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Notes on the inscriptions of Delos: the Greek transliteration of Latin names

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Abstract

Between the 2nd and 1st century BC the island of Delos was the destination of a massive immigration of freemen, freedmen, and slaves coming from Italy for economic purposes. As a consequence, a large amount of Latin onomastic material is preserved in the Greek-written inscriptions. This paper analyses the accommodation of the Latin names into the Greek orthography, trying to illustrate the complex overlap of different criteria of transliteration: the graphemic correspondences and the phonetically-based transcriptions entailing Latin speech, Greek speech, and Greek-Latin bilingual speech. The investigation will focus in particular on the phonetic value of Latin short *i* and *u*. Finally, some alleged Sabellic features will be discussed, calling their relevance into question.

Keywords: Latin onomastics, Latin-to-Greek transliterations, spoken Latin, bilingual community.

1. *Historical and social context*

In the Homeric hymn to Apollo (Hom. h. III 146-164) Delos appears as a major religious centre of a 7th-century amphictyony to which the Cyclades and the neighbouring Ionians belonged. During the 6th c. BC it was progressively drawn into the Athenian orbit, and Athenian rule was definitely established through the creation of the Confederacy of Delos (478 BC). With the rise of Macedonia in the second half of the 4th c. BC, albeit formally independent, it fell under the patronage of the Antigonid monarchy, which retained its domain upon it throughout almost the whole of the Hellenistic period. A small island surrounded by powerful kingdoms, in the first half of the 2nd c. BC Delos enjoyed close and positive relations with Rome and the major Hellenistic dynasties, except for the Ptolemies (Vial and Baslez, 1987), who had already retreated from the Cyclades at this date. But, after its victory over Perseus (166 BC), Rome handed over the island to Athens. The Delians were expelled, Athenian settlers sent to replace them, magistrates were appointed from Athens, and Delos was given the status of a free port (Roussel, 1987). This was the beginning of a large-scale immigration of *negotiatores* "business-

men", i.e. freemen, freedmen, and slaves coming from Italy for economic purposes, a phenomenon that further increased after the fall of Corinth (146 BC) and the creation of the province of Asia (129 BC). After two violent sackings during the Mithridatic wars (80 BC, 69 BC), Delian commerce and foreign communities quickly collapsed by the half of the 1st c. BC.

The origins of the *negotiatores* in Italy have been strongly debated. Such debates were based on the large amount of onomastic material found in Delian inscriptions. The most up-to-date list includes 186 *nomina gentilicia* distributed over 254 inscriptions, for a total amount of 539 complete onomastic formulae (Ferrary *et al.*, 2002: 186-221)[1]. Hatzfeld's (1912; 1919: 238-256) claim that most of them were from Southern Italy is no longer acceptable following Wilson (1966: 105-111) and, more recently, Solin (1982), whose thorough review of the gentilices suggests that a large part of the traders originated in Latium and Rome (Solin, 1982: 117). But any attempt to assign a gentilice to a specific region of Ancient Italy must face the critical methodological issue that is raised by Hasenhor and Muller (2002): given the high mobility of the *gentes* in the late Republic, an individual with a Latin gentilice might have come from anywhere in Italy.

2. *The* negotiatores *as a community of speakers*

In any case, the Italian community in Delos is overtly distinguished from the other groups acting on the island (not only Greeks, but also Phoenicians, Syrians, Egyptians, etc.; Roussel, 1987: 87-95) through the two-fold formula *praenomen + nomen gentilicium* (Poccetti, 2015: § 11), i.e. «le noyau fondamental» (Lejeune, 1976: 39) of the onomastic system that crosses the linguistic and ethnic boundaries of the Italian peninsula, even before its complete Romanisation.

Its identity rests on a common background and shared economic interests that surface in several collective self-definitions. Firstly, they characterise themselves as Latin-speaking *Italici* / Ἰταλικοί[2]. The term is used in a cho-

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[1]   Neither the Italiotes from Greek-speaking areas of Italy (Ferrary *et al.*, 2002: 236-239) are taken into account here, nor those *formulae* where the gentilice is either fragmentary or missing (Ferrary *et al.*, 2002: 222-235). Unless differently specified, inscriptions are intended to be taken from ID. The letter 'S' followed by a number refers to inscriptions drawn from Sherk's (1969) collection; 'C' followed by a number refers to Couilloud's (1974) edition of the epitaphs.

[2]   Cf. 1620, 1683, 1685, 1686, 1687, 1688, 1689, 1690, 1691, 1695, 1696, 1698, 1699, 1717, 1718, 1722, 1735, 1736, 1742, 1757, 1758.

rographic ("those who come from Italy") rather than political sense, not only in Delos, but all over the Greek-speaking areas in the late Republican period (Adams, 2003: 651-658)[3]. Secondly, they collectively operate in a public dimension as the *magistri* of the three major *collegia* on the island (*Hermaistai*, *Apolloniastai*, and *Poseidoniastai*)[4], which are set up according to the model of the *collegia* acting in Southern Italian cities like Capua. According to Hasenhor (2002: 70), these institutions should be viewed as «des collèges de dignitaires dépendant d'une entité unique», i.e. the community of the *Italici* itself. Alongside the *collegia*, also trade guilds are attested in several inscriptions[5], and the *Italici* make explicit reference to their affairs (slave trading, public and private banking, oil and wine selling; Hatzfeld, 1919: 192 ff.), describing themselves as businessmen «*qui Deli negotiantur*»[6] / «οἱ ἐν Δήλωι πραγματεύομενοι / ἐργαζόμενοι»[7]. They also finance the construction of a large (slave-?)market place, the so called 'Agora des Italiens' (Coarelli, 1982)[8], making it a gathering point for their entire community (Hasenhor, 2007). Finally, they take part in religious cults that are in part characteristic of them (Maia, Vulcanus)[9], and in part common to other groups (Apollo, Hermes/Mercurius, Sarapis, the Syrian gods)[10].

Since mutual comprehension with the Greek-speaking Delians was essential for trade, the *Italici* can be regarded as a Latin-Greek bilingual community, and this was certainly made easier in that some of them were from Greek-speaking parts of Italy, and others had Greek slaves and freedmen. Thus, as a community of speakers, not only did they share the linguistic repertoire, but also the functional relationships holding between the two languages. This is shown by a close examination of the 254 inscriptions referred to by Ferrary *et al*. (2002: 186-221) (Table 1).

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[3]   Note that, to Athenians, they were instead "Romans", in opposition to "Athenians" themselves and "other foreigners" (Adams, 2003: 652-653). This is shown by a number of honorific decrees made on the combined initiative of the various groups, such as 1646: Αθηναίων καὶ ῾Ρωμαίων καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ξένων οἱ κατοικοῦντες καὶ παρεπιδημοῦντες ἐν Δήλωι. This formula and its variants are discussed in Roussel (1987: 50-55).

