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tel. +39/07332584346, fax +39/07332584359, poli-rild@unimc.it, diego.poli@tiscali.it

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FABRIZIO SERRA EDITORE, Pisa · Roma

Uffici di Pisa: Via Santa Bibbiana 28, I 56127 Pisa,

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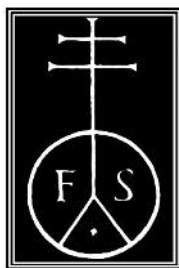
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THE *TABULA VELITERNA*: A SACRED LAW FROM CENTRAL ITALY

BLANCA MARÍA PRÓSPER

ABSTRACT · This is a study of the *Tabula Veliterna*, a legal document found in Velletri and referring to the safeguard of the goods of the goddess Declona and the measures to be taken in case of theft or profanation thereof. I shall undertake a radically different approach to syntax, phonetics and morphology. In turn, some of the conclusions may have some bearing on our conception of Sabellic phonetics and phonology.

KEYWORDS · Sabellic Languages, Indo-European Language Reconstruction, Latin Legal Language, Sacred Laws, Ancient Religion.

1. INTRODUCTION: ORIGINS AND CONTENTS OF THE *TABULA*¹

OUR current interpretations of indigenous legal texts (both in Ancient Italy and in Ancient Hispania) are often vitiated by the fact that they are based on Latin texts that are purportedly of the same nature (texts that, in turn, we are far from understanding, and whose context mostly escapes us, since our knowledge of archaic Roman law is at best fragmentary and heavily relies on guesses often going back to the XIXth c. that have remained unchallenged). In spite of much wishful thinking, all a linguist can do is try to make sense of the overall structure of the text without being carried away by the temptation of making concessions to lame syntax, tolerant semantics, non-existent word-formation, eccentric word order and, worst of all, unparalleled phonetic changes.

In what follows, I shall consequently level dire criticism against several partial and global interpretations of the *Tabula Veliterna* (ST VM 2, Velitrae/Velletri, Lazio), especially those which, for some reason, have become mainstream in spite of being intrinsically unlikely. For the sake of brevity, I shall not take account of studies prior to 1900 except in cases which are long-forgotten but deserve to be reconsidered, and the list of consulted works lays no claim to exhaustiveness. As we are going to see, most of the problems in former views arise because preconceptions on what the inscription must mean are given precedence over our actual, if meagre, knowledge of Sabellic grammar. What is more, slight discrepancies in the interpretation of one word often lead the comprehension of the whole sentence to a dead end. Still, as common sense dictates, ancient legal inscriptions leave less to imagination than modern scholars would like in

indoling@usal.es, Departamento de Filología Clásica e Indoeuropeo, Universidad de Salamanca, España.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Sabellic texts follow ST. All texts in the Latin alphabet are given in SMALL capitals, and texts in the national alphabets are in *italics*. My utmost thanks go to the editor, Diego Poli, and two anonymous reviewers for their kindness and efficiency.

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order to feel entitled to flesh them out at will. As in films, and as opposed to literature, ancient legal inscriptions do not generally contain superfluous information. This document is self-contained and complete. Accordingly, it must make sense in legal terms, and the reader does not need to be referred to further legislation to grasp its gist. Its reading presents no difficulties:

DEVE : DECLVNE : STATOM : SEPIS : ATAHVS : PIS : VELESTROM
 FAÇIA : ESARISTROM : SE : BIM : ASIF : VESCLIS : VINV : ARPATITV
 SEPIS : TOTICV : COVEHRIV : SEPV : FEROM : PIHOM : ESTV
 EC : SE : COSVTIES : MA : CA : TAFANIES : MEDIX : SISTIATIENS

This document has traditionally been considered Volscian, a dialect spoken by a population situated to the South of Rome. Recently, this idea has been called into question by *Ital.* 1, 15, who observe that “The Velitrae bronze, hitherto regarded as Volscian, is in our view not so [...] since *meddices* are attested among the Marsi, it may come from there, or from the territory of the Aequi”.¹ In view of the Umbroid features of this document, this hypothesis may turn out to be correct. As the authors remark, its ultimately origin is unknown even if the object was found near Velletri: at the time estimated for the inscription (around 275 BC) the population of the city is known to have been mostly Roman, and the areas surrounding it used the Oscan alphabet. Having this novel attribution in mind, it could be the case that the enigmatic abbreviations in a much later, lost Marsian inscription seen by Theodor Mommsen, which reads TITIDIA. TIT. F / BO. CLO / D. D. D. D. L / M (*CIL* I², 1767, 125-75 BC), if the text is meant to be Latin in its entirety, should be spelled out as D(EAE). D(ECLONAE). D(ONVM). D(EDIT). L(IBENS) / M(ERITO).

The *Tabula Veliterna* gives specific instructions regarding the consequences of a transgression of some sort against the temple, properties or images of the goddess Declona. The first words of the inscription, DEVE : DECLVNE : STATOM, need not concern us here beyond this fact. Most authors believe this to be a whole sentence, meaning ‘it has been *established* for the goddess Declona’ (Vetter 1953, Pisani 1964), where STATOM is the past participle found in Skt. *sthita-* and Gk. *στατός*.² This idea has a “title-like” variant ‘a decree for the goddess Declona’ (in which STATOM is a noun like LIX in the Marrucinian bronze of Rapino). In both cases, STATOM is cataphorically pointing to the contents of the regulation (Pulgram 1976, Murano 2014). Alternatively, it is simply stating that the physical *object* to which the tabula was attached had been ‘set up / dedicated to the goddess Declona’ (Skutsch 1912, Untermann 1956, Wallace 1984, Antonini 2011). Dissenting voices are M. Durante (1978) and B. Vine (1993, p. 376), who allow for the possibility that STATOM refers to the statue and can be integrated as the topic of the sentence. Vine’s translation would run: ‘(as for) what has been placed (here) for

¹ In fact, the text shows remarkable similarities to the votive offering PA. VI. PACVIES. MEDIS / VE-SVNE. DVNOM. DED / CA. CVMNIOS. CETVR (*CIL* XII, 3208, *ST* Um 3, Antinum), where the subject MEDIS is in all likelihood a singular form.

² Note that accounts directly translating the text into Latin as *statum* or *statutum* are ambiguous in this respect.

the D. D.'. Similarly, Ribezzo (1930) had identified it with the templum of a god Declonus, and translates 'deo declono statum (templum) si quis attigerit'. Note that, whatever syntax is preferred, the fact that the bronze plaque was found probably far away from where it was written is suggestive of its having been attached to an object (the statue) carried away as a *spolium* after war.

Unfortunately, the etymology of the divine name DECLVNE is unknown, and the only certain thing about it is that it is a typical "Hoffmann-divine name" in that it contains the possessive suffix *-Hn-*, which has been appended to a thematic formation and has been thereupon thematicised. It is, in this sense, a close cognate of the Roman divine names like *Pōmōna*, *Bellōna*, and very similar to Marsian *vesvne* (Antinum, *CIL* I, 3208). While one could toy with the idea that it contains an instrument noun in *-tlo-*, this seems incompatible with both a root **d^heh₁-* and an extended root **deh₂-i-*, if I am right that this should have given Plt. **la₁-* (see Prósper 2019b). It could, however, go back to an agentive **dek-lo-* of a root well attested in Italic (see *LIV*, 109, **dek-* '(an-, auf-)nehmen, wahrnehmen'). On a slightly more daring assumption, its base could be identical to L. *dignus*, from a (substantivated?) **dek-no-* 'worth(y)', and the resulting **deknōnā* would have undergone the frequent *-n-n-* > *-l-n-* dissimilation.¹

2. THE PHONETICS AND MORPHOLOGY OF THE TABULA VELITERNA: AN OVERVIEW

Surprisingly, all prior accounts are unanimous on one point: the second line describes the transgressor's obligation to perform an animal sacrifice. It is rather outlandish that no mention is made of the obligation to pay a substantial penalty, and that it is taken for granted that the criminal can be easily identified. In what follows I shall review the different approaches to the text. The chosen division is intended to facilitate the explanation of morphology and does not necessarily anticipate my own view of the constructions involved.

2.1. SEPIS ATAHVS

Most scholars have interpreted these two words as a protasis whose DO is implicit, because the bronze object was actually attached to it or ostensibly referred to it. It must have meant something like 'if someone should touch, profane or do anything unlawful (to it)'. Different modalities of religious transgression have been considered.

SEPIS is obviously identical to U. *sepis*, and the obvious cognate of L. *sīquis* and O. SVAEPIS, U. *suepis* (cf. *WOU*, 559, 667) 'if somebody'.

ATAHVS is, according to current opinion, the 3rd p. sing. of a Sabellic future perfect in *-ust*. Only V. Pisani (1964) sticks to its interpretation as a perfect par-

¹ Cf. Sp. *Antoninus* > *Antolín*, the plant name *santonina* > *santolina*, *Menéndez* > *Meléndez*, *Barcinona* > *Barcelona*, *de inante* > *denante* > *delante*, OSp. *gundfanone* > *gonfalone*, Portuguese *abstinentia* > *abstilencia*, It. *unicornis* > *licorno*, *Bononia* > *Bologna*, *canonicus* > *calonaco* (Cat. *calonge*, Leonese *calónigo*), *meningitis* > *melangite* (Central Italy), Sursilvan Romansh *abundantia* > *abuldonza*, Fr. *orphenin* > *orphelin*, etc.

ticipale in *-uos-/-us-. It is generally related to L. *tangō* 'to touch', from **teh₂g-* (LIV, 616-617), with a prefix **ad-*, **ā-* or **ab-*. The problems surrounding the attribution of *ATAHVS* to this root are insurmountable, however. It is miraculous that /g/ was fricativised and debuccalised in medial position. Generalisation of an outcome /h/, hypothetically generated in a neutralisation environment (for instance preceding a consonant, as in *-kt-* > Proto-Italic *-ht-*), to all contexts, is implausible. Wallace's escape route, by which /g/ may have been fricativised and palatalised in palatal contexts, from which it thereupon spread to other contexts, begs the question. It is surprising that the outcome was rendered <H>, when <I> was available and used in Umbrian, as he admits.¹ Fricativisation of /g/ in medial position would simply have given rise to an allophone [ɣ] that would not have been accorded a separate spelling, since allophonic writing is a far less common phenomenon than often assumed.

