Read in 3 Minutes. Take Notes.

The runic alphabet is a set of letters made up of forms called runes. This writing system was used by various Germanic groups in central and northern Europe as early as 150 AD until about 1100 AD. The origins of this alphabet have remained unclear, but archaeological evidence shows that runes most likely developed independently of any other alphabet.

First, Germanic groups had little interaction with people from other parts of Europe until around 700 AD, when the Romans conquered many parts of central Europe. Because people in central and northern Europe were culturally isolated from other groups, it's unlikely that the runic alphabet was based on a previous writing system.

Furthermore, according to the legends of some Germanic people, the alphabet was created by a mythological god called Odin. In one mythological text, Odin claims that the runes allow him to bring the dead back to life. The mythology of the Germanic groups was very different from the mythology in other parts of Europe, and the magical significance of the local alphabet within this mythology is also distinct. This implies that Germanic groups connected the runes to their unique mythology and traditions and not to writing systems from other groups.

Finally, many archaeologists note that the runic alphabet lacks similarities to any other alphabet that existed before or at the same time as the runic system. Any similarities between the runic alphabet and other alphabets are most likely random or coincidental. This makes it difficult to verify that the runic alphabet is a variant of an earlier alphabet.

Source: Collins