

# An index of Tolkien's English Runes

By Per Lindberg  
Sept 2014

This is an attempt to index all authorial specimina of Tolkien's use of English runes, especially for use in The Hobbit. This index may be called DRS (Daeron Rune Specimina) in accordance with the DCS and DTS (Daeron Certh and Tengwar Specimina, q.v. at [http://www.forodrim.org/daeron/md\\_home.html](http://www.forodrim.org/daeron/md_home.html)). This index has been compiled with the help of Mellonath Daeron. Thanks also to Damien Bador of Tolkiendil for spotting several less obvious specimina.

References are in many cases structural, thus avoiding confusion caused by pagination of different editions. These abbreviations are used:

H	The Hobbit
L	Letters of Tolkien
HH1	History of the Hobbit, vol 1 (of the 1 <sup>st</sup> ed)
HH2	History of the Hobbit, vol 2 (of the 1 <sup>st</sup> ed)
RS	Return of the Shadow
TI	The Treason of Isengard
AH	Art of the Hobbit

Daeron Rune Specimina
<b>DRS 1 - The Foreword Title</b> Reference: H foreword Characters: 26 Description: The title of the foreword, written in runes.
<b>DRS 2 - The Foreword Quotations</b> Reference: H Foreword Characters: 139 Description: Quotes from Thror's map (side door explanation and moon-runes) and explanation of some runes, especially for letters not present on the map.
<b>DRS 3 - Thror's Map Explanation</b> Reference: H Thror's map Characters: 38 Description: Runic text on the map, explaining details about the secret door, with the added signatures of Thror and Thrain.
<b>DRS 4 - Thror's Map Secret Door Mark</b> Reference: H Thror's map Characters: 1 Description: a D rune marking the secret door on the Lonely Mountain
<b>DRS 5 - Thror's Map Compass Points</b> Reference: H Thror's map Characters: 4 Description: runes marking the compass points (E S W N)

<p><b>DRS 6 - Thor's Map Moon Runes</b>  Reference: H Thror's map  Characters: 97  Description: rendition of the invisible runes that could only be seen in moonlight during certain conditions</p>
<p><b>DRS 7 - The Farrer Card</b>  Reference: L 112  Characters: 574  Description: a postcard to Katherine Farrer. A transcription is available in the endnotes.</p>
<p><b>DRS 8 - Allen &amp; Unwin Dust Jacket Runes</b>  Reference: H Dust Cover (A&amp;U ed.), AH plate 101  characters: 148  Description: a full (lengthy) title of the book, with the author and publisher's name.</p>
<p><b>DRS 9 - Houghton Mifflin Dust Jacket Runes</b>  Reference: H Dust Cover (HM ed.)  Characters: 147  Description: Same as DRS 8, a full (lengthy) title of the book, with the author and publisher's name changed to "HOUGHTON MIFFLIN AND CO". According to The Annotated Hobbit, Appendix B, it is not known if Tolkien himself updated these runes.</p>
<p><b>DRS 10 - Longmans Greens Dust Jacket Runes</b>  Reference: H Dust Cover (LG ed.)  Characters: 70  Description: a full (somewhat shorter than DRS 8) title of the book, with the publisher's name.</p>
<p><b>DRS 11 - Fimbulfambi's Map Explanation</b>  Reference: HH1 frontispiece, AH Intro map ill.  Characters: 29  Description: a different text than DRS3: FANG THE SECRET PASAGE OF THE DWARVES.</p>
<p><b>DRS 12 - Fimbulfambi's Map Secret Door Mark</b>  Reference: HH1 frontispiece, AH Intro map ill.  Characters: 1  Description: a rune marking the secret door on the Lonely Mountain (different from the rune in DRS 4)</p>
<p><b>DRS 13 - Thror's Map I Explanation</b>  Reference: HH1 Plate I  Characters: 38  Description: Runic text on the map, explaining details about the secret door. See also DRS 3.</p>
<p><b>DRS 14 - Thor's Map I Compass Points</b>  Reference: HH1 Plate I  Characters: 4  Description: runes marking the compass points (N E S W)</p>
<p><b>DRS 15 - Gandalf's Letter, First Phase Version A</b>  Reference: RS p154  Characters: 7  Description: The letter from Gandalf to Bingo (Frodo) at the Prancing Pony, with runes for "GANDALF" in the signature. Also, a peculiar rune-like symbol (rune "G" with a diamond-shaped box) for Gandalf's sign, occuring after the signature and on the outside of the letter.</p>