The only root hitherto regarded as an alternative to **teh₂g-* is **teh₂-* 'to steal' (LIV, 616),² which is phonetically and morphologically much more plausible. Still, this is a very poorly attested root, only found as a verb in Hitt. *tājezzī* 'to steal' and the Skt. adverb (*s*)*tāyat-* 'secretly', probably a fossilised neuter present participle.³

It has passed unnoticed, however, that there is a well-attested homonymous root **teh₂-* 'to melt' (LIV, 616), which has a plethora of mostly intransitive continuants in the Indo-European languages: OIr. subj. **taid*, **taa*, pret. **tethae* 'to melt, dissolve' (the present is reconstructed as **tā-je/o-* by Schumacher 2004, pp. 627-628), Brittonic **tā-ðe/o-* in MW. *tawð* 'melts', MBret. (*e*)*steuziff* (with **eks-*) 'to disappear, to be extinguished'; Oss. *taj-*, Gk. τήχω, OCS. *tājati*, Alb. *floh* 'abkühlen, kalt werden lassen', etc. (< **teh₂-ske/o-*; cf. Schumacher, Matzinger 2013, p. 974) and, crucially, L. *tābeō* 'to waste away' and the inchoative *tābescō*. While addition of a suffix or enlargement *-b^h-* is usually taken for granted for the Latin form, an old adjective **teh₂-d^hh₁-u-* (→ stative present **tāβ(u)-ē*; cf. *tābum* 'corruption' < **teh₂-d^hh₁u-o-*) would have given the same outcome and this reconstruction facilitates the connection with the Brittonic forms. In fact, there may be an interesting coincidence in the existence of two inherited allomorphs of the present stem in the two branches (or perhaps originally two suppletive formations): Sabellic may have had prefixed present forms with transitive meaning (cf. for instance the transitive/causative uses of E. *thaw*, G. *auftauern* 'cause to thaw') going back to **tā-je/o-*, of which the future perfect was **ta/ā-us-t(i)*.⁴

¹ Pace WALLACE 1984, the assumption that <H> rendered four different and heterogeneous realities, namely a glottal fricative, a hiatus, vowel length and a palatal approximant seems unmotivated.

² Cf. the origins of this idea in VINE 1993, pp. 373-374 and RIX 1992, p. 42 and fn. 20, referring the reader to MEISER's unpublished *Habilitationsschrift*.

³ Most of the attestations of this root are nouns; OCS. *tajp* 'to conceal' is either deadverbial to **tāju* in OCS. *taji* 'in secret' (as per EICHNER 1979) or both the Slavic and the Hittite verb continue a more complex causative present **toh₂i-eje-* (as per JASANOFF 2003, p. 117), which would leave the Latin form isolated.

⁴ One could even go further and set up **th₂-d^hh₁-u-* for the base of PGerm. **pawjanan* 'to thaw' in OHG. *douwen*, etc., under the assumption that *-ðu-* was assimilated to *-uu-* in West Germanic (cf. Goth. *fidwor* vs. OE. *fēower*, etc.). See STILES 1985 for the pros and cons of this idea.

As a consequence, it may be hypothesised that the basic meaning of *ATAHVŠ* is not related to robbery, but to destruction. While we cannot say with any degree of certainty if the text contains an injunction regarding a statue or a hoard, we may be certain that it mostly consisted of metal. Metal was not only valuable, but easy to recycle and prone to being looted by invaders. In fact, it was often melted, with or without permission of the officials or priests.¹

Whether this may have any repercussion on the interpretation of the disputed sequence *NE MED MALOS TATOD* in *CIL* I, 4 (Duenos), where the imperative form is usually held to go back to **teh₂-* ‘steal’,² I dare not say. But, if Proto-Italic, like Proto-Celtic, once had both **teh₂-d^hh₁-* and **teh₂-je/o-* (none of which is likely to be a dialectal innovation), Duenos might have preserved a stem **tā-je/o-* endowed with different semantic nuances (for instance not involving actual liquefaction) or *Aktionsart* specifications and later discarded in Latin, and *NE MED MALOS TATOD* would then mean ‘do not let a bad person crush me’.

2. 2. PIS VELESTROM FAÇIA

The next clause begins with a relative pronoun **k^uis* in the nominative singular, to which I shall turn my attention when I address the syntactic structure of the *Tabula*. There is also consensus as to the meaning and structure of *FAÇIA*: it is the 3rd p. sing. of a present subjunctive ‘makes, should make / do’, identical to U. *façia* and ultimately to L. *faciat*, which has generalised the primary ending in order to counteract the phonetic attrition of *-d* and the progressive loss of morphological distinctions.

The form *VELESTROM* has puzzled scholars from the very beginning, since it is at first glance both familiar and strange-looking, or at least unparalleled. This is why it has often been enthusiastically claimed for Etruscan, a language we have so much to be grateful for, especially since it releases us from the need to look out for answers elsewhere. As regards this text, its deceptive ability to provide explanations for unexpected derivational resources not attested in other better known languages has captivated Thurneysen, Untermann, Pisani, Durante, Pulgram and Wallace, to cite only some. Interestingly, some of these scholars have

¹ Prohibition of destruction has been said to be explicitly stated in an Hernican inscription (*ST He* 2, Anagnia) by RIX 1998, but both vocabulary and context are quite different from our case, albeit conceivably similar to Duenos or other shorter Latin texts like *CIL* I², 499 *NE ATIGAS* or *CIL* I², 2376 *NOLI ME TOLLERE*.

² In the wake of RIX 1985, *contra* EICHNER 1998-1990, p. 216 and fn. 104 who spells out <MALOSTATOD> as *MALOS STATOD* reconstructing a root form **stā-* of the same root and points to homonymy with **steh₂-* to account for the disappearance of this verb. In fact, this root has *s-mobile* to judge from the Sanskrit participle *stāyat-*, which, however, mostly occurs in contexts in which the anlaut is ambiguous because forms with final *-s* precede it (see KULIKOV 2012, p. 649), and *tāyū-* ‘thief’ (RV) shows no *s-*, which leads one to suspect that initial *s-* may be the product of some sort of textual contamination. STEFANELLI 2012, p. 230 translates the final sequence as ‘non mi deporrà con malizia’ (segmenting *MALO STATOD*), assuming a transitive use of **steh₂-*, which usually means ‘to cause to stand’, has a reduplicated present in Latin, and mostly refers to the erection of monuments, which renders this hypothesis comparatively unattractive.

advocated an Indo-European solution for VELESTROM, and an Etruscan one for ESARISTROM, which is not very compelling. Only M. Durante (1963) has identified VELESTROM with Etruscan *śvelstre*.

To begin with, we may jettison the idea that VELESTROM is a gen. pl. (= 'veliternorum'), and that PIS VELESTROM means 'anyone of the Veliterni', which goes back to R. Von Planta (1897, II, p. 543). See, in his wake, F. Skutsch (1912), R. Thurneysen (1921), G. Devoto (1931, p. 307), G. Bottiglioni (1954, p. 338), E. Pulgram (1976), A. Morandi (2009). Even ignoring the fact that the tablet may not have been written in Velletri at all, these are mere look-alikes and, as we will see in what follows, this equation contributes nothing to the comprehension of syntax and semantics, and is now nearly universally rejected.

H. Rix (1992, p. 239), who, on the strength of the *Lex Lucerina* (CIL I, 401), took it for granted that this was a regulation on the misuse of a sacred grove, traced VELESTROM back to an instrument noun endowed with a complex suffix *-(e)s-tro-* and built from the root of L. *vellere* 'to rip, tear' (cf. LIV, 679 **uelh*₃-, and fn. 37). Rix reckons with the existence of an otherwise unattested *-s-stem* **uelH-s-* >> **ueles-* and an instrumental suffix. This kind of secondary, denominal formation is thin on the ground, but may have existed in Italic, witness *monstrum*, from **mon-(e)s-tro-* (on which see below, however), or *fenestra* (with a syncopated variant form *festra*), if from **d^hen-es-tro-*.¹ Nonetheless, if U. MEŘSTO (< **medesto-*), *etuřstamu* (impv., < **tudestā-*), O. *veřkei* (**uetes-*), MINSTREIS (< **min-is-tero-* = L. *minister*), etc., are anything to go by, the reconstructed form would have become †VELSTROM by medial vowel syncope, and preservation of an intramorphemic medial vowel, less amenable to analogical restoration than vowels in morphological boundaries, calls for an explanation. What is more, as J. Bodel (1994) has shown at length, the *Lex Lucerina*, contrary to previous accounts, is not about sacred groves, but about cemeteries and restrictions on what particulars were allowed to do in them. J. Untermann (1956), followed by R. Wallace (1984) translates VELESTROM as 'improvement'. Again, as we will see, this is semantically compelling, but formationally and syntactically doubtful, since it seems to rely on the idea that it is an instrument noun. I shall delve deeper into this question in the discussion of ESARISTROM.

F. Ribezzo (1930) understood both VELESTROM and ESARISTROM as derogatory adjectives and compared the Latin forms in *-aster*; the first was substantivised as 'evil intention', while the second stood in agreement with it and meant 'less sacred'. In doing this, he marked himself off from the rest of the scholars, who have systematically understood ESARISTROM as a noun. V. Pisani (1964) took VELESTROM to be a comparative formation in **-tero-*, which in my view was a step in the good direction. However, he started from an unexplained stem **ueles-* and translated it as 'voluntary', an adjective agreeing with ESARISTROM 'sacrifice'. Finally, if VELESTROM meant 'voluntar(il)y', and PIS VELESTROM FAÇIA were only specifying a special case of the action of taking something away, some consider-

¹ According to STEINBAUER *apud* SCHAFFNER 2005, fn. 138.

ations must be made: doing something by one's own will is not the same as doing it on one's initiative. It goes without saying that one has not committed such a transgression unintentionally, and consequently this interpretation of VELESTROM is hardly plausible.

In my view, D. Steinbauer (1993, pp. 302-303) has offered the only cogent explanation for this form. One can deduce from his sober account that VELESTROM goes back to a comparative form **uelā-is-tero-*, which is morphologically impeccable and paves the way for a new explanation of the rest of the text. He apparently finds Untermann's translation of this form as a noun meaning 'Ausbesserung' reliable, however. Note that, as J. Bodel (1994, p. 26) has emphasised, "revenue derived from sacred places was to be used only on activities resulting in improvement to the places themselves".

Steinbauer's analysis of the corresponding superlative forms as **ue/ala-imo-* is unfounded, however. The extant forms adduced by Steinbauer actually reflect a regular superlative **uelH-is-ṃ(H)o-* 'most powerful'. Medial /a/ is not *lautgesetzlich*: it has spread from root allomorphs in preconsonantal position, where the laryngeal has been regularly vocalised. The relevant attested forms are the South-Picene personal name *Velaimēs* (ST Sp CH 1, *Ital.* 2, 1260-1263, Crechchio), O. *valaimas* (ST Cp 37, *Ital.* 1, 443-446, *defixio* from Capua), O. *VALAEMOM* (ST Lu 1, *Ital.* 3, 1437-1438, Bantia), and the Latin borrowing (probably from Oscan) *vol-aema* 'a fine kind of pear'.

