BRM 0/73214	wooden washing paddle	runes along the shaft; secondary or tertiary writing
70. B554/BRM 0/78670?	part of thick wooden puck or plug(?) with hole	object of uncertain function; sequence of runes on one side; secondary or tertiary writing
71. B557/BRM 0/81381	miniature wooden sword	possibly toy sword; runes on one side, along the blade; secondary or tertiary writing
72. B565/BRM 0/84763?	rectangular wooden item of unknown function, with elongated hole	runes on one of its broad faces, placed next to the hole, runes go across the surface; secondary or tertiary writing
73. B572/BRM 0/83953	inscribed stone	inscription on one side, repeated carver formula; traces of cross; secondary writing
74. B573=N626/BRM 0/1244	circular base of wooden stave-tankard	runes on the inside of the base, their sizes follow the contours of the surface; on the outside some lines/rune-like signs; probably secondary writing, integral to the object (made before the item was put together)
75. B574/ BRM 0/4115	base of wooden stave-tankard (fragment with curving ends indicates circular shape)	signs/marks on both sides; some of rune-like character; secondary or tertiary writing
76. B575/BRM 0/5691	base of wooden stave-tankard, (fragments with curving ends indicate circular shape)	signs/marks on both sides; some of rune-like character, some with double-contoured lines; secondary and/or tertiary writing/markings
77. B576/BRM 0/6037	circular base of wooden stave-tankard (fragment)	double-contoured runes on one side, lower parts missing; possibly secondary writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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78. B577=N623/ BRM 0/23851	circular base of wooden stave-tankard	runes on the inside of the base; on the outside some other signs (runes or letters); secondary and/or tertiary writing
79. B578/BRM 0/24928	base of wooden stave-tankard, (fragment with curving ends indicates circular shape)	rune-like signs or personal marks on both sides; secondary or tertiary writing
80. B579/BRM 0/95076	wooden post, building timber	now lost (?); possibly tertiary writing
81. B580/BRM 83/4135	base of wooden stave-tankard (small strip with curving ends indicates circular shape)	parts of runes on the inside of the base; secondary or tertiary writing
82. B581/BRM 83/4234	base of small turned wooden bowl (or some other vessel)	deeply cut runes/rune-like signs on the outside of the base, placed in the middle; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
83. B587/BRM 83/5180	fragment of animal bone	piece of bone; runes on one side; primary writing
84. B589/BRM 83/6013?	wooden pin, nail or tag(?), square head and one pointed end	script-bearing item of uncertain function; runes on one side of the head; secondary or tertiary writing
85. B590/BRM 83/6118	stave of wooden barrel, one end broken	runes on the inside; secondary or tertiary writing
86. B605/BRM 0/52927	parts of leather shoe	left shoe; double-contoured runes embroidered on the upper part; secondary writing, integral to the object
87. B606/BRM 0/78137	parts of leather shoe	double-contoured runes embroidered on the upper part; secondary writing, integral to the object

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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88. B612/BRM 0/6815?	wooden item of unknown function, one pointed end (broken), big rectangular head with notches	previously suggested function as wooden nail/peg not confirmed; may have formed an end part of some implement; runes on two sides of the head; possibly tertiary writing
89. B613/BRM 76/11744	base of wooden stave-tankard (fragment with curving ends indicates circular shape)	runes on the outside of the base; secondary or tertiary writing
90. B614/BRM 76/6200	carved animal head of wood	runes on one side, partly readable; possibly tertiary writing
91. B618/BRM 76/8102?	wooden item of unknown function, narrow shaft and wider, rectangular part with hole	parts of runes/rune-like signs by the broken end of the shaft; some other marks and incisions on the shaft and the wide part (used for counting or measuring?); possibly tertiary writing
92. B621/BRM 110/1230?	circular wooden disc, resembles a small bung	object of uncertain function, possibly base of small wooden vessel; runes on one side; secondary or tertiary writing
93. B627/BRM 110/3415	thick oval piece of lead	personal amulet; runes on one side; secondary writing
94. B632/BRM 0/6802?	wooden pin, nail or tag(?), small head and one pointed end	script-bearing item of uncertain function; runes on one side of the head; secondary or tertiary writing
95. B635/BRM 0/22759	bottom part of (turned?) wooden bowl, with a distinct foot (fragmentary)	runes under the bottom; placed in the middle; probably secondary writing, integral to the object

