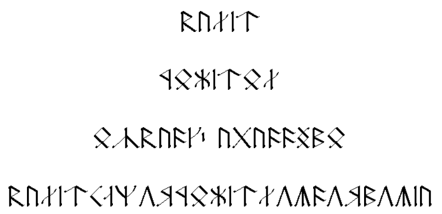
Their feet disturbed a deep dust upon the floor, and stumbled among things lying in the doorway whose shapes they could not at first make out. The chamber was lit by a wide shaft high in the further eastern wall; it slanted upwards and, far above, a small square patch of blue sky could be seen. The light of the shaft fell directly on a table in the middle of the room : a single oblong block, about two feet high, upon which was laid a great slab of white stone.

“It looks like a tomb”, muttered Frodo, and bent fowards with a curious sense of forboding, to look more closely at it. Gandalf came quickly to his side. On the slab runes were deeply graven :



“These are Dæron’s Runes, such as were used of old in Moria”, said Gandalf,“Here is written in the tongues of Men and Dwarves :

BALIN SON OF FUNDIN
LORD OF MORIA.”

“He is dead then,” said Frodo, “I feared it was so.” Gimli cast his hood over his face.

“Lord of the Rings” II.4 ‘A Journey in the Dark’