To these forms we may now add new, more archaic materials published after Steinbauer's work: the Pre-Samnite nom. pl. *Φολαισυμος* 'best, most valuable or noble' (ST Ps 20, cippo di Tortora, cf. Lazzarini, Poccetti 2001, pp. 134-138). This form may not owe its root vocalism to assimilation of the vowel to the surrounding consonants, a process we are familiar with in Latin phonetics. The fact that it is accompanied by the nom. pl. *Φολος* is telling enough: the superlative may have been slightly refashioned to become the synchronic superlative of **uolo-*, itself going back to an old agent noun **uolH-ó-* that has been reinterpreted as the positive form of an adjective meaning 'strong, good, valuable' (cf. Prósper 2018a, with lit.). The form VELESTROM turns the scales in favour of this possibility.

The phonetic evolution of VELESTROM implicit in Steinbauer's account is equally satisfactory. In fact, there is good reason to affirm that the second <E> is rendering /e:/, which is the product of monophthongisation, and consequently cannot be taken at face value and traced back to /e/, like most accounts have done, and neither to /i/ (through vowel-to-vowel assimilation). Since there is no reason to believe that this dialect split from Common Umbrian prior to Common Sabellic syncope, VELESTROM should have followed the Umbrian pattern of medial vowel syncope and become **uelstrom* in both cases. This is a decisive argument in favour of a segmentation *-is-tero-*: we may assume that two short vowels in adjacent syllables could be syncopated under favourable circumstances (at the same stage or, perhaps more probably, at different stages, especially when the first vowel belongs to a prefix). This is especially common in the sequence ²Ci(s).³CV-, as in U. **struṃikēlā* > *struhçla*, **deksitero-* > *testru* (ST Um 1); O. **ministro-* > *MINSTREIS* (ST Lu 1, Bantia); **opi-fatōr-* > Ven. *OFATORIO*

(CIL v, 8879, Pontevico/Brixia), but SP. *oftorim* (ST Sp CH 1, Crecchio).¹ In fact, syncope is likely to have taken place prior to Umbrian monophthongisation and given rise to **uēlaḡstro-* ‘better’ (> **uēlestro-*) or **maḡstro-* ‘greater, more’ (nom. sing. fem. U. *mestru* in ST Um 1, Va, etc.). These, in turn, became suitable models for the reinsertion of *-i-* in such similar forms as *ESARISTROM*,² in which *-i-* must have been regularly lost.³ At any rate, this might seem to be at odds with the idea that the superlative suffix **-iḡ-ōmo-* became **-iḡmo-* or **-iḡmo-* and eventually **-imo-*. Either the vowel *-i-* was analogically restored starting from forms in *-aḡs-* (and from other forms in which syncope was equally disfavoured), or *-i-* would have been regularly syncopated only after /i/ had undergone compensatory lengthening in the superlative forms and this was no longer possible. Interestingly, the same pattern of vowel syncope is found in South-Picene *meitistrúi* (Iltal. 1, 196-197, dat. sing., Penna Sant’Andrea), as opposed to a superlative *meitims* (nom. sing., *ibidem*) and *meitimúm* (acc. sing., Iltal. 1, 192-193, Castignano), in turn matched by the probably Venetic name *MEITIMA* (Noricum, Pannonia, Transpadana). I have interpreted these forms as meaning ‘better, more gentle or valuable’ and ‘most gentle, best’, from the same stem as L. *mītis* (see Prósper 2018a). While the semantics of the innovative comparatives in **-istero-* point to this formation having arisen to express contrast in size or spatial relationships, as in L. *magister* vs. *minister*, their use had been extended to encompass basic axiological contrasts like ‘better’ vs. ‘worse’, and some forms began over time to derive from adjectives, and not from roots. For a comparable process, see the Hispano-Celtic name *ELGVISTERI* (gen., Zamora, CIL II, 2613), and the family name *ELGVISMIQ(VM)* (gen. pl., Madrid, CIL II, 3061), respectively ‘worse’ and ‘worst’, if related to OIr. *elc* ‘mischievous’ and PGerm. **elhjaḡ* ‘ill’ < **h₁elk-jo-* at all, and then from **h₁elk-uo-*.⁴ This accounts for the structure and meaning of the South-Picene forms, which belong to the same semantic field as *VELESTROM* and, as we will see, *ESARISTROM*. In all likelihood, *VELESTROM*, which is built from the root, is the core of this set of forms.

Needless to say, a fine-grained explanation of Italic syncope and its stages deserves further research, which is hampered by the paucity of the available evidence and pervasive analogical remodelling.

This virtually eliminates any association with the notion of ‘will’ (in L. *volō*), since all these forms are built from the root **uēlH-* ‘to be strong’ (in L. *valeō*, cf.

¹ Cf. PRÓSPER 2018b.

² If, for instance, *VELESTROM* came from Etruscan *švelštre*, as contended by DURANTE 1963, it would have been unproblematically adapted as †*švelstrom* (since *šv-* is preserved in U. *sve*, O. *svai* ‘if’) or possibly †*švelstrom* (to judge from the conditional *šepis*, if *šv-* goes back to **šve/aḡ* with hypothetically secondary loss of /*ḡ*/).

³ Note in this respect *TOTICV*, where the medial vowel must have been recovered on the analogy of the nom. sing. (bear in mind the discrepancy between U. *TOTCO*, etc., and O. nom. sing. *túvtiks*, abl. *túvtikud*).

⁴ Cf. also Celtib. *elkueiz(u)* (< **elkueidjū*), *elkua*, etc. (MLH IV, K.1.3, Botorrita). Forms like *elku* (< **elkū-ū*), the gen. sing. *elkinos* (< **elkūj-ū*), both in K.1.3, and the superlative *ELGIAMVS* (Ávila, AE 1914, 12, < **elkūj-amo-*) must have played a role in the anomalous preservation or reintroduction of the labiovelar, since I would expect it to be continued in Latin epigraphy as /p/ (unless early context-bound voicing has played a decisive role).

LIV, 676), and not from $\ast_{\text{uelh}_1}$ ‘to choose, want’ (in L. *volō*, cf. LIV, 677). The translations favoured by those who have chosen to see here an adjective from this root agreeing with ESARISTROM (Pisani) or as an adverbial depending on FAÇIA (Antonini, Murano) range from ‘arbitrar(il)y’ to ‘voluntar(il)y’, via ‘in bad faith’. In view of the overwhelming amount of evidence pointing to the basic correctness of its attribution to $\ast_{\text{uelH-}}$, they can be considered obsolete. VELESTROM cannot be a noun meaning ‘improvement’, as Untermann or Wallace would have it, either, but simply ‘more noble, valuable or valid’, ‘better’. In contrast to former interpretations, we cannot lose sight of the fact that VELESTROM is an adjectival form, and, because of gradation, one not likely to be substantivised. The consequences of this assumption will be discussed at length when I address the text structure as a whole.

2.3. ESARISTROM

ESARISTROM is universally translated as a noun, in the wake of R. Von Planta (1897, II, p. 20). In fact, it has been stubbornly interpreted as a *nomen instrumenti* meaning ‘sacrifice’ or ‘transgression, sin’, either of which satisfactorily confirms the piacular nature of this inscription. Unfortunately, its derivational stem is unclear, and the sequence $\ast\text{-i-s-tro-}$ as a whole unjustified. The only inherited suffix can be $\ast\text{-tro-}$, and what precedes should in principle be an Indo-European root, whether basic or extended.

It is a common place that Latin has several instrument nouns descriptively containing a suffix -stro- , which according to some scholars has become productive. This is far from certain, however. In most of these names, medial -s- results from the contact of a root-final dental segment and $\ast\text{-tro-}$: cf. $\ast(\text{H})\text{roh}_2\text{d-tro-} > \text{rostrum}$ ‘beak’ and $\ast(\text{H})\text{reh}_2\text{d-tro-} > \text{rastrum}$ ‘hoe’.

In fact, only three forms defy this explanation. One of them is *lūstrum* ‘ceremonial procession, expiation’, for which no compelling etymology has been found, since, to begin with, it remains unknown what its basic meaning was. All attempts at an explanation thus far have posited a suffix -stro- or have reckoned with a -s- stem that constituted the derivational stem: the most widely accepted example of the second possibility is $\ast\text{leukos} \rightarrow \ast\text{leuks-tro-}$ ‘illumination’. However, this reconstruction has been challenged from the semantic point of view. What is more, it has not been noticed that loss of -k- is unexpected. L. *extrā*, *dextrorsum* or *textrīnum* have, in fact, preserved it, and suggest that $\dagger\text{lūxtrum}$ would have been a viable form. Other etymological attempts and a novel one $\ast_{\text{h}_2}\text{luH-s-}$ based on a root $\ast_{\text{h}_1}\text{leuH-}$ ‘burn’ can be most recently found in A. Nikolaev (2022). In order to obviate the problem of medial -s- without special pleading, one could reconstruct $\ast_{\text{h}_1}\text{leuH-tro-}$ ‘procession, ritual ambulation’ or, in a deeper sense, ‘means of transcendence or regrowth of the community’, which is as speculative as former views. As regards *plaustrum* ‘chariot’, the now habitually accepted, elaborate reconstruction of an obscured compound $\ast\text{pro-ueg}^{\text{h}}\text{-stro-}$ (cf. Forssman 2007) looks implausible to me on several counts: the ‘natural’ assumption of a suffix -stro- , the simplification of the cluster -xtr- , and the *ex machina* dissimilation

-r-r- > -l-r-.¹ One also wonders at the indispensable intermediate stage **pra-ŷé-*, obtained through Thurneysen-Havet-Vine's Law. The assumption that this law should have applied across a perfectly recognisable juncture, generating an entirely new prefix (whose identity was thereupon conveniently blurred, so that -r- became the input of an uncommon dissimilatory process), simply begs the question, though one can adduce as parallels such examples as Gk. φρουρός < **pro-horos* 'guardian' (through aspiration metathesis).² Finally, inherited instrument nouns are normally not compounds.

The only *locus desperatus* I know of in this respect is L. *monstrum*, SP. *múfqlúm* (ST Sp TE 5, Penna Sant'Andrea), in all likelihood respectively from **mons-tro-* and **mons-tlo-* (and not **mones-*; cf. Vine 1993, pp. 128-130), where /o/ matches the root allomorph of the causative *moneō* and the extension -s- is reminiscent of the neuter **men-os*. The resulting hybrid is hardly satisfactory in formational terms, though. One would have reasonably expected **mone-tro-*, assuming a present stem would have encroached on a slot originally occupied exclusively by the bare root. It remains a possibility that **mon-s-* obtained its unexpected enlargement by (early) analogy with stems like *lūstrum* (*ibidem*).