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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96. B637/BRM 0/54158	bottom part of turned wooden bowl, with a distinct foot (fragmentary)	deeply cut runes under the bottom; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
97. B646/BRM 76/12886	miniature wooden cross-shaped stick	personal amulet; runes on two sides; secondary writing, integral to the object
98. B650/BRM 83/6210	timber for boat (c. 97.5 cm long piece)	deeply cut runes on one side; secondary or tertiary writing
99. B651/BRM 86/426	weaving baton of bone	runes on one side; placed by the end of the shaft; secondary or tertiary writing
100. B653/BRM 115/3	wooden shaft of unknown object, broken	two runes on the round end of the shaft; secondary or tertiary writing
101. B654/BRM 0/21542	part of leather shoe	double-contoured runes embroidered on the upper part; secondary writing, integral to the object
102. B655/BRM 0/57189?	part of wooden shaft of uncertain function(?)	according to the Oslo runic database possibly shaft of bismar scales or some measuring implement; inscription in roman letters; secondary or tertiary writing
103. B656/BRM 0/74605	part of wooden spatula with small shaft	double-contoured runes/ornamental marks on one side; some lines and marks on the other side; possibly secondary and tertiary writing
104. B657/BRM 0/87107	circular base of wooden stave-tankard(?) or some other vessel	runes on the inside of the base; secondary or tertiary writing
105. B658/BRM 237/1518	small whetstone (needle hone), natural rock	runes on the narrow sides of the stone; secondary or tertiary writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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106. B661/BRM 342/81	head of broken pin/needle or small amulet of bone	possible function as pin for dress/hair or personal amulet; runes on one side, ornamentation on the other; probably secondary writing, integral to the object
107. B662/BRM 0/16253	(loom) weight of stone, with hole	single rune (f) on one side, cross mark on the other side; secondary or tertiary writing
108. B663/BRM 0/77726	upper part of leather shoe	double-contoured runes embroidered on the upper part; secondary writing, integral to the object
109. B664/BRM 76/4706	small square lead plate	personal amulet; runes on both sides; secondary writing
110. B667/BRM 346/2665	circular base of wooden stave-tankard or small lid (fragment)	similar runic sign/personal mark on both sides; possibly secondary writing
111. B670/BRM 0/93321	wooden stock, part of well	roughly cut rune-like signs of big size; possibly tertiary marking(?), may not be intentional writing
112. B671/BRM 0/73291	wooden plank, part of well	runes of varying height on one side; secondary or tertiary writing
113. B672/BRM 0/45745	oil lamp of sandstone, with handle	runes (cryptic runes) on the handle; secondary or tertiary writing
114. N288/B6029a	decorated gaming piece of whale bone	runes scratched on the flat bottom side; probably tertiary writing
115. N290/B7097b	decorated comb of bone, with shaft	inscriptions on two sides of the shaft; secondary or tertiary writing (runes are carved more thinly than the lines of ornamentation, could be later addition)
116. N291/B7097d	wooden knife, with shaped blade and small shaft	inscriptions on two sides of the shaft; possibly secondary writing

SURVEY OF MEDIEVAL INSCRIBED OBJECTS FROM BERGEN

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117. N292/B7097e	carved small wooden plane	runes by one end of the plane; secondary or tertiary writing
118. BRM 346/4200	small spindle whorl of stone	crosses and script-like marks on the flat bottom side; secondary or tertiary writing/markings
119. BRM 0/27301	decorated comb of bone or antler	rune-like sign/personal mark and other lines on one side; probably tertiary writing
120. BRM 0/3097	decorated comb of bone or antler	runes and traces of runes on both sides; secondary or tertiary writing
121. BRM 1157/2330	wooden lid, reworked, rectangular hole in the middle	two identifiable runes on one side, partly damaged due to the hole; possibly tertiary writing
122. MA214	golden finger-ring	roman-script inscription on the outside (supplication addressing Maria); one bind-rune on the inside: auæ ; secondary and tertiary writing, bind-rune may be a later addition