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## The Dziedzice inscription and West Germanic rhotacism

**Bernard Mees**

University of Tasmania  
bernardmees@icloud.com

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The inscription discovered in 1931 on the remains of a cinerary urn near Sedschütz, Upper Silesia, was at first proposed to be runic. Later analysed as a Germanic text written in Roman characters, the long-obscure Iron Age inscription has only recently been republished after being moved from the museum where it was originally conserved. Presumably executed by a member of the Buri, the early Germano-Roman text is only partially preserved and appears to feature key evidence for the early dialectal development of Germanic. Contemporary with the period of the Marcomannic Wars, its single interpretable lexical element seems to contain the earliest evidence for West Germanic rhotacism.

**Keywords:** inscriptions, Przeworsk culture, Germanic languages, rhotacism

In the first edition of his corpus of the older runic inscriptions, Wolfgang Krause (1937: no. 30) included a find uncovered in 1931 at Servitut (Serwitut), a hamlet near the Upper Silesian village then officially known as Sedschütz (cf. Krause 1934). First published in 1933 by the archaeologist Georg Raschke, the Sedschütz find was later declared by Helmut Arntz (1938: 45-46 and in Arntz & Zeiss 1939: 97-105) to be a Germanic inscription executed in Roman characters. It has generally been overlooked since that date by runologists, not appearing in the second edition of Krause's corpus from 1966 or any of the post-war runic grammars. This paper presents the first linguistic assessment of the Sedschütz inscription to have appeared since the 1930s, contextualising it in terms of other proximate continental finds.

The Sedschütz inscription is preserved on the fragments of a locally manufactured Przeworsk ceramic vessel (figure 1) excavated on the property of Anna Lazar by the museum preparator Otto Hanske (Raschke 1933: 344-48; 1934). The fragments were unearthed by Hanske from a cremation grave found three meters away from the site of a hoard of about 140 Roman denarii that had been discovered on Lazar's farm six months earlier. The coins were found in a ceramic pot and the most recent date to the reigns of Marcus Aurelius, Faustina the Younger and Lucius Verus – suggesting a date of deposition of c. AD 180 (Raschke 1932; Godłowski 1973: 324, Hellfeier 2014: 37-38). The grave that the inscribed fragments were found in included the remains of another ceramic

vessel, two spearheads, a dagger, a shield buckle and grip, two awls, a fire steel, a belt buckle, a strap end and a fibula, and the find was originally conserved in the prehistoric collection of the Ratibor Museum (Muzeum w Raciborzu).

Upper Silesia (Górny Śląsk) is now part of Poland and Sedschütz is officially called Dziedzice in Polish today. The urn inscription has also been republished recently in a survey of archaeological finds from Upper Silesia (Rodzińska-Nowak 2005) and by Robert Hellfeier (2014: 42-44) in his history of the neighbouring village of Smolarnia (Pechhütte) which Serwitut is associated with administratively now. Upper Silesia had been partitioned into German and Polish sections after a plebiscite in 1921 and the German part of Upper Silesia was subjected to Polonisation after it was annexed by Poland at the end of the Second World War (Linek 2001). Much of the surviving collection of the former state archaeological service in Ratibor was subsequently relocated to the Muzeum Śląska Opolskiego in Opole (Oppeln) and later to the Muzeum Górnośląskie in Bytom (Beuthen) which is where the Dziedzice urn fragments are now conserved (inventory number B.591/3844:58). Kazimierz Godłowski (1973: 324), Judyta Rodzińska-Nowak (2005) and Hellfeier (2014: 42-44) follow Krause in describing the Dziedzice inscription as runic, unaware that Arntz had explained the text as Germano-Roman.

Both Dziedzice and Smolarnia are villages in the Polish administrative district of Strzeleczy (Klein Strehlitz) in the province of Opole. They lie near the upper reaches of the Oder (Odra), to the north of the Moravian Gate, the site of one of the main Iron Age trade routes (the 'Amber Road') from the Mediterranean region into Northern Europe (Błażejowski 2011). The Dziedzice inscription is also remarkable as the warrior grave it was found in has been dated by the form of its fibula (Almgren type A 158) to the C1a period (c. AD 150/60-210/20), a similar date to the coin hoard (Godłowski 1973: 324; 1977: 38; Rodzińska-Nowak 2005). The Dziedzice find seems to stem from the same period as the earliest runic bog deposits and the pronounced militarisation of Northern society that occurred during the time of Marcus Aurelius's Marcomannic Wars of AD 167-80.