M. Lejeune (1972, pp. 130-131) analyses *ESARISTROM* as an instrumental noun in **-s-tro-*. He compares L. *lustrum*, *monstrum*, etc., which presuppose the existence of a verb **aisariō*, itself from an adjective. This is unconvincing in view of the above arguments. His observation that **aisaro-* goes back to a heteroclitic stem in -r/-n- derived from the Sabellic root **aḡs-* remains unsubstantiated. That dialectal Umbrian should have a form **aḡsaristrom* 'sacrifice' when the Iguvine Tables have a synonym **aḡsōno-* built from the same root begs the question.

It follows that *ESARISTROM* is just another comparative adjective, formed exactly like *VELESTROM*, and not a noun. The idea is of course not new, and must be credited to W. P. Corssen (1858). The underlying structure is probably **aḡsar-is-tero-*, derived from **aḡsaro-* 'sacred, strong?', a nearly unparalleled adjective of uncertain origin. For some scholars, this form is of Etruscan ancestry.

D. Silvestri (2016) has produced a useful compilation of the evidence: Etruscan attests the forms *ais* 'god', pl. *aizer*, *eiser* and the derivatives *aisna*, *eisna* 'sacrifice', among others. This is in accordance with the indirect transmission: cf. Hesych's testimony (which probably refers to Italy *sensu lato*): Αἰσοί θεοὶ ὑπὸ Τυρρηγῶν.

For its part, Italic proper has the following related forms: Alpine Venetic *.a.i.su.s.*, *.a.i.su.n.* (acc. pl./sing., Gurina, Noricum, cf. LV, 243-244), *AESO* (divine name in the dat. sing., Hermagor, Noricum, cf. D. Schür 2011, 100), Marrucian *AISOS* (nom. pl., ST Mv 1, Rapino), Paelignian *AISIS* (dat. pl., ST Pg 12), Marsian *ESOS NOVESEDE* (ST Vm 5, Marruvium), Umbrian *esunu/ESONO* 'sacrifice'

¹ Much better candidates would have been in fact *probrum* 'reproach', *crēbrum* 'frequent', *cerebrum* 'brain' (the vulgar Sp. pronunciation *celebro* has taken thousands of years to come up!), *crābrō* 'goad', *terebrā* 'drill', *vertragus* 'a dog', *peregrinus* (*pelegrinus* starts to occur in epigraphy in the 4th c. AD). The reconstruction of *pulcher* 'beautiful' as **prk-rō-* 'spotted' is attractive but little more than a guess, and, at any rate, the rhotic segments occur in adjacent syllables, which definitely favours dissimilation.

² The prefix *pro-* is semantically redundant as opposed to *pro-verbium*, *pro-vincia* or *pro-vocāre* and the obviously ancient *prūdēns* from **pro-uid-*.

(nom.-acc., *ST Um* 1). The Oscan form *aisusis* (*ST Cp* 37, Capua) has been plausibly corrected as *aisu{s}is* (a thematic dat./abl. pl.) by H. Rix (1967) in view of the immediately preceding forms in *-uis*. By contrast, M. Lejeune (1972, pp. 130-131) favoured a stem **aisu-* going back to **h₂eĭs-u-* and read *ais{us}is*, where the carver had apparently sought to reflect an innovative dat.-abl. pl. **aisis* (the outcome of a partly analogical evolution **ai_su-fs* >> **ai_si-ss*) but instead wrote the ‘old’ **aisus* and then messed it up by adding <is> (without erasing the sequence <us>).

The reconstructed form **ai_su-/-o-* is often deemed to be a match of the Gaulish divine name *ESVS* (Lutetia/Paris, *CIL XIII*, 3026), purportedly recorded as *Aisus* in Marcellus of Bordeaux *De Medicamentis*. The Lepontic personal names *aeso* (coin, *LEX LEP NM*, 1) and *aesia* (Samarate, *LEX LEP VA*, 28) probably have the same origin. To this we should probably add a male divinity *AESOVIO* from the Narbonensis (La Roquebrussanne/Aquae Sextiae, cf. Augusta-Boularot, Borréani 2011), in all likelihood of Celtic ancestry, which is amenable to a number of interpretations: on the one hand, it may be the regular **(i)io-* derivative of the weak stem **h₂eĭs-eu-* (with generalisation of the full grade of the root somewhere down the line). On the other hand, we may reckon with a *-tu-* stem **h₂eĭd^h-tu-* ‘burning’ or, as we will see below in detail, **h₂eĭsd-tu-* ‘reverence’. The late gentilic name *Esvius Tetricus* (emperor from 268 to 273 AD) is possibly its latinised version.

Absence of rhotacism in Umbrian *esunu/ESONO* ‘sacrifice’ is problematic, and has been accorded different solutions.¹ For instance, D. Silvestri (2016) departs from the traditionally reconstructed **h₂eĭs-* and establishes a novel connection with **h₂eĭd^h-* ‘fire blaze, burning’, and specifically with its *-t-* derivatives. G. Meiser (1986, p. 253) traces O. *aiso-* back to a secondary past part. **ai_ssd-to-*, which accounts for the unrhotaicised U. *esunu/ESONO*, from **ai_sssōno-* ‘related to the divinity’. The root **h₂eĭsd-* ‘to worship’ (*LIV*, 260-261, cf. Goth. *aistan* ‘to respect’, etc.) definitely looks like a neo-root **h₂eĭs-dh₃-* ‘to render religious tribute, to offer ritual’. D. Kölligan (2016), by contrast, derives this stem from **h₂eĭs-s-ó-* ‘provided with reverence’, in turn from **h₂eĭs-os/-es-* ‘reverence’. **ai_sssōno-* or **ai_sōno-* may also be continued by *ESONIVS* (Cerrione/Eporedia, Transpadana, cf. Cresci Marrone, Solinas 2013, p. 7), a personal name of Venetic or Gaulish ancestry, and *AESONIVS* (gentilic name, *CIL III*, 11484, Dolsach/Aguntum, Noricum).

An adjective **ai_s-aro-* is not certain to derive from the thematic form **ai_sso-*, nor is a “Caland” alternation **h₂eĭsH-u-* vs. **h₂is_hH-ro-* (>> **h₂eĭs_hH-ro-*) easy to justify (though preservation of the intervocalic voiced allophone of /s/ in an Umbrian dialect could be tentatively put down to preventive dissimilation in the neighbourhood of /r/). Direct matches of *ESARISTROM* may be river names like *Αἰσαρος* in Bruttium, Oscan place names transmitted by Oscans, like *AISERNIM* and its variants (*IItal.* 11, 984, coinage, 3rd c. BC), the local epithet in the dedication [*herek*] *lui aiserniu/i* (*ST Sa* 60, *IItal.* 11, 1037, Campochiaro 3rd c. BC), and place names too far removed from the Etruscan influence, like the one that constitutes base of *Αἰσαρονήγισιοι* (Ptol., *Geogr.* 3, 3, 6, Sardinia). Oscan personal names not

¹ The identification of these forms with *ezūi/esui* in Val Camonica (cf. MORANDI 1998, p. 104) is, for the time being, mere wishful thinking.

derived from the adjective of origin **ajserno-* are N(VMERIO) AESERIO RVFO (*InscrIt.*, 91, Caggiano/Atina, Lucania et Bruttium) and CN(AEVS) AESERIVS (*CIL* VI, 34324, Rome).

Given the existence of other similar European river names like **Isarā* (*Isère* → Rhone, *Isar* → Danube, etc., identical to Skt. *iṣirā-* ‘sacred’, Gk. *ἰρός* in Homer, etc.) and North Italian **ajs-ont-* in two dedications to AESONTIO, the deity of the river *Isonzo* (Aquileia, Venetia et Histria), it may be the case that **ajisaro-* indirectly continues **isaro-*, in turn going back to Indo-European **h₁išh₂-ro-* ‘fast, sacred’, by crossing with the elusive preforms **ajisu-* or **ajisso-*.¹

2.4. SE

This is one of the most intriguing words of this difficult document. There have been, to my knowledge, four different interpretations of it.

According to one of them (Pulgram 1976) there can be no doubt that SE is an accusative form **sīm* ‘pig’ (cf. U. *sim*, *si*, *sif*, etc., and Lat. *sūs*, *suem*) that accompanies BIM and thus definitely favours the classification of this text as a *suovetaurilia*. This strains imagination, considering that final <M> has to be restituted (which is a very minor obstacle) and, importantly, that <E> cannot possibly represent /i:/.

On another, more widespread view, SE is a verb form, specifically a 3rd p. sing. subjunctive identical to Early L. *siet*, classical *sit*, U. *si* ‘may it be’, which comes from the Indo-European optative **h₁s-īeh₁-t* (Vetter 1953, p. 156; Untermann 1956, Lejeune 1972, Wallace 1984). While loss of the final ending *-t* is regular, <E>, again, can hardly be taken to represent /i:/. In addition, this possibility runs up against syntactic difficulties. As we will see, it has brought about a translation of ESARISTROM SE as a clause ‘let there be a sacrifice’ or ‘let it be a transgression’ (in the sense of L. *piaculum est*), in turn followed by an apodosis comprised of a long series of offerings and an imperative form that rounds out the period.

Finally, G. Bottigioni (1954, p. 338) and V. Pisani (1964, pp. 118-119) opt for a conditional conjunction **sej* ‘if’, which leaves this section of the text without an apodosis. R. Thurneysen (1921, p. 218) had already dismissed this possibility and proposed an equation of SE with L. *sī-c*, a particle introducing the apodosis. See a similar idea in F. Ribezzo (1930), and now F. Murano (2014, p. 222), who translates ‘if someone does X, then he should bring an ox’.

2.5. BIM

This form is universally held to mean ‘ox’, and to be the cognate of L. *bovem*, U. *bum* (Thurneysen 1921, Pisani 1964, Pulgram 1976, Wallace 1984, Rix 1992, Mor-

¹ Cf. GARCÍA-RAMÓN 1992 for this etymology and its Greek continuants, and in his wake LIV, 234, **h₁eish₂-* ‘kräftigen, antreiben’. It remains to be seen, however, whether we can unify both roots under a single lemma **h₂ejs(H)-*, given that there are no reliable instances of a full grade **ejs(V)-*. The adduced forms built from **h₁ojs-*, like Gk. *οἶμα* ‘wrath’, can of course be traced back to **h₂ojs-* equally well. L. *eira* ‘ire, wrath’ in Plautus (allegedly from **ejsā*) is hardly an argument in favor of this possibility. If the digraph is hypercorrect, this form could even go back to Plt. **izārā*.

andi 2009, Antonini 2011, Murano 2014). Only F. Skutsch (1912) dared show some scepticism, shared by WOU, 147, and F. Ribezzo (1930, p. 86) related it to Pael. BIAM ‘sacellum’, without mentioning that the idea belongs to F. Bücheler (see also Von Planta 1897, II, p. 651).