[4]   Cf. 1731-1759. For the social peculiarities of a fourth *collegium*, i.e. the *Competaliastai*, see Adams (2003: 668-669).

[5]   For the *olearii* / ἐλαιοπῶλαι, cf. 1712-1714; for the οἰνοπῶλαι, cf. 1711; for the τραπεζῖται, cf. 1715.

[6]   Cf. 1620, 1695, 1696, 1698.

[7]   Cf. 1725, 1727, 1729.

[8]   Cf. 2612 for the Agora and 1683-1693bis for the neighbouring buildings.

[9]   Cf. 1750, 2440.

[10]   Cf., among many others, 442, 443, 1449, 1450 (temple of Apollo), 2127, 214, 2142 (Serapeum), 2204, 2245, 2248 (temple of the Syrian gods).

Types of inscription	N.	Language	N.
Accounts of the temples	37	Greek	37
Honorific dedications and decrees	132	Greek	96
		Latin	16
		bilingual	20
Funerary inscriptions	62	Greek	60
		bilingual	2
Graffiti	6	Latin	3
		Greek	3
Seals	16	Latin	14
		Greek	2
Defixiones	1	Latin	1

Table 1. *Inscriptions of Delos containing Latin names.*

The accounts of the temples cannot be written but in Greek, as they were commissioned by the Athenian priest-admini strators to professional stonemasons in order to take account of donors, gifts, mortgage and rental agreements, etc.; likewise, the gravestones from Rheneia are carved as a serial and rather banal production (Couilloud, 1974: 53-59) by primarily, if not exclusively, Greek-speaking draftsmen (Poccetti, 2015: § 87). On the contrary, for the other typologies of sources an explicit choice on the part of the purchasers is involved. Thus, on the one hand, the use of Greek in public epigraphy expresses the accommodation of the *negotiatores* in Greek-speaking Delian society; on the other hand, the maintenance of Latin in the decrees of the *collegia* and other public inscriptions in which they acted under the collective name of *Italici* symbolises their corporate Latin-speaking identity (Adams, 2003: 645-661). In contrast with more formal, public texts, the use of Latin for an inherently private action like a malediction (the Rheneia curse tablet: 2534; Adams, 2003: 680-682; Poccetti, 2015: § 81), as a marker of personal identity (the seals), and in more casual contexts (the *graffiti*) suggests that Latin remained the spoken language for inner communication among the *negotiatores*. Finally, its use for personal, intimate purposes finds second-hand evidence also in the accounts of the temples, which record some ἀναθήματα offered by Romans and inscribed ῥωμαϊκοῖς γράμμασιν[11].

3. *The Greek epigraphy of Delos*

To individuate some features of the Latin spoken by the *negotiatores* is the main goal of this paper, but, in order to do this, little weight is to

[11]   Cf. 442, 443, 1439.

be attached to the public Latin texts, since the people responsible for their drafting were «*Italici* [...] using formulaic Latin in public inscriptions» (Adams, 2003: 651). Private documents, in their turn, are too short (except for the curse tablet 2534) and do not amount to much. Thus, following Adams (2003: 676-679), there are no certain grounds for assuming any kind of variation, with the exception of the possible regionalism *Mircurius* for *Mercurius* (1732, 1733, 1753, CIL I² 2233).

More inferences can be drawn from the transliteration of Latin names within Greek texts. As we should expect in the light of the historical and political context, the public, official epigraphy of Delos conforms to Athenian practice, whose influence dates well before the 2nd-century settlement back to the 5th-century confederacy (Rhodes and Lewis, 1997: 239-245). During the Athenian cleruchy (166-140s BC) several decrees were sent to Athens to ask for confirmation, and in some cases the ratification of Athens is inscribed afterwards[12]. Later, state decrees and records of the temple are largely absent, and the major types of public documents are honorific dedications set up by individuals on public buildings, statue-bases, altars, etc.

The language of these texts is the Attic Koine that essentially developed from the so-called Great Attic, i.e. a superdialectal variety used in Attica, Euboia, the Ionic Cyclades and Asian Ionia as the written language of administration in the late 5th and 4th c. BC (Horrocks, 2010: 73-77, 80-84; Bubeník, 1989: 178-181). The progressive atticisation first, and then koineisation of the Cycladic islands from the 5th down to the 2nd c. BC, is illustrated in detail by Handel (1913), by means of a systematic analysis of ca. 500 inscriptions from Ionia. Among others, typical Great Attic / Koine forms that are well attested in the Delian official inscriptions are the following: the spelling ἀμφικτύων instead of ἀμφικτίων (Threatte, 1980: 263-264); the analogical levelling of (παρ-)ἐδώκαμεν (aor. 1st pl.)[13] and ἔδωκαν (aor. 3rd pl.)[14] instead of (παρ-)ἔδομεν and ἔδοσαν respectively; γίνεσθαι for γίγνεσθαι[15]; ἕνεκεν for ἕνεκα[16]; the initial aspiration in ἕτος instead of ἔτος[17]; the peculiar spelling of the diphthong

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[12] Cf. 1504, 147 BC; 1505, 146 BC.
[13] Cf. 1401, after 166 BC; 1416, 156 BC; 1417, 155 BC; 1422, 155 BC.
[14] Cf. 1507, 145-135 BC; 1514, 116 BC.
[15] Cf. 1517, 156 BC.
[16] Cf. 1520, after 153 BC; 1527, 145-116 BC.
[17] Cf. IG XI.2 135, 314-302 BC: καθ᾽ἔτος.

-ηι as -ει in the dative singular of η-stems (Threatte, 1980: 377-380)[18]. Let us just note that, where available, the demotic of artists' signatures relates to an Attic-Ionic environment (Ἀθηναῖος, Ἐφέσιος, Ἡράκλειος).

To what degree the language and orthography of funerary inscriptions might have differed from public dedications is difficult to assess, as the former are almost exclusively limited to the stereotyped formula '[name of the deceased] χρηστὲ/-ὴ (καὶ ἄλυπε) χαῖρε' (Couilloud, 1974)[19]. Excluding mere engraving errors, in the variable part of the text (i.e. the name of the deceased and his/her demotic), some alternations indicate a tendency to iotacism, such as Ἱεροπολεῖτι (C 155) ~ Ἱεροπολῖτι (C 131), Εἰσιάς (C 420) ~ Ἰσιάς (C 438), and Μεικώνιε (C 45) for Μυκόνιε[20], together with a couple of examples of a confusion between long and short vowels, such as Μεικώνιε itself, with <ω> for <o>, and Ἡράκληα (C 154) ~ Ἡράκλεαν (C 485.2), both for Ἡράκλεια (for examples of transcription of the Latin ō as <o> and Latin ĭ as <ηι> / <ει> see below, § 4.4).