In the 1930s, the Dziedzice text was presumed to be a Vandalic manufacture. The Przeworsk archaeological culture of central and southern Poland is often identified with the Vandals and thought to have been linguistically East Germanic (Pohl 2004: 32-33). Silesia has traditionally been claimed to have been named after the Siling Vandals and during the 1930s German nationalists politicised this ancient identity (Korta 1986). But Polish archaeologists have long debated the ethnic identity of the bearers of Przeworsk culture (Andrzejowski 2010; Tomczak 2013; Domański 2017). Lower Silesia evidences a concentration of Jastorf culture finds in the late centuries BC and both Lower and Upper Silesia show so much late La Tène material influence they appear to have witnessed ethnically Celtic enclaves in the late pre-Roman period (Bochnak 2013). Indeed Dziedzice lies just north of the Głubczyce Plateau, the site of the La Tène settlement of Nowa Cerekwia (Rudnicki 2014). A last-century BC depopulation of the western part of the Przeworsk area is linked by Artur Błażejowski (2008: 146) with the invasion of Gaul by Ariovistus's (West Germanic) Suebi and evidence of influence from the Jastorf culture can be seen in most parts of the Przeworsk horizon (Grygiel 2015; Domański 2017). Błażejowski (2017) similarly details the evidence for growing Suebian (Marco-



Figure 1. Photograph of the Dziedzice (Serwitut) inscription  
(Witalis Szotyś, Muzeum Górnośląskie w Bytomiu)

mannic or Quadic) material influence in Lower Silesia in the first and second centuries AD, and in his close study of the Iron Age sites in the south eastern Opole Plain, Błażejowski (2015) argues that the part of Upper Silesia east of Dziedzice only seems to have been settled by bearers of the Przeworsk culture at the time of the Marcomannic wars when iron deposits and the manufacture of weaponry became of particular importance. Other than the lost Rozwadów inscription, however, the closest comparisons to the Dziedzice text are another inscription on a ceramic shard found in the 1980s some 175 km away further east at Jakuszowice, in the district of Kazimierza Wielka (Rodzińska-Nowak 1992), and a third Przeworsk text excavated a further 82 km northeast at Rudki in the district of Nowa Słupia (Czernek 2006).

The inscribed ceramic shard from Jakuszowice is one of c. 30,000 ceramic artefacts found at the Iron Age settlement. The settlement is associated with a Hunnic princely grave from the early fifth century, but many of the finds from Jakuszowice date back several centuries earlier (Rodzińska-Nowak 2016). The inscribed piece of greyware has been dated to the fourth century and its inscription is interpreted as the first two letters of a Roman abecedarium by Rodzińska-Nowak (1992). As can be seen from the illustration that accompanies her article (figure 2), however, the inscription must be held to run from right to left if it is to be transcribed as *ab*[. The letterforms also look to be inverted if read in this manner with the rounding of the counter making it look as if the engraver started at the bottom of the second character. The internal arm of the first

character is also quite irregular, starting much higher on the left stem than is regular for Latin letterforms. A more likely reading of the Jakuszowice inscription is *ub[* or perhaps even *ur[*, presumably the first syllable of the name of the potter.

A third inscribed Przeworsk find was uncovered in 1933-34 at Rudki, near Kielce, by a team of Polish archaeologists led by Stefan Krukowski, but it was not published until 2006. A fragment of a ceramic vessel that seems to have been made locally bears an inscription of five characters, not all of which are clearly legible. The inscription is read very doubtfully by Daniel Czernek (2006) as featuring a runic text **aa?iz** with the unexpected central character looking like the later star-like form of the *j*-rune (figure 3). The Rudki site is the remains of a prehistoric iron mine, with several Iron Age mining shafts clearly identified by the excavators. Among the finds of mining tools and wooden reinforcements, a fibula, a whetstone, animal bones and ceramic shards all dating to the B2 and C1 periods were recovered. The inscribed shard is conservatively dated by Czarnek to c. AD 200.

Czernek's interpretation of the Rudki inscription as runic is plausible – it is clearly not written in Roman letterforms and appears unlikely to represent mere decoration. But the final character read by Czernek as **z** appears to represent the expected nominative ending *-z* inherited from Proto-Germanic, not the reflex *-s* attested in Gothic. Vandalic names show clearly East Germanic features (Onesti 2013), but the difficult sequence **aa?iz** does not at first look to be East Germanic. Derolez (1987) explained the star-like form of the *j*-rune as having arisen from a ligature of **g** and **i** after the palatalisation of /g/ (to [j]) before /i/ occurred in West Germanic and early Danish. Yet *\*agiz* 'fear' does not seem as plausible an interpretation of an inscription found in an ancient mine as is *\*ajiz* 'bronze, ore', a term that is reflected in Gothic by *aiz* 'money' where the West Germanic reflexes such as Old English *ār* 'ore, brass, copper' and Old High German *ēr* 'ore' feature rhotacism of *z* > *r*. The final *-z* in Gothic *aiz* is unexpected, one of the exceptions to the general tendency in Gothic for final sibilants to lose their voicing in this position, but voicing is also recorded in the Gothic compound *aizasmīpa* 'coppersmith' and is clearly retained because it is part of the suffix of the Proto-Germanic neuter substantive *\*ajiza* 'bronze, copper, ore', a remade *s*-stem inherited from Indo-European (cf. Sanskrit *āyas*- 'metal, copper' and Latin *aes* 'ore').