The Indo-European accusative of *g^uous ‘ox’ was *g^uōm due to the early action of Stang’s Law, which establishes that -V_{um}# undergoes regressive assimilation, simplification and compensatory lengthening of the preceding vowel. The resulting form *g^uōm is directly continued by Skt. *gām*, Doric Gk. βῶν (also Homer, *Il.* 7, 238) and, crucially, U. *bum*. Let us finally note in passing that we are assuming a Proto-Sabellic acc. *bōm on the strength of the L. nom. sing. *bōs*, itself held to be a Sabellic borrowing, whose vocalism imitates the accusative *bōm (as in Doric nom. sing. βῶς). Were it not for this indirect reasoning, U. *bum* could have been taken from *g^uoum (comparable to Attic Gk. βοῦν, after the nom. sing. βοῦς), rendering its evolution into *bīm impossible.

Accordingly, this form should have been spelt †BVM. If BIM were an isolated form, like an adverbial, one could even venture the guess that the vowel has undergone dissimilation and has been delabialised when flanked by labial consonants. But it is not. It is said to form part of a paradigm in which /o:/ (< ou/) and /u:/ (< o:/) have necessarily alternated. This definitely speaks against the only alternative hypothesis, which is still more desperate (cf. Thurneysen 1921 and Pisani 1964, in the wake of Von Planta 1892, I, p. 131): the deviant vocalism has arisen in analogy to *sīm, the accusative of *sīs ‘pig’ (< *suH-s). Upholders of this theory seem reluctant to clarify whether the accusative BIM has adapted its vocalism to match that of *sīm (which is untenable), or the whole paradigm has been levelled out (which is mere wishful thinking). See the reasonable doubts expressed by EDLIL, 44.

A third explanation (see for instance Wallace 1984) contends that the solution to this quandary is phonetic, and that BIM results from *būm by regular processes. I leave for the moment aside the possibility that short /u/ has been fronted to /y/ in Sabellic, which I shall address in the Appendix, and focus on the fate of the long vowels.

Fronting of /u:/ must have taken place in (Proto-)Sabellic earlier than lowering of /o:/ . Otherwise, /o:/ > /u:/ would probably have fed /u:/ > /i:/ and the original distinction between the two Indo-European back vowels would have been lost. This chain shift consequently worked as a drag chain, and /u:/ must have been fronted to /y:/, or possibly centralised to /ɨ/ or /ɘ/, before the lowering process that affected /o:/ started, as in Attic Greek. G. Meiser’s account (1986, pp. 52-53) is silent as to the relative chronology of the changes involved. R. Wallace’s diametrically opposed claim (1984, p. 49) runs: “it is more likely that raising of *o: preceded the fronting of *u: and in fact was in some sense responsible for the movement of *u: to a front position in Umbrian and Volscian (i.e. a push chain)”. He limits the first stage of the change “(raised) /o:/ > /u:/” to Volscian accented syllables or monosyllables to make this idea fit in with the available evidence: apparently, BIM is the only Sabellic form in which a change /o:/ > /u:/ managed to catch up with the ongoing change /u:/ > /i:/, resulting in

partial merger. One wonders how this could exclusively happen in one Umbrian dialect, and his somewhat later account (Wallace 1985b, fn. 10), in which he sticks to the same etymology but acknowledges these laws stand in a counterfeeding relationship, and, as a consequence, morphological change must have been somehow involved, is by all means preferable.¹

There is nothing inherently suspect about the possibility that the fronting of /u(:)/ to /y(:)/ is Proto-Sabellic, however: most recently, J. V. Méndez Dosuna (2021) proposes that the fronting of /u(:)/ to /y(:)/ dates back to Proto-Greek. This change was thus far mainly recognisable in monosyllables and endings. The new etymology of Paelignian FIRATA in the inscription of Herentas (ST Pg 9, Corfinium), epitaph of a priestess, traced back to *fūrātā ‘stolen’ by I.-X. Adiego (2018), points to an early date for the inception of the change /u:/ > /y:/ . But L. fūr goes back to a root-noun *b^hōr, and, as a consequence, this etymology requires some special pleading (like borrowing from Latin). Of course, other etymologies are possible, and one could consider *fūrātā ‘hit, beaten, finished’, the past participle of a denominative / deadjectival verb *fūr-ā-, itself from *b^hiH-ró- ‘beaten’ (following the derivational type of *flagro- ‘burning’ → L. *flagrāre*, *gnāro- ‘knowing’ → *narrāre*).² The expression SVA AETATV FIRATA FERTLID, usually interpreted as an ablative absolute construction, could then be taken to mean ‘her (still?) fertile age finished’, *mutatis mutandis* similar to that proposed by I.-X. Adiego (2018, pp. 287-289): ‘dopo che fu sottratta la sua vita (che era ancora) fertile’.

Pael. CLISVIST on the same inscription (ST Pg 9, Corfinium) is obscure: while it is usually taken to mean *clausa est ‘is buried’, we would not really expect a zero grade of the neo-root *kleh₂u-d(h₃)- in the past participle. But, even if this form somehow went back to *klh₂ud-tó-, I would definitely expect laryngeal metathesis to give rise to a form *klüssó-, and <1> would be entirely regular (a Latin borrowing from decompositional clūsus is again possible but forced).³ If one were to indulge in further speculation, the expression CLISVIST CERFVM SACARACIRX SEMVNV could mean ‘was anointed as the priestess of the deities ...’, where SACA-

¹ See BLEVINS 2004, pp. 285-289 for current explanations of chain shifts, specifically this one. For the general principles and a specific chain combining the general tendency to raising and fronting, which is especially common in Indo-European languages, as in Greek, French, North Frisian, Swedish, Yiddish, Albanian, etc., see LABOV 1994, pp. 129-137. Since long vs. short high vowels are opposed by tenseness, fronting of /u:/ probably falls out from a general principle (III) stated by LABOV 1994, p. 200 as follows: “In chain shifts, tense vowels move to the front along peripheral paths, and lax vowels move to the back along nonperipheral paths”.

² Cf. the original comparison with L. *finis* in THURNEISEN 1888, p. 351. Note the resemblance with L. *finire* ‘to end, terminate’ and the curious case of Sp. *finado* ‘deceased’, the past participle of a verb *finar*, itself derived from Sp. *fin* ‘end’, which in Spain at least is obsolete but is used with the meaning ‘to murder’ in American Spanish. This adjective is no longer isolated, anyway: it has been recently reconstructed for Albanian (Old Gheg) /bīr/, /biri/ ‘son’ by SCHUMACHER, MATZINGER 2013, p. 215. In my view, this etymology could also explain Celtic *birro- ‘short’ (either through Dybo’s Law and expressive gemination or by the action of *Lex flamma*).

³ As regards Oscan forms like *fruktatiuf* (ST Cm 1, Abella) and *purasiāi* (ST Sa 1, Agnone), as opposed to U. *frif* ‘fruits’, *pir* ‘fire’, we may surmise that the stage /y:/ had been surpassed at the time of the attestations and /u:/ had reached the final stage /i:/, but that, some time earlier, the change had occasionally been reverted, and /y:/ had been assimilated to the labiality of the preceding labial segment.

RACIRIX is the predicative complement. CLISV would then be a past part. **kluHd^(h)-tó-* ‘ritually purified’ of a verb built from the enlarged version of the root reconstructed as **kleuH-* ‘to purify’ by LIV, 335, mostly attested in Italic (cf. L. *cluere*, *cloāca*). Note, however, that Ven. *klovetlo* ‘temple’ in the lead bullet of Monte Manicola and the Baltic forms (Žemaitic Lith. *šlavù*, inf. *šlúoti* ‘to sweep’) render the alternative **kleh₃u-* more acceptable. The reconstructed **kluH-d^(h)-* (presumably from **klh₃u-d^(h)-* with laryngeal metathesis) was probably a neo-root, whose extension goes back to **dh₃-*, or, conceivably, **d^hh₁-*; cf. Goth. *hlútrs* ‘pure’ (< **kluHd-ró-*), as opposed to the unenlarged MW. *clir* ‘clear’ (< **kluH-ró-*) and also Arm. *lurj* ‘shiny, light’ (< **kluH-r-ı́ó-*), *lurt* ‘blue’ (< **kluHd-ró-*) according to H. K. Martirosyan (2010, pp. 322-323).¹

What is more, proponents of the etymology **g^uōm* > **bīm* have overlooked another rule, stated by G. Meiser (1986, pp. 120-122) for Umbrian: Both /u/ and /u:/ are lowered to /o/ and /o:/ before a nasal in any position of the word. This means that our only surviving instance of the Umbrian acc. *būm* (IIa 5), in the Umbrian national alphabet, stands for /bom/ or /bo:m/. The language of the Tabula has not undergone this final step, since it mentions a divine name DECLVNE, which contains the suffix *-ūno-* < **-ōno-*. Meiser even considers the possibility that Proto-Sabellic /u:/ underwent this change. But, in view of the discrepancy between *būm* and *sim* (IIb 1), it seems natural to assume that at least the first stages of the change /u:/ > /i:/ took place prior to /o:/ > /u:/, which in turn is earlier than /u:/ > /o:/ preceding a nasal (possibly /u:/ > /u/ > /o/ in unstressed syllables).

2. 6. ASIF

Again, this form comes to complicate matters. Once the hypothesis that it is a dative-ablative plural in **-b^hos* ‘assibus’ (Pisani 1964, 118, partly followed by Pulgram 1976, who believes it to be an adjective and makes it agree with VESCLIS) is rejected, only two possibilities remain. The first one is followed by most scholars: ASIF is the acc. pl. of an *-i-* stem noun. Since it is unlikely to designate an animal, other ideas have been put forward. For instance, it could be the perfect match of L. *asses*: along with animals, wine and vessels of food, coins are offered, possibly as a penalty (Skutsch 1912, followed by Vetter 1953, Wallace 1984, Rix 1992, and Murano 2014). Why the precise amount of money is not consigned remains a mystery, a minor problem for those who find no alternative, since in their view it must have been placed between the accusative BIM and the ablative VESCLIS VINV for some reason. It should be noted that Latin and Umbrian inscriptions containing words for ‘currency’ usually explicitly mention the imposition of a penalty, which is not the case here.