The phonetic evaluation of the alternations <η> ~ <ε> and <ω> ~ <o> in Attic inscriptions of the Hellenistic period is not an easy matter (see the discussion in Bubeník, 1989: 184; Horrocks, 2010: 163-165, and references therein). Of course, they both may be related to the loss of distinctive length, but underwent separate developments in Roman times, with <η> [εː] > [eː] > [i] ≠ <ε> [e] > [ɛ], and <ω> [ɔː] > [oː] > [o] = <o> [o]. Using epigraphic material, Teodorsson (1974: 183-184, 211-212, 218-219) argues that long vowels were tending to merge with short as early as the 6th c., and this development was accomplished in about 350 BC, when «in the dialect of more than half the Attic population vowel length had been equalized» (Teodorsson, 1974: 293). According to less radical views about the chronology of the change, Threatte (1980: 159-164, 384-387) states that both Classic and Hellenistic examples of <ε> for <η> may be regarded as indicating the beginning of the breakdown of vowel quantity, but are nevertheless insufficient to support vowel isochrony, for which conclusive evidence only comes after 100 AD

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[18] Cf., among many others, the formula ἀγαθεῖ τύχει· ἔδοξεν / δεδόχθαι τεῖ βουλεῖ (*passim*); τεῖ ἄλλει ἀναστροφεῖ [...] ἐν τεῖ νήσωι (1501: honorific decree, 148 BC); ἐν τεῖ πομπεῖ (1505: honorific decree, 147 BC); καὶ τεῖ γυναικί (C 148, epitaph).

[19] The few exceptions over the 507 texts published in Couilloud (1974), BCH 102, BCH 121, and REA 103, are 2 bilingual inscriptions (C 243, C 495; cf. Poccetti, 2015: §§ 82-85) and 20 *carmina epigraphica* (C 466-484, BCH 121: 648, n. 10).

[20] Cf. also Ασκαλωνεῖτα (C 228) ~ Ασκαλωνῖτα (C 229), Δαρδανεῖτι (C 89), Πανορμεῖτα (C 429), Σειδώνιε for Σιδώνιε (C 110bis, C 314), Νεικίου (C 7), Νεικαίου (C 56), and Νεικηφόρε (C 195), for Νικίου *et sim.*

(Threatte, 1980: 387)[21]. Moreover, a qualitative rather than quantitative similarity cannot be excluded (Allen, 1987: 94). The question is open and beyond the scope of this paper, and it should probably be reassessed in view of Duhoux's (1987) critical discussion of the motivations for such a drastic chronological discrepancy between Teodorsson's and Threatte's reconstructions (on these motivations see also, lastly, Teodorsson, 2014: 192).

However, even if Teodorsson has probably overinterpreted his data, he correctly highlights that «there existed at least two subsystems in the phonology of Attic» (Teodorsson, 1978: 92). This variation persisted throughout the Hellenistic period, where a distinction can be drawn between the 'conservative system' of the aristocracy, which mostly retained both qualitative and quantitative oppositions, and the 'innovative system' of the moderately educated, which was instead characterised by a remarkable iotacism and was far more advanced in the loss of vowel-length distinction (Teodorsson, 1978: 91-98).

This was also likely to be the condition of the differently skilled and variably engaged drafters and stonemasons who composed the Delian epigraphic texts. Their repertoire exhibited the same range of variation that is, more generally, typical of the Greek-speaking Hellenistic world, where the Koine can be seen «not only as the standard written and spoken language of the upper classes [...], but also more abstractly as a superordinate variety standing at the pinnacle of a pyramid comprising an array of lower-register varieties, spoken and occasionally written» (Horrocks, 2010: 84, drawing from Consani, 1991: 16; Consani, 2014: 121-122)[22]. As is normally the case, such a distinction should be regarded as scalar diaphasic, rather than clearcut diastratic variation, with most users of the conservative and the innovative subsystems respectively being more or less competent in the other subsystem (Teodorsson, 1978: 93).

Thus, some features of a spoken 'innovative' variety have occasionally penetrated the written language, at least in more private documents like the epitaphs. To be sure, since the concept of 'authorship' of an epi-

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[21] This should not be put on a par with the 5th-century BC alternations between ‹ε› and ‹η›, that are better explained as an unfamiliarity with the spreading Ionic alphabet (THREATTE, 1980: 159).

[22] The repertoire and the functional relationships holding among the different varieties, were particularly complex in those communities where the pressure of the Koine was overtly challenged by regional varieties, dialect Koines, and local dialects for reasons of identity and political independence (cf. the cases of Cyprus and Thessaly illustrated in CONSANI, 2014: 122-123).

taph is complex (Adams, 2003: 84-93), one cannot ascribe such features to specific individuals or particular social figures (...the relatives of the deceased? ...the person who composed the text? ...the stonemason who cut it into the stone?), but this does not undermine the fact that they were part of the linguistic repertoire of the Greek-speaking community. In addition, a certain degree of societal bilingualism must be assumed for the Greeks dwelling in Delos, in order for them to interact with the Latin-speaking committers of the inscriptions and, more generally, with the foreign groups on the island.

4. *Latin names in Greek inscriptions*

The standardised language of the Attic epigraphy, however, could not supply the Delian drafters with a comprehensive model for the spelling of the Latin names. During the 2nd and 1st c. BC, the Latin speakers were a scanty minority among the Athenian population, many of them reached the city via Delos (Wilson, 1966: 96-98), and Latin names are uncommon in inscriptions from Athens[23]. The official standard of transliteration is rather to be seen in the Greek versions of *senatus consulta* and in the *epistulae* of Roman magistrates to Greek communities (Sherk, 1969: 13-19, 390-392), among which the *senatus consultum de Serapeo* (S 5, 164 BC) is specifically addressed to Delos. These texts are specimens of Greek composed by Romans and were set out in Rome by professional draftsmen (Sherk, 1969: 13). Yet the practice does not seem to have been common until the beginning of the 2nd c. BC, when Rome definitely entered the Eastern world and politics, and right up to Augustan times these documents are not free of a number of inconsistencies that denote the lack of unambiguous criteria (see below, §§ 4.1-4.5).