Other inscriptions of Iron Age date found in Poland include the text on a sword discovered in 1888 at Grabice (Reichersdorf), Lower Silesia (Jentsch 1889: 344-50). Grabice lies near the German border, on the right bank of the Oder, and the inscription is clearly Latin, a manufacturer's stamp: *Natalis m(anu)* 'Natalis's h(andi)work' (*CIL* XIII 10036.84, Dąbrowski & Kolendo 1972: 64-65). The Grabice sword was buried bent in half and was found in a cremation grave along with a silver-plated scabbard mount decorated with a palmette, a shield boss, a spearhead, an axe-head, a pair of spurs, two belt buckles, three fibulas, a comb and some other personal effects. The third-century burial stems from the region of the Luboszyce culture that is traditionally associated with the Burgundians (Domański 1970). The sword and its inscription were clearly imported, however, unlike the Dziedzice urn.

A more famous import is the four-footed bronze folding altar found in 1886 in a princely grave at Sackrau, Lower Silesia (now Zakrzów in the northeast of Wrocław)

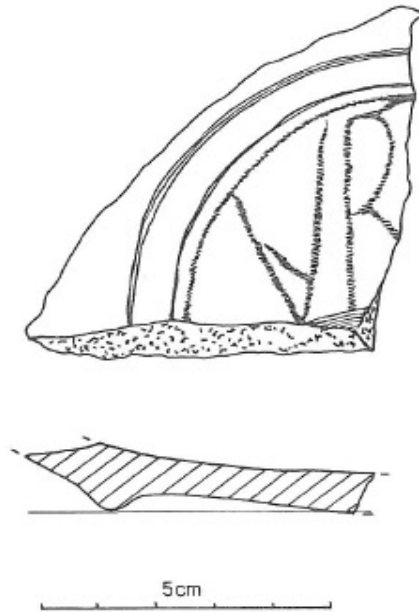


Figure 2. Sketch of the Jakuszowice inscription  
(Rodzińska-Nowak 1992: 211)

(Grempler 1887; Quast 2014). The altar dates from the late third century AD and although it was discovered broken up in one of the three chamber graves uncovered at the site, it has since been reassembled so that its rear legs stand 107.5 cm high. The altar is richly decorated, with its front legs featuring busts of maenads at the top, then satyrs, panthers, floral decoration and panther's paws at the bottom. The front legs feature the inscription *Num(en) Aug(usti)*, a dedication to the 'imperial godhead', twice (once below the maenad busts, a second time below the panthers), and the altar also features a name *Avitus*, clearly the signature of the craftsman who made the piece, stamped on the back hook at the top of one of the rear legs (*CIL* XIII 10036.90). Other finds from the Zakrzów grave included a silver vessel, a gold and silver fibula, a torc, armrings, belt buckles, ceramics, a bronze *patera* and a silver *skyphos* or two-handed drinking cup.

Further east, the oldest datable Latin inscription found in Poland was unearthed in 1962 from a male cremation grave in an Iron Age cemetery at Wesółki, near Kielce (Dąbrowski & Dąbrowski 1967). It is stamped into a sword that appears to have been buried sometime between c. 25/20 BC and AD 15/20. The text reads *Allius Pa(...)* and preserves an Italic family name *Allius* along with an abbreviated cognomen *Paetus*, *Paetinus*, *Pansa*, *Patricus* or the like (Dąbrowski 1970; Dąbrowski & Kolendo 1972: 62-64). The grave (number 20) held the charred remains of a man in his 30s or early 40s and the 82.5 cm long sword is clearly of Italian or provincial Roman origin. Lubomira Tysz-

ler (2016: 48) suggests that the Wesółki sword may have been made in Noricum as it is best paralleled otherwise only by Celtic imports.

Inscriptions are also found on the many coins that were circulating in the Przeworsk region at the time. The earliest inscription appears on a bronze coin of Philip II of Macedon discovered at the La Tène settlement of Nowa Cerekwa that features the minter's monogram AV on its reverse (Rudnicki 2014: 49). A fragment of an imitation of a tetradrachm of Philip II of Macedon also discovered at Nowa Cerekwa preserves the last two letters of [ΦΙΛΙΠΠ]ΟΥ 'Phillip's' (Rudnicki 2014: 48) and is an early Celtic or Getic imitation of Lower Danubian origin that was probably minted at the end of the fourth or in the first half of the third century BC (Preda 1973: 29-47). Other inscribed coins found in Upper Silesia dating more surely from the third century BC include a coin minted at Croton, Italy, that records the name of the river god ΑΙΣΑΡΟΣ and ΚΡΟΤΩΝΙΑΤΑΝ on its reverse, a coin of Hiero II of Sicily with its inscription ΙΕΡΟΝΟΣ and a coin of the Mamertines of Messana that bears the legend ΜΑΜΕΡΤΙΝΩΝ (Rudnicki 2014: 48). Roman coins begin to appear in Przeworsk contexts from the second century AD, however, and these even include imitation denarii that, unlike earlier copies of Boian coins found in the area, sometimes preserve Latin numismatic inscriptions more or less faithfully (Czerneck 2013). The earliest imitations date to the late or end of the second century and include examples such as a coin from a hoard found at Malkowice in Lesser Poland where the imperial style *Antoninus Aug(ustus) Pius* is written *Antoninus Au.ins* (Czerneck 2013: 147). Similar errors are found in other Przeworsk imitations of Roman coins, including a denarius imitation from Olchowiec, near Lublin, that renders *Aurelius Caesar Aug(usti) Pii F(ilius)* as *Aurelius Aufsra Pii F* (Czerneck 2013: 147-48). Comparable denarius imitations are also known from Gotland and Ukraine, a distribution that suggests they are Gothic manufactures (Lind 2018). But there are also some examples of higher-value coins that feature what seem likely to be linguistically Gothic texts. Two coins held by the Ossolineum in Wrocław (both of unclear provenance) feature East Germanic inscriptions, one (on an aureus of the Emperor Postumus) scratched in Greek letters, the other (on an imitation of an aureus of the Emperor Septimius Severus) in runes (Bursche 2013, Degler 2015; 2017; Mees 2018). Reading γΟΥΝΘ/ΙΟΥ 'Gunthios' (or perhaps 'Guttios') and [h]rustis 'ornament' respectively, these texts seem most likely to have been executed in the late third century AD in Wielbark or Chernyakhiv culture contexts.