The fact that the form BIM immediately precedes ASIF has encouraged still another interpretation: ASIF denoted the roasted meat of the ox (*Ital.* I, 340-343;

¹ Whether SP. *qdufeniūi* ‘for Clufenius’ (ST Sp TE 7, Penna Sant’Andrea) can be brought to bear here or not cannot be ascertained, since either laryngeal loss or vowel shortening are unexpected. It is at least clear that it is identical to the (Oscan?) gentilic name CLVFENNIVS in Apulia and Noricum (*CIL* III, 4793, 4897), where /u/ shows no trace of fronting. I intend to return to this form in a forthcoming work.

R. Antonini 2011). In fact, there are conceivable parallels. In my view, as expressed in Prósper 2020a, p. 83, there existed a possibly Pan-Italic inherited predicate **at^stom ferō* ‘carry the roasted (meat)’, where the DO ultimately goes back to a past part. **ad-to-*. It is thus far attested in Marrucinian (dialectal Oscan) ASVM FERET (Rapino, *ST* Mv 1, c. 250 BC), Umbrian ASO DESTRE ONSE FERTV, ‘bring the roasted meat on the right shoulder’ (*ST* Um 1, VI.b), and Latin ASOM FERO (cista, Praeneste, *CIL* I, 560g, 260-240 BC). However, this formula more or less automatically discredits the above interpretation of ASIF: one does not see how the past participle could have been transferred to the *-i*-stems, and one definitely does not expect a masculine plural when all the ascertained examples have neuter singular endings denoting a mass of meat, not separate roasted parts allegedly mentioned as ‘the roasted ones’. Finally, no document known to me mentions an ox and roasted parts thereof separately in the same sentence, and at the same time, paradoxically, lacks a verb related to sacrificing, roasting, offering or carrying. F. Ribezzo (1930, p. 86) and G. Bottiglioni (1954, p. 338) translate ASIF as ‘aras’, which does not fare better for similar morphological reasons.

R. Thurneysen (1921) mentioned the possibility of analysing ASIF as the nominative singular of an active participle in *-f* of an *-ē-* present, like L. *torrens*. This is not possible, since he seems to be referring to the same verb **ad-* as discussed above. In fact, this is an older idea, going back to F. Bücheler, mentioned and followed by R. Von Planta (1897, II, p. 651), who posited a cognate of L. *arens* with transitive meaning ‘incendens’. Once again, this is hardly satisfactory either in phonetic terms (**as-* should have undergone rhotacism) or in formational terms (*arens* contains a stative suffix *-ē-* and its Umbrian cognate cannot have had transitive uses).

2. 7. VESCLIS VINV ARPATITV

When one takes a look at former interpretations of the text as a whole, one wonders why, to begin with, no basic verb designating the execution of sacred rituals involving animal sacrifice like L. DATOD, U. FEITV is used here. The vocabulary for ceremonies involving sacrifice is highly standardised in Italic. In fact, a more concise expression could be expected, as in the Lex Spoletina, *CIL* I, 366: SEQVIS VIOLASIT (LVCVM), IOVE BOVID PIACLVM DATOD, which most of the studies paradoxically bring to bear on this matter. Secondly, there is no answer to why the piacular victims are mentioned in the accusative, and the inanimate, bloodless offerings in the ablative case.

The only imperative in this text, and thus the central instruction, is ARPATITV. Some scholars have identified its root as Indo-European **pet-* ‘spread out’, which is phonetically questionable. In addition, it cannot be neatly made to fit in a sacrificial context on the grounds that it originally alluded to the victims being ‘spread out’ before the gods, and over time was taken to mean ‘offer, sacrifice’, as R. Wallace (1984, pp. 51-52) concludes. Others have favoured its cognacy with L. *quatiō* ‘to shake’ (*LIV*, 563 **(s)kueh₁t-* ‘durchschütteln, aufrütteln’).

In my view, this form is *mutatis mutandis* equatable to Homeric Gk. ἐπι-πᾶσσω ‘sprinkle’, from **(s)kueh₁t-*. Its complements are the DO referring to the thing that has to be besprinkled with grain and liquid, which must be retrieved from the context, and the grain and liquid to be used for this libation in the ablative case: *VESCLIS* (cf. U. *veskles*/*VESCLIR*), possibly from **uēsk-tl-ōis* (cf. L. *vēscor* ‘enjoy’),¹ which is not certain to be related to L. *vāsculum* (which is a diminutive formation),² and *VINV* (cf. U. acc. sing. *vinu*). In sum, the ritual action is a libation, probably fitting in the consecration of the new or repaired statue or treasure.

3. THE SYNTAX OF THE *TABULA VELITERNA*: A STATE OF THE ART

Let us now offer a short overview of the syntactic structure of this text proposed by authors who have tackled a global approach to it.

R. Von Planta (1897 II, p. 543): ‘*Divae Declonae* statum. Siquis attigerit quis Veliternorum, faciat sacrificium; si [...]m *incendens*, vasculis vino ad[...]to. si quis publico conventu sciente, pium esto’.

F. Skutsch (1912): ‘If somebody touches it, then (a sequence of accusatives, including *asses*) ... If, on the other hand, with the permission of the assembly, then it should be no sin to take it away’ (my translation).

This account is, as we will see, more cautious than most. Skutsch reckons with the possibility that *PIS VELESTROM FAÇIA ESARISTROM* means ‘whoever of the Veliterni or peregrini does it’. This identification of *VELESTROM* with the Veliterni cannot be justified on syntactic or semantic grounds, but is followed by a substantial number of specialists. *ESARISTROM* is accorded an arbitrary content and made to agree with it, which is equally on the wrong track.

R. Thurneysen (1921): ‘If someone, that is to say, a Veliternus, has undertaken it to offer an *esaristrom*, then he should, while he roasts the ox, perform an (indeterminate) action with vessels and wine. If someone does it with the authorisation of the *convirium publicum*, let a feastly procession be permitted’ (my translation).

This analysis again shows the fundamental flaw of relating *ATAHVS* to *tangere*, but incorporates a novelty: it refers to a ritual initiative and not to a transgression. To this effect, it gets rid of *VELESTROM* in order to make *ESARISTROM* the DO of *FAÇIA*, following a tradition that goes back to Mommsen. The resulting word order is unexpected, especially in view of the following DO + participle ‘while he roasts the ox’ agreeing with *SEPIS* and *PIS*. The already reviewed morphological objections apply.

F. Ribezzo (1930): ‘*Deo Declono* statum (templum) si quis attigerit qui arbitrium faciat sacrilegum, (si / is) sacellum aras, vasis vino aspergito. Si quis civica curia sciente ferre (scil. attigerit ut ferat) pium esto’.

This translation has the merit of economy and concinnity and offers a reasonable analysis of *SE* (‘then’ or ‘he himself’, which he equates to *ip-se*), though the DO of *ARPATIV* is morphologically suspect. He understands *ESARISTROM* as an

¹ Other reconstructions in *WOU*, 846-847.

² Cf. *HANSEN* 1941.

adjective agreeing with VELESTROM 'arbitrium'. But then, the 'arbitrium sacrilegum' must be simultaneous, not to say coterminous, with the sacrilegious action and the use of a present subjunctive form is therefore unjustified.

E. Vetter (1953): 'siquis attigerit qui arbitrium faciat piaculum sit: bovem, asses (cum) vasculis (et) vino conferto. Siquis publico conventu sciente, asportare pium esto'.

The construction 'arbitrium faciat' is a superfluous explanatory device that apparently expands 'attigerit', again in the wrong tense and mood. The syntax of the second relative clause and its alleged apodosis ESARISTROM SE is especially unconvincing, and there are multiple semantic and phonetic objections to be raised.

G. Bottiglioni (1954, p. 338): 'Divae Declunae statum. Siquis attigerit, quis veliternorum faciat sacrificium. Si bovem (et) aras vasculis vino adspergito. Siquis, publica curia sciente, ferre, pium esto' (similarly La Regina 1995).

This account tacitly relies on R. Thurneysen (1921), and incurs the same erroneous interpretation of VELESTROM and ESARISTROM. The main clause means 'let any one of the Veliterni perform a ritual action / sacrifice', which constitutes a novelty in that it separates the criminal from the spontaneous citizen willing to bear the expenditure, but founders on the use of a subjunctive for the apodosis. Unless he understood SI as an adverbial in the wake of Thurneysen, however, the syntactic construction becomes lame again at the end with the unruly conflation of protasis and apodosis.

J. Untermann (1956): "Established/consecrated to the goddess. If somebody touches (the sacred object), who intends to make an improvement to it, an expiation offering should take place. He should offer an ox and ... with vessels and wine. If someone does it with the acquiescence of the public assembly, let it be pious to take away (the object)" (my translation).

Untermann in my opinion correctly identifies the import of the inscription as related to improvement or embellishment, but some issues remain unsolved in his account, such as the nature of ASIF, ESARISTROM and BIM, for which he relies on previous solutions. It is, in addition, rather outlandish that laying hands on something in order to do a reparation should entail such an expensive sacrifice, in fact probably more costly than the improvement itself, and that this can only be carried out with the explicit consent of the assembly.

V. Pisani (1964): 'Divae Declonae statutum. Siquis imprudens pius voluntarium faciat sacrificium, si bovem assibus vasculis vino adperso, siquis publica curia sciente ferre pium esto'.

For Pisani, ATAHVS 'imprudent' is the epithet the text dedicates to a priest who did not know his job, and PIS means 'pius', alluding to his disposition to repair the damage. He makes VELESTROM an adjective agreeing with ESARISTROM. While the syntax of the first conditional clause must be credited with the merit of some internal consistency, the second is lame since it lacks a verb, and there is no apodosis until the end. The antecedents leading to this peculiar obligation are missing. The usual phonetic problems obtain.

E. Pulgram (1976): "A decree concerning the goddess Declona. If anyone will have laid hands on [something, whatever was in the container or behind the door

to which the bronze plate itself was attached], anyone of the inhabitants of Velitrae, let him make an expiatory sacrifice -a pig, an ox-; let him sprinkle (them) with wine out of *asif* jars. If anyone (will have done it), there shall be, with the knowledge (or consent) of the public assembly, an expiatory purification”.

The same objections apply as for R. Thurneysen’s account. The phonetic problems surrounding the sequence of sacrificial victims and items involved are innumerable.

R. Wallace (1984): “If someone should have laid hands on ... in order to make a restoration/ cleaning, (then) let there be an expiatory sacrifice. Let (someone) offer a cow and an *asif* (money?) along with vessels of wine. If anyone (will have laid hands on this object) with the consent of the assembly, then let the carrying (away) be lawful”.

This translation correctly follows J. Untermann’s general views, but the phonetic problems are insurmountable, and the syntax, as we will see below, is unconvincing, especially regarding the translation of *ESARISTROM SE*, which draws upon E. Vetter (1953).