Thus, it is for the first time in Delos that Greek drafters working on behalf of Latin-speaking businessmen face the issue of writing down a large amount of Latin names. The absence, until that moment, of any well-estab-

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[23] The prosopographic list of the Romans resident in Athens at this date (41 names, following Osborne and Byrne, 1996: 266-271; of which 24 are limited to a *praenomen* within the ephebic lists) is much shorter than that of those operating in Delos (539 names, following Ferrary *et al.*, 2002: 186-221; but the number rises to more than 750 if fragmentary gentilices are included). Only by the age of Augustus, when the Romans became a considerable presence, a fixed set of Latin-to-Greek correspondences can be recognised in documents from Athens. The norms of transliteration, together with possible variations, are illustrated in detail by Threatte (1980: 136-141, 198, 220-223, 235-238).

lished model is evident from the great variation in the spelling of the following *nomina*, not only in private texts like the epitaphs, but also in the reports of the temples, in the public dedications of the *collegia*, and in the honorific inscriptions on buildings:

Allidius = Ἀλείδιος (2612, *Agorà des Italiens*) ~ Ἀλλίδιος (1764, *Competaliastai*);

Arellius = Ἀρέλιος (1755, three *collegia*) ~ Ἀρέλλιος (1753, three *collegia*; 1733, 1804, 2616, other public inscriptions);

Avilius = Ἀυίλιος (1523, honorific inscription; 2628, Syrian temple) ~ Ἀύλιος (C 495, epitaph);

Caecilius = Καικίλιος (1735, *Hermaistai*; 1764, *Competaliastai*; but also 1961, *graffito*) ~ Καικέλιος (C 75, epitaph; but also 2616, Serapeum);

Naevius = Ναίβιος (2616, Serapeum) ~ Ναιούιος (1766, *Competaliastai*);

Nonius = Νώνιος / Νῶν‹ι›α (2616, Serapeum; C 52, epitaph) ~ Νόννεις (C 318, epitaph);

Quinctius = Κοίγκτιος (1429, temple of Apollo) ~ Κοίνκτιος (*ibidem*) ~ Κοίντιος (1443, 1450, temple of Apollo);

Sabinius = Σαβείνιος (1429, 1432, temple of Apollo) ~ Σαβίνιος (1450, temple of Apollo);

Saufeius = Σαυφήιος (1754, 1755, three *collegia*) ~ Σωφήιος (C 243, epitaph);

Servilius = Σερουέλλιος (2351, to Apollo) ~ Σερουήλιος (*ibidem*) ~ Σερουίλιος (1758, three *collegia*);

Stertinius = Στερτίνιος (1755 *bis*, 2155, 2156, 2379, 2437, 2446, 2449, 2618, various dedications; C 48, C 161, epitaphs) ~ Στερτέννιος (2616, 2622, Serapeum; C 372, epitaph) ~ Στερτένιος (2378, to Artemis Soteira);

Stlaccius = Στλάκκιος / Στλακκία (1740, 2441, dedications; 2819, 2622, 2628, Serapeum and Syrian temple) ~ Σλάκις (C 70, epitaph) ~ Σλακία (*ibidem*) ~ Σταλακία (C 184)[24];

Varius = Οὐάριος (2612, *Agorà des Italiens*) ~ Ὀάριος (2616, Serapeum);

Veratius = Οὐηράτιος (1739, 2289, dedications) ~ Ὀηράτιος (1450, temple of Apollo);

Vibius = Βίβιος / Βιβία (442, 443, 1432, 1449, 1450, temple of Apollo; 2616, Serapeum) ~ Οὐίβιος (1766, *Competaliastai*);

Vicirius = Οὐικέριος (2011, BCH 97 1963 p. 252, dedications; 2612, *Agorà des Italiens*) ~ Οὐικίριος (1732, *Hermaistai*);

Volusius = [Ο]ὐολόσηιος (1739, a *collegium*) ~ Ὀλόσσηιος (2248, Syrian temple) ~ Οὐολόσιος (C 276, epitaph) ~ [Οὐ]ολύσ[ιος] (BCH 121 1997 p. 659, epitaph)[25].

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[24]   And, probably, Σταλκήιος (2634, subscr. of a military expedition).
[25]   On Φλουέιος (C 186, epitaph), see FERRARY *et al.* (2002: 196, n.28).

All these cases speak against the existence of long-standing, fossil-ised spellings, and in favour of an ongoing accommodation of the Latin names into the Greek orthography. However, such a matching is not a straightforward matter, because it is entangled by a complex overlap of the graphemic conventions current in the two languages with a set of ten-tative correspondences that switch between orthographic and phonetic transcriptions.

4.1. *The official orthographic conventions*

Most of the correspondences between Latin and Greek graphemes are banal enough to require no further comment, but the following are worth mentioning. Although generally avoided (see below, § 5), a graphemic rather than phonetic correspondence must be assumed between Latin <u> (= /u/, /w/) and Greek <υ> (= /y/, /i/!) in the spelling of the string -*ull*- as -υλλ- within the legal texts[26]. This is normal also in Delos[27] and, later, became part of the Athenian standard of transcription (Threatte, 1980: 222). Purely graphemic is also the alternation <γ> ~ <ν> for [ŋ] in Κοίγκτιος (1429) and Κοίνκτιος (*ibidem*), which follow the Greek and the Latin orthographic norm respectively.

Two different scripts are regularly adopted in formal public docu-ments for Latin /w/, which is written <ου> before a vowel (Καλουίσιος, S 31; Καρουίλιος, S 12; Οὐαλάριος, S 34) and <υ> after (Γαυένιος, S 24; Νάυτιος, S 12; Ὀκτάυιος, S 12). The same criterion is followed in Delos, as shown, for example, by the names Καρουίλιος (2616), Οὐάριος (1687, 2612, 2616, 2575), Οὐερρίνιος (2612), and Οὐηουήιος (1763) in front of Αὐώνιος (C 330), Μεύιος (2616, 2619), Ὀκτάυιος (2616, 2488), and Σαυφήιος (1754, 1755).

Finally, some Latin epigraphic habits are transferred into Greek script, such as the archaising rendering of the diphthong *ae* by means of <αι> (e.g.: Αἰμύλιος, Καικίλιος, Λαίλιος, Ναιούιος, *et passim*)[28], and the use of <αα> for *ā*

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[26]   Τύλλιος: S 23; Σύλλας: S 18, S 20, S 21, S 23, S 51, S 70.

[27]   Τύλλιος: 1730, 1761, 1802 (*ter*), 2628; Βαβύλλιος: 1760, 1764, 1842, 2399, 2407, 2616, 2628; and in other names where *u* is followed by a double consonant: Λυκκήιος: 1763; Τύκκιος: 2612.