Finally, there is the Rozwadów inscription, found in 1932 on an Iron Age spearhead unearthed in a suburb of the Polish industrial city of Stalowa Wola. Another funerary find, the Rozwadów spearhead was discovered in a cremation grave and has been dated most recently to the c. AD 150/160-210/220 period (Kaczanowski 1988). Silver-inlaid and preserved on a barbed type of spearhead, its text was rather fragmentary, but what could be made out by Marcyan Śmieszko (1936) of its dextroverse inscription was accepted by Krause (in Krause and Jankuhn 1966: no. 35) to be a runic text [---]krlϋs. The rune-inscribed spearhead has been missing since the Second World War, but two other spearheads were unearthed at Rozwadów along with the inscribed find as well as a belt buckle, spurs and the fragments of an urn (Paluch 2015). The somewhat corroded 24 cm long rune-inscribed piece also features several tamgas inlaid with silver (although much

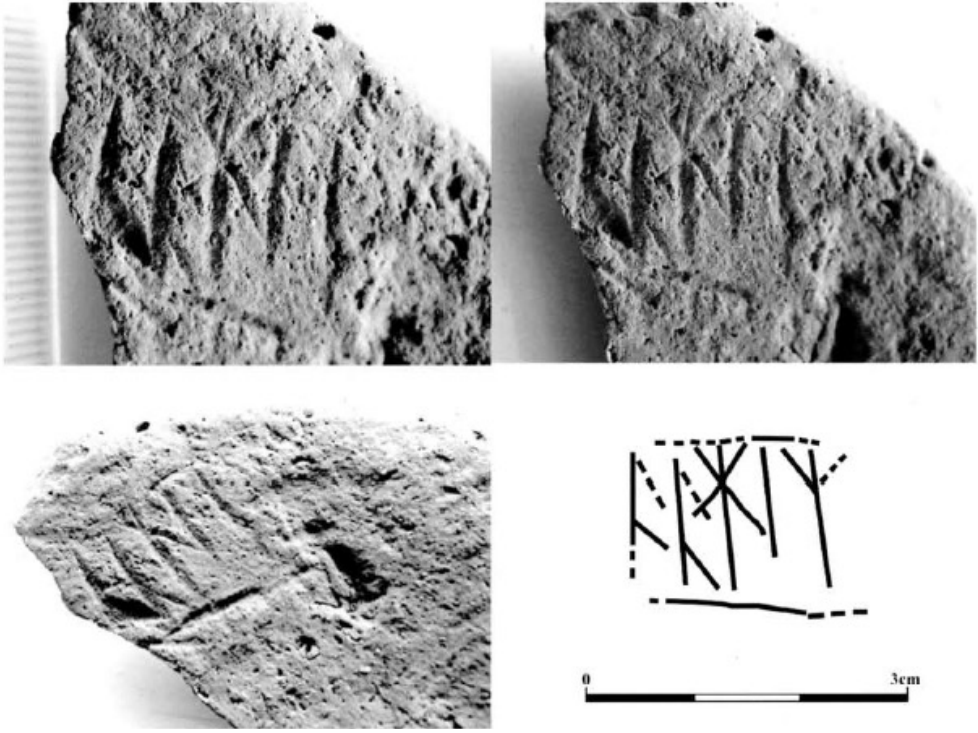


Figure 3. Photographs and sketch of the Rudki inscription (Czernek 2006: 96)

of the silver was destroyed by the incineration). The ending in *s* rather than *-z* is also typical of Gothic substantives and as Piotr Garbacz (2016) has most recently argued, the sequence looks much like a scrambled form of the common early runic sequence *[e]k erilaz*. What the Rozwadów sequence represents precisely, however, remains unclear.

The catalogue card in the Muzeum Górnośląskie indicates that the urn fragments from Dziedzice have been held in its archaeological department in Bytom since 1974. Much of the collection formerly conserved in Ratibor was evidently destroyed during the Second World War, yet Hellfeier's (2014: 42-44) transcription of the Dziedzice inscription is much the same as that produced by Krause, and separates the early Germanic text into eight 8-10 cm high letterforms. The inscription was applied before the urn was fired and the originally reddish yellow (now brown) local fabrication was evidently 33 cm in diameter before it fractured (Rodzińska-Nowak 2005). Almost a third of the cinerary urn was rescued and a total of six graves were eventually excavated from the Serwitut site. Godłowski (1973: 323) describes a series of additional finds not published by Raschke in the 1930s and Hellfeier (2014: 41, 45) reports that other discoveries made in the area during the 1940s and 50s remain unpublished.

