

Madame Blavatsky on Irish Talismans



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The best talisman is harmless and unconditional brotherhood in thought and deed, coupled with non-resistance to evil. Real protection comes from merit and virtue, not from stones.

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I shall feel highly obliged if you will kindly insert in the columns of *The Theosophist* the meanings and history of the two following names:

1 Runic; and 2, *Arne Saknussemm*.

I guess the meaning of the first to be the name of a language. Of the second the name of a professor or a learned man of the sixteenth century, a great alchemist of the day.

I want a regular history of the second expression.

“A JUNIOR STUDENT”

Trevandrum, April 8th, 1883



“A Junior Student” makes a right guess in one instance. There is not much mystery in the adjective “runic,” though its noun “Rune” of *Rūn* (an Anglo-Saxon word) stood in days of old for “mystery,” and related to magical letters — as any *Encyclopaedia* might have told him. The word runic relates both to the language and the peculiar alphabet of the ancient Norsemen; and “runes” was the name used to indicate the sixteen letters or characters of which the latter was composed. It is of the remotest antiquity, and the few ones who were acquainted with the use of those [541] peculiar marks some old stones bearing yet inscriptions in the Runic character — were considered as great enchanters and magicians, until the *runes* began to be used in communication by writing and thus — their sacred and mystic character was lost by becoming vulgarized. Nevertheless, in some Occult books it is distinctly stated that those letters received in their subsequent usage a significance quite distinct from the original one, the latter remaining to this day a mystery and a secret with which the initiated descendants of the Norsemen will not part. The various talismans and charms used occasionally by the modern so-called “wizards” and “witches” in Ireland — supposed to have inherited the secret science of old — are covered generally with

runic marks and may be easily deciphered by those students to whom no ancient mystery is one, they studying Occultism in its general or universal aspect.

As to the other word or rather name of which “Junior Student” wants “a regular history” — it will be more difficult to satisfy him since no such name is to be found either in the catalogue of mediaeval Alchemists and Rosicrucians, or in the long list of Occultists in general, since Apollonius of Tyana and down to the days of Éliphas Lévi.

It is most certainly not a European name, in its second — half at any rate; and if the name of Arne is to be occasionally met with, that of “Saknussemm” has an Egyptian rather than a Western ring in it. There was an “Arne” (Thomas Augustine), an English musical composer and the author of “Rule Britannia” in the eighteenth century, and two men of the name of Socinus, in the sixteenth and seventeenth. But these were no alchemists but great theologians, or rather we should say anti-theologians and infidels. Lælius Socinus,¹ the first, was the friend of both Melanchthon and Calvin, though he denied the fundamental doctrines of popular Christianity and made away with the Trinity. Then came Faustus Socinus,² his nephew, and a great sceptic, the *protégé* of F. de Medici, grand duke of Tuscany. This one openly maintained that the Trinity is a pagan doctrine; that Christ was a created and inferior being, and that there was neither personal God nor devil. [542] Having thus confessed our ignorance, we can suggest to “Junior Student” but one plan; and that is, to seek for his “Saknussemm” among the Egyptian deities. “Arne Baskenis” was the Greek name of Aroeris the elder Horus, “Sakanaka” is the mystical appellation of a great fire, which is mentioned in the hundred and sixty-fifth chapter of the Ritual of the Dead — and may have, perchance, something to do with the alchemist fire of Saknussemm. Then we have Sakasutu — the “Eldest-born of the Sun God,” one of the names of the planet Saturn in Chaldean Astronomy; and finally Samoulsamouken, the name of the rebel king of Babylon, the brother of Assurbanipal, king of Assyria. Having done our best, we can but advise our correspondent to let us know in what work he met with the name, as also his reasons for believing that “Saknussemm” was an alchemist, or a learned man of the sixteenth century.

H.P. BLAVATSKY



¹ [Lelio Francesco Maria Sozzini, or simply Lelio Sozzini, 1525–1562]

² [Fausto Paolo Sozzini, or simply Fausto Sozzini, 1539–1604]



The Funen bracteate (DR BR42 = DR IK58), found in Funen, Denmark. The runic inscription is read as: houaz laþu aaduaaaliia(a) or, alternatively, houaz / laþu aa duaaalii(a) / al(u). According to the display at the National Museum of Denmark, houaz is interpreted as “The High One,” a name of Odin.

Suggested reading for students.



She being dead, yet speaketh.

- BLAVATSKY ABOUT TO UNVEIL ISIS
- BLAVATSKY AGAINST ECCLESIASTICAL CHRISTIANITY
- BLAVATSKY AGAINST SPIRITUALISM
- BLAVATSKY CUTS DOWN TO SIZE A CARPING CRITIC OF HETERODOXY
- BLAVATSKY CUTS DOWN TO SIZE THE VENERABLE SWAMI OF ALMORA
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS BUDDHISM IN CEYLON
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS ISIS UNVEILED
- BLAVATSKY ENLIGHTENS HER READERS
- BLAVATSKY ENLIGHTENS THE SCEPTICS OF HER MOTHERLAND
- BLAVATSKY EXPELS A FRIEND OF COMMUNISTS
- BLAVATSKY HATED BALLS
- BLAVATSKY ON A CASE OF OBSESSION
- BLAVATSKY ON A HEAVY CURSE
- BLAVATSKY ON ANIMAL SOULS
- BLAVATSKY ON BULGARIAN SUN WORSHIP
- BLAVATSKY ON CHRISTMAS AND THE CHRISTMAS TREE
- BLAVATSKY ON ELEMENTALS AND ELEMENTARIES
- BLAVATSKY ON FOETICIDE BEING A CRIME AGAINST NATURE
- BLAVATSKY ON HINDU WIDOW-BURNING
- BLAVATSKY ON JESUITRY IN MASONRY
- BLAVATSKY ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND CELIBACY
- BLAVATSKY ON NEBO OF BIRS-NIMRUD
- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT ALPHABETS AND NUMERALS
- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT VIBRATIONS