[28]   Such a correspondence might in theory be interpreted also as a phonetic transcription that was favoured by a parallel, though not contemporary, process of monophthongisation. In the 'in-novative system' of Attic, the monophthongisation [aj] > [ɛ(ː)] was complete by the mid-4th c. BC (Teodorsson, 1974: 286-289); in Latin, the monophthongisation of ([aj] >) [ae] to [ɛː] is attested outside Rome in the 2nd c. BC and labelled as 'rustic' (Leumann, 1977: 67-68; cf. Lucil. ex Varro *l.l.*

in the spelling Μαάρκος (*passim*). Granted the Oscan origin of the *geminatio uocalium* (Lazzeroni, 1956), its institution as a Latin orthographic device to write long vowels is attributed to Accius (Ter. Scaur. VII 18,12 K). Such practice is chiefly restricted to either official epigraphy (*leges*, *tituli consulares*, coins, public buildings) or poetic, archaising epitaphs, which cover roughly the period 150 to 50 BC, and it spread in the Hellenistic world through the Greek translations of the *senatus consulta* (Adams, 2003: 662). Also in Delos, it is not attested in the earliest occurrences (cf. Μᾶρκος in 1416, 1417, 1432, 1426: 155-145 BC), it does not survive the first half of the 1st c. BC, and, being consistently applied in public epigraphy, it may be lacking in private texts like the epitaphs (cf. C 330; Poccetti, 2015: § 86).

4.2. *The role of spoken Latin*

Examples of phonetically-based transcriptions of Latin names occur on both public and private inscriptions from Delos, which testify to a number of phenomena that are currently acknowledged as peculiar features of spoken Latin (see the list in Clackson, 2011: 520, among many others): Σωφήιος, that occurs in a bilingual epitaph (C 243) alongside *Saufeius*, attests the monophthongised pronunciation of *au* (Poccetti, 2015: § 84)[29];

VII 96: *Cecilius pretor ne rusticus fiat* "*Cecilius* let's not elect to be countrified *pretor*"; on this passage see, among others, ALLEN, 1978: 60-62, CLACKSON, 2011: 247), though precise geographical distribution is difficult to be plotted in detail (ADAMS, 2007: 78-88; ADAMS, 2013: 71-73). Thus, *in some domains* of the Greek language that was spoken and written in Delos between 150 and 50 BC, the digraph ‹αι› possibly spelled the vowel [ɛ]; at the same time, *in some domains* of the Latin language the vowel [ɛː] was spelled by the digraph ‹ai›/‹ae›. This symmetry might have played some role in establishing a graphemic correspondence between Greek ‹αι› and Latin ‹ai›/‹ae›, but this does not mean that forms such as Καικίλιος and Λαίλιος necessarily hint at a Latin pronunciation *C*[ɛː]*cilius* and *L*[ˈɛː]*lius*. It is important to stress that the correspondence between Latin ‹ai›/‹ae› and Greek ‹αι› is without exception in Delos and goes back to the earliest instances of Latin names in Greek letters (cf. 1416: report of the Serapeum, 155 BC; 1417: account of the Ecclesiasterion, 155 BC). Therefore, if one is ready to regard Greek ‹αι› as a device to write Latin [ɛː] (< [ae]), two untenable consequences follow: a. the monophthongisation in spoken Latin was generalised already in 150 BC; but this is far from certain in general and, with specific reference to Delos, many traders were from Rome (see above, § 1), where it can be safely excluded at this date; b. in this case, the 'innovative system' is systematically adhered to by Greek drafters; but this was just a variety of their repertoire and, moreover, a variety that only sporadically surfaced in written documents. To summarise, the hypothesis of a phonetic rationale behind the transcription of ‹ai›/‹ae› as ‹αι› forces the assumption, for both Latin and Greek, of a linguistic *facies* that is too uniform to be consistent with the articulate sociolinguistic frame of the Delian environment.

[29] Κλώδιος (e.g. 1758, 1761), Οφίδιος (2623), and Πλώτιος (e.g. 1732, 1763) may instead be related to the variants *Clodius*, *Ofidius*, and *Plotius* that are well attested in Latin alongside *Claudius*, *Aufidius*, and *Plautius*.

together with many other instances discussed in § 5, Οὐολόσ(ση)ιος for *Volusius* (1739, 2248, C 276) exhibits the lowered pronunciation of the Latin *ŭ*; and, against Καικίλιος and Φλαμίνιος, which preserve the Latin orthography, Καικέλιος (2616, C 75) and Φλαμένιος (2598) show a parallel lowering of *ĭ* on the front series, that surfaces also in the *praenomen* Τεβέριος for *Tiberius* (1732, 1753, 1754, BCH 87(1963): 252-253). Moreover, the Greek script indicates the syncope of a short post-tonic vowel in the usual transcription of the *praenomen Decimus* as Δέκμος (*passim*)[30].

It is noteworthy that transcriptions entailing a spoken rather than written model, are not unknown either to the *senatus consulta* and *epistulae*, where the following are attested: Λέντλος for *Lentulus* (S 24, 69), Ποστόμιος for *Postumius* (S 1), Ῥοτίλιος for *Rutilius* (S 16), Λοτάτιος (S 9) and Ῥόβριος (S 16) alongside Λυτάτιος (S 22) and Ῥούβριος (S 12)[31].

4.3. *The role of spoken Greek*

Some spellings can be accounted for in the light of the Greek pronunciation during the last two centuries of the Hellenistic period. The fact that Latin *ī* may correspond to either <ι> (e.g. Πλίνιος: 442, 443), <ει> (e.g. Σαβείνιος: 1429, 1432), or <η> (e.g. Σερουήλιος: 2351), and Latin *ĭ* to either <ι> (e.g. Λικίνιος: 1751, 2628) or <υ> (e.g. Αἰμύλιος: 1417, 2124, *et passim*), is a hint for the advanced iotacism that characterised the Greek spoken by the drafters (Teodorsson, 1978: 96-98).

Again, such alternations are not uncommon in Sherk's (1969) collection, as illustrated by the doublets Καλουίσιος (S 31) ~ Καλουήσιος (S 27), Ὠφεντίνα (S 27) ~ Ὠφεντείνα (S 29), Μινύκιος (S 5) ~ Μυνύκιος (S 23).

4.4. *The role of language contact*

The treatment of the Latin /w/ requires further investigation. In line with the Roman official conventions (see above, § 4.1), it is normally spelled either <ου> or <υ>, but the spellings <ο> and <β> are also attested in Delos. Such fluctuations entail a bilingual speech and a process of phonetic 'rein-

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[30] Πόπλιος, which is the sole transcription attested for *Publius*, is better regarded as a deliberately archaising form corresponding to the earlier Latin spelling (Threatte, 1980: 220).

[31] More banal, yet entailing a phonetically-based transcription, is the voicing of /p/ in Σεμβρώνιος (S 4) for *Sempronius*.

terpretation' made by native Greek speakers[32]. As /w/ was lost in Attic as an independent phoneme at an early date, they interpret as relevant only one of two features ([+ vocalic] and [+ consonantal]) that are concomitant in the secondary language. Thus, /w/ may be given either a vocalic value and be transcribed by <ο> (cfr. Ὀάριος and Ὀηράτιος for *Varius* and *Veratius*), which makes it identical to the transcription of Latin *ŭ*, or a consonantal value and be transcribed by <β> (Ἕλβιος for *Helvius*, and Ναίβιος and Βίβιος in front Ναιούιος of and Οὐίβιος)[33]. Σεροίλιος for *Servilius* occurs in official translations as well (S 27, S 55).