The Dziedzice text clearly reads from left to right and preserves a series of often clearly rounded letterforms that can mostly be taken as runic or Roman. It had original-

ly been taken as an older runic inscription by Krause (1934; 1937: no. 30) who transliterated the Sedschütz text as **rīþ·b·hkbuļ**, but Arntz later interpreted the inscription as Germano-Roman after his archaeological collaborator Hans Zeiss had sought out August Oxé's opinion. Oxé was an expert on Roman pottery and read the Dziedzice inscription (working from an illustration) as R (or B) D.B.HVR (or B) DΛ (Arntz & Zeiss 1939: 102). Oxé took the fifth character of the Dziedzice inscription to be a Roman V (where Krause had implausibly read a **k** of the younger-runic type) and the second and seventh characters to be Roman D's. Krause had interpreted the second letterform as an irregular ligature of an *l*-rune with a *þ*-rune, but the lower part of the presumed ligature is separated from the upper by a crack and it is not at all clear that the two graphemes share a stem. Krause's ligature might better be taken as two separate characters: one ending an otherwise lost upper line of text (more lightly incised than the lower one) and the second more prominent character being part of a better-preserved lower line. Using the editorial conventions employed for Roman inscriptions, the best transcription of the Dziedzice text is: ]+ / ]rd·b·hurd+[.

Oxé's reading of the Dziedzice text is clearly more regular than Krause's interpretation of the inscription as an older runic find. The final letter is very doubtful (only a stem can be made out on the urn fragments today), but Arntz identified *hurd-* as an early cognate of Gothic *haurds* 'lattice door', Old Norse *hurð* 'door', Old Saxon *hurth* 'hurdle, wickerwork' and Old High German *hurt* 'hurdle, grate, railing' (< \**hurdiz* 'wickerwork door'; cf. Latin *cratis* 'wickerwork construction, hurdle'), and proposed that the term was originally written twice, separated by a preposition. He interpreted the Dziedzice inscription as [*hu*]rd *b(i)* *hurda*[*i*] 'braid by braid', a quite remarkable expression to find on an ancient cinerary urn. Arntz suggested that the (putative) reference to a braid could reflect an attempt to bind the deceased to the grave in line with the grave-magic theories of Arthur Nordén (1934) that were also championed by Krause (Arntz & Zeiss 1939: 104-5).

A key problem with Arntz's interpretation is his treatment of the punctuated third character, clearly a Roman or runic *b*. The missing vowel of *bi* 'by (means of)' was included by Arntz in his transcription as *b(i)*, with the apparent syncopation explained as being due to weak accentuation of the preposition. Yet if the presumed syncopation is not merely orthographic (i.e. due to abbreviation or error), how weak stress could explain the single letterform is not clear – vowels are not simply omitted when they appear in weakly stressed prepositions in either runic or Roman epigraphy. A more plausible explanation would be that the third character represents an abbreviation. Roman inscriptions often abbreviate the military title *beneficiarius* 'soldier seconded for special duties' in this manner (e.g. *M(arcus) Var(ius) Sroerus b(eneficiarius) co(n)s(ularis)*, *RIB* 235), and (unlike references to binding) onomastic texts are relatively common finds on cinerary urns.

If *·b·* represents an abbreviation, then the Dziedzice text could be Latin. The sequence *hurd-* is not obviously Latin and no clear grammatical endings are apparent (otherwise) in what remains of the inscription, but the name of the cremated was sometimes etched into cinerary urns in Roman times. The Latin indication *b(eneficiarius)* is commonly (but not always) specified by a further indication such as *co(n)s(ularis)* 'of the governor', however, and given the widespread abbreviation of names in Roman epigraphy, the *b* on



the Dziedzice urn could well stand for another, one-off abbreviation such as a name beginning with *b*. Family names (gentilicia) and nicknames (cognomina) can have their nominative endings omitted in Roman inscriptions (e.g. *Var[ius]*), but it is usually only Latin given names (praenomina) that are fully abbreviated (e.g. *M[arcus]*) and there is no evidence that there ever was a Latin praenomen that began with *B-*. But a text comparable to a Roman cinerary inscription may have been intended and Latin funerary texts are often widely abbreviated.

