

Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Inscriptions



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3. ARLON (Luxembourg, Belgium), silver bulla. In the Musée Luxembourgais, Arlon. It is dated 1st th. 7th c. Found in 1936 in a Frankish row-grave field (Roosens & Alenus-Lecerf 1965:119–127).

The runes read: **godun o e s rasuwa(m)ud wo?gt**

X ǫ M N Y ◊ 1 / R F S N P P

N M P X ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ B X T

X ǫ M N Y ǫ M S R F S N P P N M P ǫ X |

The bulla is heavily damaged. The empty places indicate the lost runes which have vanished together with parts of the bulla. Nevertheless the text can be reconstructed reasonably well.

godun is a PN, dsf. *n*-stem: ‘for Goda’.

rasuwa(m)u[n]d is also a PN, nsm. *Rasuwamund*; the first element is **rasuwa-**, cf. OE *ræswa* ‘leader, ruler’. The second element *-mund*, < Gmc **mundō* ‘hand, protection, security’, is originally a feminine *ō*-stem. The (**m**) in **rasuwa(m)u[n]d** has weathered away. The [n]

in *-mund* has been omitted before the homorganic *d*, a common practice in runic writing.

Names ending in *-mund* are masculine among the Franks (cf. Gregory of Tours' *Historiae Francorum*). The centre of manufacture of *bullae* was Mainz, but Franconian names would not have been out of the ordinary, since Mainz had a Rhine-Franconian dialect in OHG times.

The third rune in **wo?gt** may be a damaged **r**, in view of what is left of the rune. The ultimate rune might be **t**, although its sidetwigs are missing. **wo(r)gt** may be taken as a verb form: *worgt* = *worhta*, 3 sg. pret. ind. of OHG *wurken* 'to work, to make'. The inscription would thus be a maker's formula. Nedoma (1992:6) offers another proposal: inspired by the recorded name *Votriilo* he suggests reading a PN *wōpro*.