Moreover, the funerary monuments also show a handful of examples of a confusion between <ο> and <ω> that once occurred in public epigraphy too. In fact, Latin *ō* is regularly transliterated as <ω>, except for Ῥομαία (C 150, *bis*; instead of Ῥωμαία, *passim*), Νόννεις (C 318; instead of Νώνιο[ς], 2616 / Νῶν‹ι›α, C 52), and Ὀφίδιος (for Latin *Ōfidius* in 2623, a list of subscribers of the Serapeum). Given the advanced loss of vowel-length distinction in some domains of the Greek language, such forms can be interpreted as a phenomenon of 'under-differentiation'[34] on the part of more or less bilingual speakers, who substitute a single phoneme of their primary language (/o/) for two phonemes of the secondary language (/o/ ~ /o:/) whose opposition is not contrastive for them. Also the representation of Latin *ĭ* by <ηι> in Ὀλόσσηιος (2248) and by <ει> in Γάειος (C 492, for *Gaĭus*), indicates, in addition to iotacism, the absence of quantitative distinctions in the language of the Greek drafters[35].

4.5. *Interim summary*

To sum up, during the 2nd and 1st c. BC, the Greek epigraphic texts composed by official translators on behalf of the Romans, and those com-

[32] WEINREICH (1966: 18): «reinterpretation of distinctions occurs when the bilingual distinguishes phonemes of the secondary system by features which in that system are merely concomitant or redundant».

[33] These cases should not be necessarily viewed as earlier instances of the Late Latin confusion between /w/ and /b/, for which plain inner-Latin evidence only comes by the 1st c. AD (CIL IV 4380, Pompeii: *Berus* = *Verus*). All the republican examples discussed in CAMPANILE (1977) are instead Greek transcriptions, for which contact phenomena must be taken into account.

[34] WEINREICH (1966: 18): «under-differentiation of phonemes occurs when the sounds of the secondary system whose counterparts are not distinguished in the primary system are confused».

[35] Elsewhere, a parallel loss of distinctive vowel length is consistently attested, for example, by the large number of alternations <η> ~ <ε> and <ω> ~ <ο> that occur in the inscribed pottery from the Nymphaeum of Kafizin (Cyprus, 225-218 BC; cf. CONSANI, 1986: 27-38).

posed by Greek drafters in Delos do not exhibit clear-cut differences in the transliteration of Latin names. Of course, the former are more tied to orthographic correspondences whereas the latter are more open to phonetic transcriptions, but both types of criteria are easy to find in both classes of documents. Moreover, a univocal interpretation is not possible in some instances, like in the spelling <ει> for Latin *ī*. On the one hand, it can be explained through the Greek iotacism, but, on the other hand, the influence of Latin orthography cannot be excluded, since <ei> was also a Latin device to write *ī* in line with Accius's recommendations (Mar. Victorin. gramm. VI 8 K).

Also the double consonants of Ἀΰλλιος (C 495), Ἔρριος (C 402), Νόννεις (C 318), Ὀλόσσηιος (2248), Σερουέλλιος (2351), Στερτέννιος (2616, 2622, C 372), and Λικίννιος (S 12, S 13) bypass all-encompassing accounts and are liable to a number of different explanations, down to the null hypothesis of simple engraving errors. In Νόννεις (for *Nōnius*), for example, the vowel length of *ō* might have been replaced by a compensatory lengthening of the following consonant (Poccetti, 2015: § 105), which may be consistent with the reinterpretation of vowel quantity as syllabic quantity for a Latin-Greek bilingual; but the double consonant follows a Latin short vowel in Στερτέννιος, Ὀλόσσηιος, and Λικίννιος (for *Stertĭnius*, *Volŭsius*, *Licĭnius*). In Ἀΰλλιος and Ἔρριος the double consonants might otherwise be an Oscan orthographic device indicating palatalisation (Poccetti, 2015: §§ 84, 104); but Ὀλόσσηιος (2248), Σερουέλλιος (2531), Στερτέννιος (2616, 2622), and Λικίννιος (S 12, S 13) occur in documents where the graphemic influence of Oscan is highly unlikely (public dedications, official records of the Serapeum, and two *senatus consulta*). The issue cannot be tackled here, but if these spellings are supposed to reflect palatalisation, such a feature cannot be specifically assigned to one language or the other, but it should be probably seen as a *Sprachbund* feature that was found in early Central and Southern Italy (Pisani, 1954; Orioles, 1972). Among many other hypotheses, one still cannot rule out the possibility that these forms attest early instances of the C*j* > CC*j* gemination that, later, characterised spoken Latin and the Tuscan/Italian developments (e.g.: *vindemiam*, *habeat*, *folium* > Tusc./It. *vende*[m:]*ia*, *a*[b:]*ia*, *fo*[ʎ:]*o*; Väänänen, 1967: 54-56) – but this is unexpected in Ὀλόσσηιος, as *-sj-* > [ʃ / ʒ] (e.g.: *basium*, *pensionem* > Tusc. *ba*[ʃ]*o*, *pi*[ʒ]*one*).

As a matter of fact, Latin names in Greek script entail miscellaneous, intertwined criteria of transcription, that are not always easy to either ac-

knowledge or disentangle. With particular regard to Delos, both public and private texts continuously switch between graphemic transliterations and phonetic transcriptions, and no consistent distinction can be maintained between the different textual typologies. But, if one excludes what can be traced to graphemic influence (§ 4.1), spoken Greek (§ 4.3), and language contact (§ 4.4), there remains a reliable corpus of data that can provide clues to the pronunciation of the Latin of the *negotiatores*.

5. *Latin names in Delian inscriptions: Latin short* i *and* u

The analysis will focus here on the phonetic value of Latin short *i* and *u*. The qualitative similarity from early times of *ĭ* and *ē* and of *ŭ* and *ō* is currently acknowledged by scholars (Marotta, 2015, and references therein), and it is regarded as a consequence of the correlation between vowel length and tenseness, so that short vowels had a more open pronunciation than their long equivalents[36]. Alongside inner-Latin data, in large part drawn from inscriptions, the fact that the Greek <ε> and <o> may transcribe Latin *ĭ* and *ŭ* and, symmetrically, the representation of Greek <ε> and <o> by Latin *ĭ* and *ŭ* adds external evidence that the Latin short high-vowels were particularly open (Allen, 1978: 49; 1987: 63-64).