Typically, inscribed Roman cinerary urns bear simple two-part texts, including both the name of the deceased and that of the commissioner of the urn. Several thousand columbarium texts are recorded in the sixth volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and as Borbonus (2014) indicates many of them date to the period of the ‘epigraphic revolution’ of the first and second centuries AD when funerary epigraphy became particularly popular with the Roman middle classes. In columbaria, the inscriptions were often left on separate plaques (*tituli*), but their texts are of the same basic form as is found on cinerary urns. Longer inscriptions on Roman cinerary urns can include the initial sequence *Dis Manibus* ‘for the shades of the dead’ (often abbreviated just to *D·M*) and additional information can also be supplied, indicating, for example, how long the deceased had lived or preserving an explanation of what the relationship between the dead and the commissioner was. A relatively simple funerary inscription found in 1879 on an urn in a columbarium near the Porta Tiburtina in Rome, for example, reads (*CIL* VI 13414):

*M(arcus) Antonius Diognet(us)*  
*vix(it) ann(os) L*  
*Auruncea Hedone*

Marcus Antonius Diognetus  
 lived 50 years  
 Auruncea Hedone

When a title such as *beneficiarius* is expressed, it comes after the name of the officer. A funerary inscription from Lambaesis, Algeria, for example, reads (*CIL* VIII 2870):

*D(is) M(anibus)*  
*T(itus) Flavius*  
*Domi-*  
*tianus*  
*b(eneficiarius) Iuliae*  
*Quaet(a)e*  
*matri*  
*fec(it) v(ixit)*  
*ann(os) LXV*  
*h(ic) s(ita) e(st)*

For the shades of the dead,  
 Titus Flavius  
 Domi-  
 tianus,  
 a *beneficiarius*, for Iulia  
 Quaeta,  
 (his) mother,  
 made (this). She lived  
 65 years.  
 She lies here.

Rarely, gentilicia can also be fully abbreviated, such as in the following, slightly fragmentary funerary text from Sagunto, Spain (*CIL* II 588):

*Fab(iae) Ursae an(norum) [...]*  
*et B(aebio) Pyramo a[n(norum) [...]*  
*L(ucius) B(aebius) Artemas [uxori(?)]*  
*et l(iberto) bene mere[ntibus]*

For Fabia Ursa ... years  
 and Baebius Pyramus ... years  
 Lucius Baebius Artemas, [for (his) wife]  
 and freedman, (both) well deserving.

Roman urns such as those collected by Sinn (1987) are typically much more elaborate constructions than is the Dziedzice find, made of marble and highly decorated. But less elaborate forms of funerary inscriptions are often found in the provinces and it seems likely that the same basic onomastic features of a Roman memorial text are reflected on what remains of the Dziedzice find.

There is no Roman name or Latin word that begins with *hurd-*, however, although from a Roman epigraphic perspective, the Dziedzice inscription looks as if it features a memorial text made by or for a *beneficiarius* whose cognomen ended in *-rd(us)* by or for another man whose gentilicium began with *Hurd-*. There is a Latin gentilicium *Hordionius* (and cf. Latin *hordeum* ‘barley’), but *Hurd-* could only be understood to be Latin if it were a misspelling or a Germanisation. Yet there are no examples of Germanised Latin names of such a type attested in other inscriptions and, as *haurds* ‘(lattice) door’ shows, Gothic regularly lowered (or diphthongised) \**u* before *r* in contrast to West Germanic where inherited \**u* is reflected before *r* unchanged, for example in the Tungrian name *Hurmius* from Housesteads (*RIB* 1619).

Nonetheless medieval names such as *Hordolf*, *Hortbert* and *Horthari* suggest that the Dziedzice sequence *hurd-* may be Germanic. Given that the Dziedzice inscription was found in a Germanic burial, its sequence *hurd-* seems best understood as representing a name beginning with the Germanic onomastic element *Hurd-*. In light of the kinds of texts found in comparable Roman cinerary inscriptions, *hurd-* seems most likely to re-

present the first element of the name of the commissioner of the urn or that of the warrior buried in the cremation grave. The vast majority of Roman-letter texts preserved on ceramics represent names – either those of the maker or the owner of the find – and there seems little reason to expect that the Dziedzice inscription would represent anything other than an onomastic text.

The main problem with an onomastic interpretation of the Dziedzice inscription is that the Germanic naming element *Hord-*, *Hort-* is usually linked etymologically with Gothic *huzd*, Old Norse *hodd*, Old English *hord*, Old Saxon *hord* and Old High German *hort* ‘treasure, hoard’ (Förstemann 1901: 866), forms which since Brugmann (1896) have typically been connected by etymologists with Greek *keuthō* ‘hide’, Latin *custos* ‘guardian’ and hence a Proto-Germanic *\*huzdq* (Rix 2001: 358-59, Kroonen 2013:260); cf. the Gothic names *Hosdas* and *Hosbut* (Haubrichs 2014:22). Vandalic is usually accepted to be an East Germanic language, featuring retention of the sibilant pronunciation of inherited *\*-z-* in names such as that of the great fifth-century king *Gaisericus* < *\*Gaiza-rīkaz* (Schönfeld 1911: 99-101), where contemporary West Germanic forms such as the epigraphically preserved Suebian name *Hildiger* (*AE* 1975: 894, Africa proconsularis) show rhotacism (Onesti 2013: 179-95). The name of the Vandal *Hasdingi* is distinguished from the Old Norse *Haddingjar* and the Old English *Heardingas* by this very feature, with Old Norse *haddr* ‘hair’ < *\*hazdaz* ‘flax’. If it is taken to be Germanic, the Dziedzice inscription seems to preserve early evidence for a characteristically West Germanic development, rhotacism of *\*z > r*, already appearing in an epigraphic find from the archaeological C1a period. The spelling *hur-* does not show *a*-umlaut (i.e. *hord-*), but the date of the phonemicisation of *a*-umlaut is unclear.