H. Rix (1992, pp. 47, 41): “Se qualcuno che fa uno strappamento avrà presso lo strappato a se, (che) sarà una violazione, o (che) sia un sacrificio ... esso metta a disposizione un bue e un asso ciascuno per i vasi con polta e per il vino. Se qualcuno lo facesse coll’approvazione dell’assemblea comunale, il portare sia esente di contaminazione”.

By a perilous syntactic turn, Rix manages to turn the *consecutio temporum* upside down: his translation raises the secondary action *VELESTROM FAÇIA* to the beginning, suggesting it has taken place prior to the first one. Unfortunately, one cannot wrench anything after one has taken away the product of this very action. The rest of the problems concerning the status of *VELESTROM* and *ESARISTROM* and the phonetics of *SE* and *BIM* persist.

More recent accounts contribute essentially few new ideas to the interpretation of this text. For instance, A. Morandi (2009, 445): “Statuto per la Dea Declona se qualcuno avrà compiuto delle manomissioni. Chi dei Veliterni (lo) faccia, dei sacerdoti, un maiale, un bue, denari, vino con vasi apportati. Se qualcuno (faccia/ farà questo) con il consenso della assemblea pubblica, sia lecito apportare (come purificazione)”.

This translation introduces an original syntactic division: the apodosis ‘it is established’ seems to precede the condition around which the whole document revolves: potential unlawful manipulation of the divine patrimony. Thereupon, *PIS* ‘whoever’ introduces a relative clause containing specifications on the general point, which does not explain why the mood and tense have abruptly changed. As far as I know, his interpretation of *ESARISTROM* as a gen. pl. ‘(any) of the priests’, agreeing with *VELESTROM*, is original. The rest amalgamates previous research and entails the same problems.

R. Antonini (2011): “Se qualcuno (lo) *atahus*: chi faccia l’atto con mala fede, vi sia piaculo: *arpatitu* un bue, gli arrostiti con le (interiora cotte in) olle, con il vino! Se qualcuno (lo *atahus*): (chi faccia l’atto) essendo consapevole il *totico couehrio*, il sacrificare (scil., portare il piaculo) sia rimesso!”.

Though I confess most of this article has proven unintelligible to me, its final interpretation boils down to a remake of Vetter's. For a judgment of the interpretation of ASIF as 'roasted parts' see above.

Ital. 1, 340-343: "Decided for the goddess Decluna. If anyone shall have taken who may make a ^m, it should be a (case of) *piaculum*; he is to provide an ox, (i.e.) roasted portions, with vessels and wine. If anyone (shall have taken) with the approval of the public assembly, the removal' is to be not irreligious".

This account is both eclectic and non-committal, as usual with this work.

F. Murano (2014): "Per la dea Declona ciò è stabilito. Se qualcuno tocca (prende?; *scil.* qualcosa di pertinenza della divinità), chi (lo) fa di propria iniziativa, – sia (c'è) una violazione (oppure vi sia un sacrificio) – metta a disposizione un bue, denari, con (*exta* cotti in) vasi e vino. Se (invece) qualcuno (*scil.* tocca/prende), essendone a conoscenza l'assemblea popolare, il *ferom* (l'obolare?) sia lecito".

This approach contributes essentially nothing to former scholarship and simply follows Vetter in most points.

4. THE PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY OF THE *TABULA VELITERNA*: ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW

The phonemic contrasts between front vowels have evolved from Proto-Indo-European to Sabellic as follows, according to Meiser 1986, p. 42:

/i/ > /e/ (so-called *Mittellaut*)
/i:/ > /i:/
/e/ > /e/
/e:/ > /e:/

Our text shows in this respect the following relation between phonology and spelling (in part already formulated by Rix 1992):

/i:/ (BIM, VINV, PIHOM) and /i/ > /e/ (SEPI, PIS, ESARISTROM, ARPATITV, TOTICV) pattern together and are both spelt <I>, as opposed to Umbrian proper, where we find the random spellings <e>, <i> and <E>, <EI>, <I> for the *Mittellaut*.

/e/ (VELESTROM, VESCLIS) and /e:/ (SEPV) are spelt <E>. Length can be marked by addition of <H> if we accept that COVEHRIV, like L. *cūria* 'assembly', continues a derivative of **ko(m)-uēro-*, as per B. Vine (1993, pp. 377-379), "referring to a social grouping originally based on mutual trust, oath-taking, propriety, legality, or some similar conception or practice".

As expected in a dialect of the Umbrian group, the closing diphthongs /aj/, /ej/, /oj/ are consistently monophthongised to /e:/ and spelt <E>. In word final position, however, the resulting long vowel seems to have been raised. For instance, the dative-ablative plural was Proto-Sabellic **-ojs* (traditionally taken from **-ōjs*). We would reasonably expect it to become consistently /es/, with word-final shortening. In the Iguvine Tables it is usually attested as <es>, in the Latin alphabet <IR>, <EIR>, <ER> (or their unrhotalised variants <IS>, <EIS>, <ES>). In other words, it seems to have merged with the *Mittellaut*, the outcome of Indo-European /i/ in stressed syllables. The same applies to final

/e:/ to judge from the adverb TRAHVORFI ‘transverse’ (ST Um 1, VIIa) from Sabellic *trā=ūortssē(d) (< *trans=ūort^s-to-).

In the Tabula Veliterna, this is confirmed by VESCLIS, which is identical to U. veskles, VESCLIR with late raising of palatal vowels in final syllables. Apparently, the dialect of the Tabula Veliterna has not undergone rhotacism of final -s (and it is likely, but not certain to have undergone it in other positions). Indo-European /e/ shows the same tendency to raising in Umbrian in final syllables (with the likely exception of /e/ preceding a nasal), as in the mediopassive primary ending *-ter: cf. herter, HERTEI, HERTI ‘oportet’. This point will prove integral to my interpretation of ASIF.

5. THE TEXT ARCHITECTURE OF THE TABULA VELITERNA: A REAPPRAISAL

The repeated attempts to decipher this text, in spite of displaying subtle differences, have much more in common than one would expect if one considers they span one full century: notably, all of them are adamant that there is an animal sacrifice involved, and that BIM at least means ‘ox’, and all of them reckon with a single protagonist, who commits a transgression and performs an expiatory ritual, or has good intentions but anyway is obligated to perform an expiatory ritual if one wants the rather lengthy ensuing section of the text to make sense.

The hitherto unnoticed, most blatant contradiction incurred by most former studies of this text lies in the fact that SEPIS and the following PIS cannot have the same referent. If the subject of the conditional clause is someone unknown, who has committed a crime or a sacrilege, this clause is complemented by a relative one, introduced by PIS, that either a) describes what he may or must do next as an atonement imposed by the authorities, or b) clarifies some aspects of what he has actually done, introducing a specification of the illegal action (which, following Untermann’s and Wallace’s interpretation, should have qualified as a disclaimer, however). But in that case, the second PIS is out of place, because the person involved is taken to be the same, and in that case another relative pronoun would certainly have been used.

In fact, Italic has a relative pronoun *k^{uo}-ī that specifies in what actions a person that has been previously mentioned takes part. This is of course common in other Indo-European languages: cf. G. ‘wenn jemand ... der/welcher’ (not ‘wer’), Sp. ‘si alguien ... que/el cual’ (not ‘quien’). *k^{uo}-ī is continued by L. *quoi*, *quī*, but also by U. POI, O. *pui* (ST CP 37, Capua).

Take, for instance, a number of cases from the Iguvine Tables: ST Um 1 VIa 5-6 SERSI PIRSI SESVST POI ANGLA ASERIATO EST may be literally translated, with minor differences between scholars, as ‘when/if (he) in the seat has sat *who* will go to watch the augural birds’. This is not very different from the structure of the Volscian sentence as commonly understood, and the relative clause introduced by POI even has a final nuance. The relative form POI is used because it is common knowledge of the writer and the reader that the same local magistrate is involved, if of course it is not always the same person, and *whoever* would be

out of place. In other words, the referent is definite as well as non-specific, as in 'call the doctor'. Still more transparent in this respect is the highly redundant construction of *ST Um 1 Vib 24*: APE HABINA PVRDINŚVS ERONT POI HABINA PVRDINSVST DESTRVCO PERSI VESTISIA ET PESONDRO SORSOM FETV 'when he has offered the sheep, the *same* person *that* has offered the sheep should sacrifice the *vestisia*, etc.'

The same applies to the earliest Latin inscription, the vase of Duenos (*CIL* I, 4), which reads: IOVESAT DEOS QVOI MED MITAT 'he who sends me, swears by the gods' (where QVOI may even be interpreted as both definite and specific). Of special interest on several counts is an example adduced by R. Wallace (1984, p. 43) in the wake of J. Untermann (1956). A text from Narbonne (*CIL* XII, 4333) reads: SIQVIS TERGERE ORNARE REFICERE VOLET QVOD BENIFICII CAUSA FIAT IVS FASQVE ESTO 'it is right and proper if someone wishes, as a kindness, to clean up, embellish, or restore (this altar)' (Wallace 1984, p. 43; his translation). Here, the proposed beneficial actions consigned in the protasis (closed with a verb in the future tense) are resumed by QVOD, not QVICQVID, in the explanatory relative clause, whose verb is in the present subjunctive (because these actions can only take place if the initial condition is fulfilled). The apodosis contains, as expected, an imperative that simply proclaims the lawfulness of the enterprise, and, interestingly, does not foresee any ritual performance.

It is surprising that most accounts adduce in this respect the *Lex Lucerina* (*CIL* I, 401), which begins by notifying the reader of the prohibition: IN HOCE LOVCARID STIRCVS / NE [QV]IS FVNDATID NEVE CADAVER / PROIECITA(TI)D NEVE PARENTATID, and thereupon reads: SEI QVIS ARVORSV(M) HAC FAXIT [CEIV]IVM / QVIS VOLET PRO IOVDICATOD N(VMMVM) <L=I> / MANVM INIECT(I)O ESTOD SEIVE / MAG[I]STERATVS VOLET MOLTARE / [LI]CETOD. Obviously, SEI QVIS is the potential infractor, and CEIVIVM QVIS VOLET refers to any citizen who is entitled to do justice: 'If anyone transgresses this (order), whoever of the citizens wishes, let there be (by his hand), by way of a judgement, a laying of hands upon him of 50 sesterces. Or if a magistrate wishes to impose a fine, let this be allowed'. Both pronominal morphology and use of a perfect tense (future perfect) followed by a future indicative and an apodosis in the imperative is highly reminiscent of the text of the Tabula Veliterna.