BLAVATSKY SPEAKS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- BLAVATSKY ON OLD AGE
- BLAVATSKY ON OLD DOCTRINES VINDICATED BY NEW PROPHETS
- BLAVATSKY ON PLATO'S TIMÆUS
- BLAVATSKY ON PROGRESS AND CULTURE
- BLAVATSKY ON RELIGIOUS DEFORMITIES
- BLAVATSKY ON RITUALISM IN CHURCH AND MASONRY
- BLAVATSKY ON SHAMBHALA, THE HAPPY LAND
- BLAVATSKY ON SPINOZA AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS
- BLAVATSKY ON SUNDAY DEVOTION TO PLEASURE
- BLAVATSKY ON TEACHINGS OF ELIPHAS LEVI
- BLAVATSKY ON THE BOOGEYMEN OF SCIENCE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE BOOK OF ENOCH
- BLAVATSKY ON THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN INDIA
- BLAVATSKY ON THE DOOMED DESTINY OF THE ROMANOVs
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ELUCIDATION OF LONG-STANDING ENIGMAS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE HARMONICS OF SMELL
- BLAVATSKY ON THE HIDDEN ESOTERICISM OF THE BIBLE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE HISTORY AND TRIBULATIONS OF THE ZOHAR
- BLAVATSKY ON THE INTROVERSION OF MENTAL VISION
- BLAVATSKY ON THE KEY TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE KNIGHTED OXFORD SANSKRITIST WHO COULD SPEAK NO SANSKRIT
- BLAVATSKY ON THE LETTERS OF LAVATER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE LUMINOUS CIRCLE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE MODERN NEGATORS OF ANCIENT SCIENCE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE MONSOON
- BLAVATSKY ON THE NEW YEAR AND FALSE NOSES
- BLAVATSKY ON THE NEW YEAR'S MORROW
- BLAVATSKY ON THE QABBALAH BY ISAAC MYER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE QUENCHLESS LAMPS OF ALCHEMY
- BLAVATSKY ON THE RATIONALE OF FASTS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ROOTS OF ZOROASTRIANISM

BLAVATSKY SPEAKS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- BLAVATSKY ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE TEACHINGS OF ELIPHAS LEVI
- BLAVATSKY ON THE VISHISHTADVAITA PHILOSOPHY
- BLAVATSKY ON THEOSOPHY AND ASCETICISM
- BLAVATSKY ON WHETHER THE RISHIS EXIST TODAY
- BLAVATSKY REBUTS UNSPIRITUAL CONCEPTIONS ABOUT GOD
- BLAVATSKY UNMASKS THE TRINITY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
- BLAVATSKY'S LAST WORDS
- BLAVATSKY'S OPEN LETTER TO HER CORRESPONDENTS
- GEMS FROM THE EAST
- INDUCTIVE REASONING LEADS TO FAKE DEDUCTIONS
- MADAME BLAVATSKY ENLIGHTENS THE SCEPTICS OF HER MOTHERLAND
- MADAME BLAVATSKY ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL MIND OF THE CHINESE
- OBITUARY TO MIKHAIL NIKIFOROVICH KATKOV
- OBITUARY TO PUNDIT DAYANAND SARASWATI
- OCCULT PHILOSOPHY IS ANCIENT SPIRITUALISM
- OPEN LETTER TO THE AMERICAN SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
- OPEN LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
- OPEN LETTERS TO THE AMERICAN CONVENTION
- PAGES FROM ISIS UNVEILED
- PAGES FROM THE CAVES AND JUNGLES OF HINDOSTAN
- PAGES FROM THE SECRET DOCTRINE 1 - ABRIDGED
- PAGES FROM THE SECRET DOCTRINE 2 - FULL TEXT
- PANTHEISTIC THEOSOPHY IS IRRECONCILABLE WITH ROMAN CATHOLICISM
- ROSICRUCIANISM WAS AN OFFSHOOT OF ORIENTAL OCCULTISM
- ROSICRUCIANS EMERGED AS AN ANTIDOTE TO THE MATERIAL SIDE OF ALCHEMY
- THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS FAR MORE DREADED BY THE DEVIL THAN BY GOD HIMSELF
- THE HERMETIC FIRE OF THE MIND IS THE KEY TO THE OCCULT SCIENCES
- THE REAL MEANING OF THE FIRST LINE OF GENESIS
- THE SECRET DOCTRINE (1888) VOL. 1 OF 2 ON COSMOGENESIS
- THE SECRET DOCTRINE (1888) VOL. 2 OF 2 ON ANTHROPOGENESIS

BLAVATSKY SPEAKS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- THOTH IS THE EQUIVALENT OF HERMES AND MOSES
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON CRITICISM AND AUTHORITIES
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON THE EIGHTH WONDER
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON THE MORNING STAR
- WE ARE MORE OFTEN VICTIMS OF WORDS RATHER THAN OF FACTS
- WITHOUT THE REVIVAL OF ARYAN PHILOSOPHY, THE WEST WILL FALL TO EVEN GROSSER MATERIALISM