If *Hurd-* is linguistically West Germanic, the Dziedzice inscription cannot be a Vandalic manufacture and might be better linked with one of the other Germanic tribes mentioned in the area at the time such as the Buri. According to Tacitus (*Germ.* 43), the Marsigni and Buri lived ‘close in the rear’ of the Marcomanni and Quadi (*terga Marcomanorum Quadorumque claudunt*), and ‘in their language and manner of life resemble the Suebi’ (*sermone cultuque Suebos referunt*). Ptolemy (*Geographia* 2, 11, 10) links the Buri with the Lugi (as Lugi Buri) and they are recorded as one of the members of the Marcomannic confederation by Cassius Dio (*Historia Romana* 72-73). Archaeological evidence for Suebian influence in (at least Lower) Silesia at the time is also clear. The Buri do not seem to have been defeated by the Romans until the early reign of Commodus when an *expeditio Burica* was undertaken in either AD 181 or 182 (Kovács 2009: 260-61). The Dziedzice hoard appears to date to the reign of Marcus Aurelius and the presumably contemporary urn inscription looks as if it may support Tacitus’ record of West Germanic speakers present in Upper Silesia in the early centuries AD.

Yet the late second century is a much earlier period for the appearance of West Germanic features than is usually assumed. A comparatively early date for rhotacism in West Germanic contrasts with the much later North Germanic development where evidence for the merger of reflexes of inherited *\*z* with those of *\*r* dates from the transitional-runic period of the seventh-eighth centuries (Antonsen 1975: 17, Ringe and Taylor 2014: 82). But Ringe and Taylor (2004: 82-87) date West Germanic rhotacism to after a split within West Germanic of the northern from the southern dialects on the grounds of variations

in monosyllabic forms such as the Old English adverb *mā* ‘more’ and Old High German *mēr* ‘more’ (< \**maiz*). The variation between Old English *meord* and *mēd* ‘reward, meed’ (< \**mizdō*) similarly suggests a West Germanic dialectal connection between \**z*-loss and rhotacism (Crist 2001: 101-5). West Germanic gemination has also typically been dated to after rhotacism because it only fails to affect both \**z* and \**r* – incipient rhotacism (if not full merger of the reflexes of \**z* and \**r*) seems likely to have predated this sound change (Ringe & Taylor 2014: 50-53).

The first clear evidence of West Germanic gemination is the runic spelling **kunni** ‘kin’ on a bone from Sandstedt, on the Lower Weser, whose epigraphic authenticity was demonstrated by Pieper (1989) and that has been dated to c. AD 355-410 by carbon-14 and amino-acid analysis (Antonsen 2002: 315-28). This date seems to vitiate Wagner’s (1993) attempt to date gemination in Frankish to the sixth century or later by its failure to appear in the name of the *Salii* and underlines the importance of runic evidence. Dative plural epithets from the Rhineland such as *Gabiabus* and *Teniavehis* that seem to date to the second or third century similarly fail to exhibit gemination (Mees 2006: 23-24, 34), but variations in the spellings of more clearly Germanic personal names such as *Freiania* and *Friannius* (CIL XIII 8396 and 8536) show how unreliable apparent geminate spellings (or the lack thereof) can be in provincial Roman epigraphy. It is the earliest evidence for a sound change rather than later counter-examples that is most probative, however – as Barnes (2005: 179) observes, sound changes do not occur uniformly at all points in a speech area initially, but instead tend to spread out from an innovative place or group, with competition for older and newer pronunciations lasting for some time until one becomes predominate at the expense of the other.

Recently, García Losquiño (2015) has reiterated Antonsen’s (1975: 26-28, 2002: 17-36) argument that West Germanic features can be isolated among the archaeological C1a period texts in the early runic corpus and Nedoma and Düwel (in Schmidt, Nedoma and Düwel 2010/11) have similarly argued that the c. AD 300 runic inscription from Frienstedt evidences West Germanic loss of \**-z*. Schuhmann (2014: 400-401) contends that the Frienstedt description **kaba** may just represent a weak masculine like Old High German *kambō* ‘comb’, however, and a similar analysis may be applied to the early runic forms such as **lagubewa** focussed on by García Losquiño (2015: 54-79). Schwartz (1951: 256) pointed to Tacitus’ spelling of the names *Chariovalda* and *Catualda* as evidence that \**-z* had already been lost in the first century, but these forms may also feature weak or even Latinate endings (Wagner 1983) and as Schwartz (1951: 257) acknowledged a reflection of final *-z* seems to be retained in the second or third-century Germanic dative plurals *Affims* and *Vatvims* from the Rhineland (Mees 2006: 16).