<p><b>DRS 16 - Gandalf's Letter, First Phase Version B</b>  Reference: RS p158  Characters: 7  Description: Similar to DRS 15. Gandalf's peculiar sign (see DRS 15) also occurs on RS p156.</p>
<p><b>DRS 17 - Gandalf's and Bilbo's Stone-marking, First Phase</b>  Reference: RS p194  Characters: 2  Description: The two runic letters G and B in a circle, inscribed on a stone marking the place where they hid the trolls's gold.</p>
<p><b>DRS 18 - Gandalf's Sign on the Fireworks, Second Phase</b>  Reference: RS p235  Characters: 1  Description: Gandalf's peculiar sign (see DRS 15) on the fireworks bundles.</p>
<p><b>DRS 19 - Galadriel's Rune on Sam's Box</b>  Reference: TI p274  Characters: 2  Description: A flowering G-rune on Galadriel's gift-box to Sam. Also another, purely formal elaboration of the rune on the following manuscript page.</p>
<p><b>DRS 20 - Saruman's Sign on the Orc Caps</b>  Reference: TI p382  Characters: 1  Description: An S-rune (for Saruman) on the front of the orc's caps at Amon Hen.</p>
<p><b>DRS 21 - Saruman's Sign on the Orc Caps, Fair Copy Manuscript</b>  Reference: TI p387, note 5  Characters: 1  Description: An S-rune (for Saruman) on the front of the orc's leathern caps at Amon Hen. The rune is not depicted, but described in detail; it has wavy lines.</p>
<p><b>DRS 22 - Balin's Tomb Inscription, Initial Draft</b>  Reference: TI p456  Characters: ?  Description: The runic inscription on Balin's Tomb in Moria was initially written in Old English runes, but then at once rewritten in the "Runes of Beleriand", i.e. <i>cirth</i>. The actual manuscript is not shown, however. CJRT only reproduces the latter versions on Plate V (p 464).</p>
<p><b>DRS 23 - Saruman's Sign on the Stone Head</b>  Reference: WR p138, note 5  Characters: 1  Description: The Old English S-rune, struck out, before the words "The red eye", describing the struck-off stone head at the crossroads in Ithilien (see p. 132). Cf. DRS 20-21. The actual manuscript is not shown, however.</p>
<p><b>DRS 24 – Thror's Map proof</b>  Reference: AH plate 29  Characters: 140  Description: An earlier version of Thror's Map, but very similar to the final (DRS 3-6, plate 28 in AH). The moon-runes use the "boxed" version of the D rune.</p>

**DRS 25 – Moon-lettes Sketch I**

Reference: AH plate 30

Characters: 98

Description: The text of the moon-runes in mirror-reverse “as Elrond saw them”. Also contains another phrase written in *Cirth*.

**DRS 26 – Moon-letters Sketch II**

Reference: AH plate 31

Characters: 98

Description: A cleaner version of the moon-runes from DRS 25.

**DRS 27 – Moon-letters Sketch III**

Reference: AH plate 32

Characters: 98

Description: A yet cleaner version of the moon-runes from DRS 26, now in outline. Titled “The MoonRunes”.

**DRS 28 – Moon-letters Sketch IV**

Reference: AH plate 33

Characters: 98

Description: The final draft of the moon-runes from DRS 27, now no longer in mirror-reverse. Titled “These are the Moon Runes seen by Elrond”.

**DRS 29 – Runic Alphabet**

Reference: HH 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Addendum (v), Ad.Ms.H.S.4

Characters: 32 + 35 in the text and notes

Description: Tolkien’s own chart for the “Runes used by Thorin & Co.”, with explanatory text. The runes are given names in modern English. There are, however, some differences with how the runes are actually used in The Hobbit (q.v. the paper on *Tolkien’s English Runes* by this author).

There is also an accompanying similar ms (Ad.Ms.H.S.5) published in HH 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. which shows “Anglo-Saxon Runes”. It is not indexed here. The runes used by Thorin & Co. are said to be “very like, but not the same as the Anglo-Saxon Runes”. Note TN4 also mentions two other similar chars of Anglo-Saxon Runes; Ad.Ms.H.S.1 & 3.

**DRS 30 – Gandalf’s Mark on Bilbo’s Door**

Reference: AH plate 3

Characters: 3

Description: The runes that Gandalf wrote on Bilbo’s door to guide the dwarves. Consists of a B-rune, a D-rune and a rune that is not seen elsewhere.

**DRS 31 – Aunt Jane’s Runic Alphabet**

Reference: *Literature and Illustration, Including the Library of Neville L. Fakes, CBE.*

Catalog for auction L02303. London: Sotheby’s, 2002. Lot 781.

Characters: 27

Description: A “manuscript with the runic alphabet” page inserted in a copy of *The Hobbit* with dedication to Tolkien’s aunt Jane, offered for sale by Sotheby’s. A fairly complete Anglo-Saxon rune alphabet, with the Anglo-saxon names (and modern English translations) and sound values.

**DRS 32 -- The Davis Inscription**

Reference: *A History of Merton College, Oxford* by G.H. Martin and J.R.L. Highfield (Oxford: OUP, 1997), ill. 42.

Characters: 28

Description: Beneath the dedication "Norman Davis from J.R.R. Tolkien" on the flyleaf of a copy of *The Hobbit*, this inscription says: BEST WI[SH]ES FROM [TH]ORIN AND KOMPANY.