Further discussion is needed about the possible objection that Greek <o> for Latin *ŭ* cannot be used as evidence, because Greek in any case had no short /u/ sound and anything else but <o> (=/o/) remained as the most [u]-like sound among short vowels. Yet this objection would be valid with reference to 5th-century Classical Greek, in which *quantitative* distinctions were relevant, but it is empty for the 2nd/1st-century Hellenistic Greek, in which vowel length was otherwise equalised and only a *qualitative* distinction was relevant in the opposition between /o/ (= <o> / <ω>) and /u/ (= <ου>) (Teodorsson, 1978: 91-98). If, from the beginning of 1st c. AD, when the sons of the Roman aristocrats were regularly sent to Athens, both Latin *ŭ* and *ū* are transcribed as <ου>[37], this comes as no surprise. At this date and in this setting, the Athenian draftsmen encountered a definitely stan-

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[36] The phonological implications are, instead, much more debated (Marotta, 2015), as they are closely interrelated with the loss of distinctive vowel length (Mancini, 2015, for an up-to-date critical discussion).

[37] Cf. Ιούλιος, Λουκίλιος, and Ροῦφος, with *ū*, and Σουμπτουάριος, Πουδέντα, and ἀννώρουμ, with *ŭ*; these and other examples can be drawn from Threatte (1980: 220-223).

dardised variety of urban Latin, in which *ŭ* = [u ~ ʊ] (Allen, 1978: 49-50)[38]. On the contrary, if in the 2nd and 1st c. BC, the Latin *ŭ* produced in Delos by non-aristocrat *negotiatores* of both urban and non-urban provenance, is instead transliterated with <o>, this can be assumed as a genuine clue of its [o]-like pronunciation. At least, it was a (mid-)high vowel open enough to be perceived by the Greek drafters as more similar to their native /o/ (= <o>) than to their native /u/ (= <ου>).

Tables 2 and 3 summarise the full set of correspondences between the Latin *ū, ŭ, ī, ĭ* and the Greek script in the Delian inscriptions[39].

LATIN VOWELS	GREEK LETTERS	GENTILICES	TOKENS	% TOKENS
/ˈuː/	<ου>	Ἀκούτιος (1), Κοσσούτιος (3), Φούριος (4), Λούξιος (1)	9/9	100%
/uː/	<ου>	Μουνάτιος (1), Πλουτίδιος (1), Τουτώριος (8)	10/10	100%
/ˈu/	<o>	Καλπόρνιος (1), Κλούιος (1), Δεκόμιος (2), Φολούιος (7), Ποστόμιος (6), Σπόριος (1), Οὐετόριος (1), Οὐολόσιος (3)	22/22	100%
/u/	<o>	Λοκρήτιος (2), Μονδίκιος (4), Πακτομήιος (3), Ῥοτίλιος (5), Τορπίλιος (1), Ὀμβρίκιος (2)	17/17	100%

Table 2. *Greek spellings of Latin back high vowels.*

[38] This corresponds to a higher level of standardisation also in the script, because, in this way, the Latin graphemic identity between short and long vowels is restored also in Greek. Only when followed by a consonant cluster, some examples of Latin <u> transliterated into Greek as <o> are maintained alongside the normal spelling <ου>, but they all cease about 100-110 AD (THREATTE, 1980: 220-221).

[39] Stress position in Column 1 refers to the Latin forms of the names, so it may differ from the Greek transliterations of Column 3, that are conventionally cited in the nominative case and conform to the Greek stress rules. Vocalic quantities have been cross-checked on the following dictionaries: GLARE's *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, CASTIGLIONI and MARIOTTI's *Vocabolario della lingua latina*, and PERIN's *Onomasticon totius latinitatis*. For the cases of 'hidden quantity' reference has been made to BENNETT's (1907: 36-55) and ALLEN's (1978: 65-75) criteria. Among them, the criterion of the Greek transliteration is not considered here, in order to avoid the risk of circularity. The cases of the purely graphemic correspondence <u> = <υ> illustrated in § 4.1 are not taken into account, nor the following names, either because I could not safely establish the 'hidden quantity', or because there are discrepancies among the reference dictionaries: Ὀγούλνιος, Πανδυσῖνα, Σόλφιος, Σολπίκιος (only for *ĭ* the quantity is certain), Τοσκήνιος, Ἀλλίδιος, Καπίνιος, Καρουίλιος, Κερρίνιος, Κοσσίνιος, Φιλικίνιος, Οὐιζήιος, Οὐισέλλιος, Ἀγείριος, Αὐίλιος, Νίμμιος, [Οὐ]ετίληνος (?), Ἀλικήιος, Αὐίλιος, Γεριλλάνος, Κίνκιος, Κίσπιος, Μίνδιος, Μινάτιος.

LATIN VOWELS	GREEK LETTERS	GENTILICES	TOKENS	% TOKENS
/ˈiː/	‹ι›	Ἀνίκιος (1), Καβίνιος (1), Μαμλιος (2), Ὁστλιος (1), Πανδυσῖνα (1), Πλίνιος (2), Κοίγκτιος (3), Σαβίνιος (1), Σερουιλιος (1), Σιλλιος (1), Τιτίνιος (1), Οὐεργίνιος (1), Οὐερρίνιος (1), Οὐ-/Βίβιος (7), Οὐικίριος (1)	25/32	78.1%
	‹ε›	Σερουέλλιος (1), Οὐικέριος (3)	4/32	12.5%
	‹ει›	Σαβείνιος (2)	2/32	6.3%
	‹η›	Σερουήλιος (1)	1/32	3.2%
/iː/	‹ι›	Οὐικίριος (4), Οὐινίκιος (1)	5/5	100%
/ˈĭ/	‹ι›	Αὐφίδιος (11), Καικιλιος (4), Καστρίκιος (11), Κρασσίκιος (2), Φαβρίκιος (1), Λικίνιος (2), Μονδίκιος (3), Ὀφίδιος (1), Πομπλιος (1), Ποπίλιος (2), Ποπλιλιος (1), Ῥοτλιος (5), Σεξτιλιος (6), Στερτίνιος (10), Σολπίκιος (3), Τορπλιος (1), Οὐινίκιος (1)	65/83	78.3%
	‹υ›	Αἰμύλιος (10)	10/83	12%
	‹ε›	Καικέλιος (2), Φλαμένιος (1), Στερτέννιος (5)	8/83	9.7%
/ĭ/	‹ι›	Λικίνιος (2), Μινυκία (1), Σατρικάνιος (2), Τιτίνιος (1)	6/6	100%