Various attempts to date rhotacism in ancient West Germanic names have also been proposed over the years. The name of the early-fourth-century Frankish king *Merogaisus* (with *gaisus* presumably representing \**gaiza-* ‘spear’) is only known from a corrupt passage in the *Panegyrici Latini* restored as *Ascarici Merogaisique* by Zeuss (1837: 339)<sup>1</sup>. But as Wagner (1985:254-55) points out, the name *Ariogaisus*, borne by a king of the

<sup>1</sup> Zeuss (1837: 339, n.) gives the attested manuscript forms as *Ascari cinere gaisique*, *Ascari cumero geaisique*, *Assaccari cynero craisique* and *Asacari cynero gaisique*.

Quadi in the time of the Marcomannic Wars, features a similar onomastic element *-gaisus* and the Quadi are accorded a Suebian tribe by Tacitus. There is also a late-fourth-century name *Laniogaisus* attested by Ammianus Marcellinus that is typically thought to be Frankish (Schönfeld 1911: 152). Yet Wagner (1985) argues that the late-fourth-century general *Arintheus* also recorded by Ammianus bears a Frankish name featuring rhotacism (with *Arin-* < *\*azina-* ‘fireplace’). As Ködderitzsch (1986: 200-210) admits, *Ariogaisus* looks to be a Celtic spelling with the first element comparable to those found in *Ariomanus*, *Ariovistus* and *Ariobindus*, and Wagner (1985: 254) also claims that *Laniogaisus* is Celtic. The two fourth-century Alemannic figures called *Hortarius* that have traditionally been seen to bear a name featuring West Germanic rhotacism (whether reflecting *\*huzda-* ‘hoard’ or *\*uzda-* ‘sharp point’) are explained by Wagner (1990) as Latin (cf. Latin *hortus* ‘garden’). It is important to note, however, that intervocalic *\*z* is not the same phonological environment as *\*z* before *\*d* and that the West Germanic rhotacism of inherited *\*z* before *\*d* may well predate the similar intervocalic development. As Ringe and Taylor (2014: 84-86) note, there is also evidence that rhotacism of *\*z* occurred earlier in the Suebian/Alemannic dialects than it did in the rest of West Germanic, both in terms of Old English and Frisian forms that evidence late retention of *\*z* (such as North Frisian *lāsk* ‘lark’ < *\*laiwazikā*) and Old High German monosyllabic terms (e.g. *mēr* ‘more’ < *\*maiz*) that preserve final *-r* where *\*z* is typically lost altogether from other West Germanic dialects. The developments *\*hurda-* < *\*huzda-* and *\*mair* < *\*maiz* represent instances of rhotacism before a consonant or at the end of a word respectively while *\*gaira-* < *\*gaiza-* displays the same sound change occurring intervocalically – and the Dziedzice inscription’s *hurda-* may well represent evidence that rhotacism of West Germanic *\*z* first occurred before *\*d* before it spread to other environments. As Denton (2003: 13-14) argues, the rhotacism of /z/ was probably facilitated by the emergence of a coronal fricative allophone of Germanic /r/. The medial voiced dental fricative allophone [ð] of Germanic /d/ may well have provided the phonological environment that encouraged the identification of an allophone of /r/ with /z/ which presumably served as the catalyst for West Germanic rhotacism.

The Dziedzice inscription has long been obscure, its fate since the end of the Second World War unclear. But it seems to be best taken as preserving the initial element of a name that exhibits a West Germanic phonological development. An archaeological C1a or c. AD 150/60-210/20 date for this rhotacism accords with Antonsen’s (1975: 27; 2002: 33) c. AD 200 date for the emergence of West Germanic which is accepted by Schulte (2018: 19); cf. Grønvik (1998; 2010) who argued for a first-century separation from North Germanic, Maláškova and Blažek (2012: 10) who contend that the divergence probably occurred in c. AD 150, and Euler (2013) who prefers a third-century date. West Germanic rhotacism appears to be a sound change that predates most of the earliest runic evidence and seems to have begun at the same time (rather than be anterior) to *z*-deletion. As Ringe and Taylor (2014: 84-86) observe ‘a substantial number of [early West Germanic] innovations ... either diffused from one dialect to another or were independent but parallel’ and both sound changes represent a lenition of *\*z* and seem to have been positional, with *\*z*-deletion (rather than just rhotacism) even occurring medially before *\*d* in some instances. The differing treatment of inherited *\*z* before *\*d* in West Germanic forms

such as Old English *meord* and *mēd* ‘reward, meed’ also suggests that the retention of sibilant pronunciations preserved intervocally in onomastic elements such as *-gaisus* is only relevant to the final stage of West Germanic rhotacism – i.e. that the rhotacism of *\*z* before *\*d* was an earlier development in Suebian/Alemannic than its rhotacism (or deletion) in other environments. West Germanic rhotacism and *\*z*-deletion are two of the most characteristic early sound changes in West Germanic, but where Kuhn (1955) dated the final separation between North and West Germanic to the period of the Anglo-Saxon migrations, the earlier evidence for both West Germanic rhotacism and gemination suggests that a fifth-century demarcation is far too late. Names of figures from late antiquity evidence typically West Germanic sound changes and such testimony is supported by a West Germanic interpretation of the onomastic element *hurd-* attested in the Dziedzice inscription.

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