Table 3. *Greek spellings of Latin front high vowels.*

Albeit testifying to the openness of the Latin short high-vowels, this quantitative survey does complicate the picture, inasmuch as the timbric lowering is not symmetric at all. Such a tendency is evenly found for both stressed and unstressed vowels so that, on the whole: a Latin $ū$ is spelled as ‹ου› (= [u]) in 19 out of 19 occurrences (100%); a Latin $ŭ$ is spelled as ‹o› (= [o]) in 39 out of 39 occurrences (100%); a Latin $ī$ is spelled as ‹ι› / ‹ει› / ‹η› (= [i]) in 33 out of 37 occurrences (89,2%); a Latin $ĭ$ is spelled as ‹ι› / ‹υ› (= [i]) in 81 out of 89 occurrences (91%). Thus, in the back series, the Greek spelling points to a consistent phonetic distinction between Latin $ŭ$ (= ‹o›, i.e. [o]) and $ū$ (= ‹ου›, i.e. [u]), but in the front series the qualitative similarity is maintained between Latin $ĭ$ and $ī$, both spelled as ‹ι› / ‹ει› / ‹η› / ‹υ› (i.e. [i], as a consequence of the Greek iotacism) in most cases[40]. Thus, the Latin of the *negotiatores* testify to an outstanding tendency of the short high vowel

[40]   ...or, once again: at least, Latin $ĭ$ was a high vowel closed enough to be perceived by the Greek drafters as more similar to their native /i/ (= ‹ι› / ‹η› / etc.) than to their native /e/ ([ẹ]) (= ‹ε› / ‹ει›). In Οὐικέριος for *Vicirius*, the open pronunciation of $ī$ might be due to the following *r*, even if its opening effect is currently acknowledged for shorts vowels only (ALLEN, 1978: 51).

ŭ to fall together and merge with the long mid vowel *ō* [o:]; at the opposite, such a tendency is much less evident for the front vowels, with the qualitative distinction between *ĭ* and *ē* holding more firmly.

6. *Alleged Sabellic features*

An asymmetric system with three front vowels ([i], [e], [ɛ]) and two back vowels ([o], [u]), has been reconstructed for contemporary Oscan (Rix, 1983; Meiser, 1986: 120-122; Seidl, 1994: 352-354), but any Sabellic influence on the Latin of the *negotiatores*, if ever possible because of their provenance, ought to be excluded in the light of forms like Ῥομαία and Νόννεις, that are indicative of the [o]-like phonetic value of Latin *ō*. The production of Latin *ō* by native speakers of Oscan should in fact be [u], as is shown by the loanword KVAÍSSTUR (Po 3 *et passim*, < Lat. *quaestōr*; Untermann, 2000: 423-424), the *cognomen* KENSSURINEIS (Ve 81, < Lat. *Censōrinus*, gen.; Untermann, 2000: 384), and the borrowed theonym VÍKTURRAÍ (Po 16, *Victōria*, dat.; Untermann, 2000: 856). Moreover, *Aufidius* and *Saufeius* are certainly Oscan *nomina*, but forms such as Ὀφίδιος and Σωφήιος testify to monophthongised variants that are more Latin than Oscan, where the diphthongs are instead retained.

The syncope of the final vowels is another candidate-Oscanism. In Oscan, short vowels in front of either word-final *-s* or word-final *-m* (after *-Cj-* / *-Cw-*) are dropped (Meiser, 1986: 59-62), such as in LÚVKIS (Ve 4) < **lowkjos* (cfr. Lat. *Lucius*) and PAKIM (Ve 6) < **pākjom* (cfr. Lat. *Pacium*). The same may be supposed to account for the following cases, all from the necropolis: Σλάκις (C 70) < **stlakk-jos* (cfr. Lat. *Stlaccius*); Νόννεις (C 318) < **nōn-jos* (cfr. Lat. *Nonius*); Χαρίτιν (C 184) < **kharit-jon* (cfr. Gr. Χαρίτιον). It must be stressed, however, that an abbreviated spelling -ις (< -ιος) and -ιν (< -ιον) for the nouns is also part of the Greek epigraphic habit, even if its phonetic value is disputed (Threatte, 1980: 400-404; see also Poccetti, 2015: §§ 105-106, with particular reference to the epitaphs), and the earliest examples rules out any Italic influence (IG II²: Βάκχις; IG II²: Διονύσις; both from Athens and dated to the 2nd-1st c. BC).

Since the *geminatio uocalium* is better described as spreading from the Greek versions of the *senatus consulta* (§ 4.1), and the cases of consonant gemination are not straightforward evidence of an Oscan epigraphic practice (§ 4.5), only two instances of anaptyxis remain as alleged Oscanisms in

Delos: Ὁλόκιος (2628, ~ Lat. *Ulcius*) and Σταλακία (C 184, ~ Lat. *Stlaccia*). But the latter is not consistent with the Italic anaptyxis, which operates only in the presence of a syllable boundary (Wallace, 2007: 13).

In summary, although a number of *negotiatores* bore typical Oscan names, their language was likely to be definitely Latinised, in line with the more general Romanisation of the Oscan élites that was taking place in the 2nd/1st-century BC Italy, which, as far as language is concerned, meant the abandonment of Oscan in favour of Latin (Adams, 2003: 657).

7. *Conclusion*

Even with all the caveats about the heterogeneous criteria of transcription, the adaptation of the Latin names to the Greek orthography may cast some light on the variety of Latin that was spoken by a consistent social group of traders incoming from Latium and Southern Italy, and operating in Delos between the 2nd and the 1st century BC (§ 2). Among other features that reflect well-known aspects of colloquial speech (§ 4.2), a closer examination of the lowering of $\breve{\imath}$ and $\breve{u}$ and their merging with $\bar{e}$ and $\bar{o}$ respectively, shows that such tendency is much more pronounced for $\breve{u}$ than for $\breve{\imath}$.

This asymmetric pattern cannot be explained by the intermediary of Sabellic phonology (§ 6), but is better described as an inner-Latin development, in the light of general phonetics and through the asymmetry of the supraglottal tract. There being less articulatory space in the back than in the front, back vowels are nearer to each other in articulatory space than their front counterparts and, thus, more likely to merge (Martinet, 1955: 98-99). Moreover, the same asymmetry in the lowering of $\breve{\imath}$ and $\breve{u}$ is acknowledged by Marotta (2015), based on Latin epigraphic data. Thus, the path by which the symmetric vowel system of Classical Latin evolved into the symmetric vowel system of Proto-Romance, probably did not proceed in parallel for the front and back series – but the chronology of the Romance vocalism is out of question here, as no more than four lines are left. It is enough to recall that the transcriptions under investigation tell us something about the pronunciation of the Hellenistic Greek spoken in Delos, and confirm, in particular, its pervasive iotacism (§ 4.3) and the loss of distinctive vowel length (§ 4.4).

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SsL

Section III

*Language variation at the boundaries
of the Graeco-Roman world*