As J. Bodel (1994, p. 27) has appositely observed, summarising previous views: "Beginning with a thorough discussion of the Roman concept of in^{ex}piabilitas and drawing upon similar texts in which fines and piacula are mentioned together, Tromp showed that in cases of religious crimes committed knowingly, the guilty party was subject to fine for having broken civil law, but, *being impius*, *he remained in^{ex}piable in religious terms*."¹ The obligation to perform a piaculum fell rather to the magistrate or chief priest, whose responsibility it was, regardless of the nature of the infraction, to expiate the religious pollution on behalf of the community". It certainly follows from this that one could not expect to catch the

¹ My italics.

offender and then both make him pay a substantial fine and have him conduct a sacrifice to purge himself of guilt and save the city from religious pollution of unpredictable consequences.

Only translations in which VELESTROM is taken to be a genitive plural 'Veliter-norum' (e.g. Thurneysen, Bottiglioni, Pulgram, Morandi) seem to capture the idea that something is wrong with the use of PIS to introduce a relative clause, and for their proponents, at any rate, PIS is referentially but not conceptually identical to PIS in SEPIS. By some accounts, it is an indefinite, not a relative pronoun 'anybody, any of the ...', which specifies the contents of SEPIS and potentially denotes a subclass of it: 'if someone has/will..., any of the Veliterni'. A minority of scholars, by contrast, understands PIS as a relative pronoun of indefinite meaning, and takes it to mean that nobody is excluded: so F. Skutsch (1912) 'whoever of the Veliterni or the peregrini does it'. A. Morandi (2009) equally captures the ultimate reason for the repetition of PIS, and his analysis, like the former account, introduces a relative clause that alludes to the potential agents: 'if someone has manipulated ... (then) whoever of the Veliternian priests does it'.

Once more, this idea has been subject to some amount of further, often unprofessed internal variation. For instance, the whole sequence has positive nuances for Thurneysen: 'if someone wants to perform a sacrifice, namely one of the Veliterni'. By contrast, it must be globally deemed negative for E. Pulgram (1976): 'if someone has committed an offence, one of the Veliterni' and A. Morandi thinks it has been promulgated in case someone *in charge of the temple* commits an offence: 'if some has manipulated [...], whoever of the Veliterni priests does it'. Only G. Bottiglioni (1954) believes both instances of PIS to refer to different subsets: the first has committed the transgression, and the other one has to make things up and, in addition, introduces the apodosis: 'let any of the Veliterni offer a sacrifice'. Unfortunately, besides other syntactic problems I shall review in what follows, this pathway is closed forever by the essential incompatibility between VELESTROM and *Veliterni*, both in formal terms and concerning *realia*, given that the tabula is not even likely to have been written in Velletri.

In sum, any minimally plausible explanation for the sequence SEPIS [...] PIS must take into account the fact that their referent is not the same, and, in addition, that the second PIS alludes to someone who does something *after*, and as a consequence of, another person's unlawful or unexpected doing. This would relieve us from having to come to terms with an obvious violation of the expected *consecutio temporum*: either if PIS VELESTROM FAÇIA was alluding to someone acting in bad faith, voluntarily, etc., or if it was merely specifying that one of the Veliterni could be involved in the action expressed by ATAHVS, this would never have been expressed by a present subjunctive FAÇIA, since intention precedes action and involvement is simultaneous with it. Therefore, we would definitely find another future perfect in its stead. The correct clause would read †SE(PIS) VELESTROM FACVS. In this regard, the harmonious translation 'if someone should touch ... in order to make an improvement', offered by Untermann 1956 and Wallace 1984, as well as that of Thurneysen 1921, who understands SEPIS ATAHVS ... FAÇIA ESARISTROM directly as a single clause 'whoever intends to

make a sacrifice' and thus makes FAÇIA the DO of ATAHVS, may work from the syntactic point of view, but, again, founder on the fact that the subject potentially filling the slots of SEPIS and PIS cannot possibly be the same.

As contended above, the following form VELESTROM is most likely to mean 'better'. As a consequence, one can take it for granted that the second action (FAÇIA) was intended to make up for the first (ATAHVS), which is consistent with the idea that SEPIS and PIS must have different referents. VELESTROM may be an adjective, an adverb, or, conceivably, a substantivised adjective. Therefore, PIS VELESTROM FAÇIA may be taken to mean 'who(ever) makes (it) better' = 'repairs (it)' or perhaps, if this is a collocation, it may convey a similar meaning to that of the Latin compound *satisfaciō* 'give satisfaction, make up for', and E. *make good (on something)* 'repair, pay for, compensate'. This is probably the reason why, as we are going to see, no animal sacrifice is mentioned in this text: the person or persons responsible for the ritual atonement are not obligated to such an unnecessary expense and have done nothing to outrage the divinity. The sacrifice in all likelihood consisted of a libation, intended as part of the ritual consecration of the new statue or the renewed patrimony of the goddess, which may have formed part of an act of evergetism, unless, as we have seen, it naturally accrued to the authorities.

The identification of the sequence ESARISTROM SE as the first apodosis, and the rest of the text, closed by the imperative ARPATITV, as the second apodosis, is a very popular option, shared by Vetter, Wallace, Rix, Antonini and Murano. In this way, it is naturally accepted that the subjunctive can be used in this role as the main verb of the clause, and that only the second verb of the apodosis must be an imperative. As we have seen with Von Planta's and Pulgram's account of FAÇIA, this is an unjustifiable concession, since the subjunctive mood is hardly ever used in direct commands,¹ and SE cannot possibly go back to Proto-Italic **sjet̥*. In addition, its meaning oscillates between 'let it be (that is to say 'constitute') a transgression' and 'let there be a sacrifice'. It stands to reason that in the second case, the one usually favoured by scholarship, we would rather have expected something like †ESARISTROM FEITV.

If SE cannot be the reflex of /siz/, there is a limited number of one plausible alternatives: <E> represents /e/, /e:/ or an original diphthong. If this form were the conditional conjunction **sej*, the text would be, once again, unintelligible: there is no verb in personal form between SE and ARPATITV. To my knowledge, nobody has suggested the possibility that SE is a pronoun.

¹ The adduced examples are usually prohibitions, in which a negation precedes and the verbal mood is labeled *Präventiv* (cf. Rix 1998), and are *-ā-* derivatives. Factoring out cases in which subjunctives are actually dependent on another verb, JONES 1962 has established for the passage VIIa 1-4 the existence of a distinct pragmatic nuance: the subjunctives are not inserted in a ritual context, but allude to the functions of priests and officers, thus apparently providing a specific context for *jussive subjunctives*. Since this is not exactly an instruction, but a description of what they are expected to do according to their capacities, we are dealing with different types of modality. As a consequence, the occurrence of a subjunctive and an imperative in the same sentence, with the same subject and the same function, is unwarranted and unparalleled.

The reflexive pronoun was inflected in Italic, but its Indo-European enclitic variants occasionally survived. Thus, the dative form was **seb^hei* (O. *sífeí*, L. *sibī*), but it had a variant form **soi* that is a match of Homeric Gk. *oi*, Av. *hōi*, OPers. -*šaiy*, OCS. *si*, Hitt. -*ši* (which is mostly anaphoric, not reflexive; this function of the pronoun is also well attested in Greek and Indo-Iranian). Umbrian attests two reinforced instances of the same pronoun as *seso*, *seſe*, presumably from **soi* + forms of the paradigm of **so* or **epso*- (see WOU, ss.uu.). The preforms **moi*, **toi* and, crucially **soi* probably underlie OL. *mīs*, *tīs*, *sīs* (the last one only in Priscian 3, 3, 6), reinforced by an element -*s* of uncertain origin: while it is usually held to be a genitive ending -*s*, the idea that Latin and Sabellic shared a preform **soi-so* with early Latin loss of a final short vowel in unstressed position is more appealing to me. Of course, as we will see, if one reconstructs a genitive **mei*, **tei*, **sei*, presumably both disguised under the forms extended by -*s* and forming the base of the Latin possessive pronouns, a translation of the text will be equally possible.

As observed above, *ESARISTROM* is universally held to be a noun, specifically an instrument noun of uncertain make-up. But, if *VELESTROM* is an adjective, so must be *ESARISTROM*. Accordingly, it means neither ‘sacrifice’ nor ‘transgression (demanding a sacrifice)’, and the need to envision this document as a description of the legal causes and circumstances of an animal sacrifice vanishes. *ESARISTROM* goes back to a comparative or contrastive adjective **aīsar-is-tero*- ‘more sacred’. It may consequently have agreed with a noun in the accusative singular, and this noun can only have been *BIM*. If this is true, *ESARISTROM SE BIM* constitutes a syntactic unit in the accusative singular.

Once its mainstream attribution to **g^uoi-* is ruled out, *BIM* can only be the accusative of **bi-* or **bī-*, respectively the root noun from **g^uei-* ‘to win, defeat’ (*LIV*, 206), which is only Indo-Iranian for verbs (cf. the Vedic compounds in -*ji-t-* ‘beating’, but also Gk. *βία* ‘violence’), or that of **g^uiēh₃-* ‘to live’ (*LIV*, 215). It must have meant something like ‘force, energy’. This is not to say that violence is in some way intended or promoted here: it points to *ritual force*, like the accusative *vim* in the Latin formula *vim dicere* ‘to assert that one has legal power over an item’ (cf. *vindex*, *vindicare*). In G. Agamben’s words (2011, p. 62), “the ‘force said with the word’, which is in question in the action of the *vindex* as also in the oath, is the force of effective speech, as the originary force of law. The sphere of law is that of effective speech, of a ‘saying’ that is always *indicere* (to proclaim, to declare solemnly), *ius dicere* (to say what conforms to the law), and *vim dicere* (to say the effective word)”.

In my view, the construction and meaning of *vim dicens* is very similar to that of *BIM ASIF*. This does not necessarily mean that L. *vīs* has to be identified with *BIM* and separated from its apparent cognate, Gk. **Fī-* (< **uiH-*), though the idea is attractive in spite of the difference in gender (and was already considered and rejected by F. Skutsch 1912; note that the Latin form has been remodelled as a -*s*-stem). As a consequence, the following form *ASIF* can no longer be interpreted as an accusative plural, but as an active participle, which governs *ESARISTROM SE BIM* and agrees with *PIS* in case, gender and number.

O. Hackstein (1995, pp. 334-335) has reconstructed an Indo-European desiderative stem $*h_2e\acute{g}\text{-}s\text{-}e/o\text{-}$ from $2^*h_2e\acute{g}\text{-}$ 'to say' (LIV, 256), in which the formant $-s$ was lexicalised, yielding a Proto-Tocharian root $*h_2e\acute{g}\text{-}s\text{-}$. This accounts for Toch. B $\bar{a}k\bar{s}\bar{a}m$, a 3rd p. sing. thematic subjunctive from $*h_2e\acute{g}\text{-}s\text{-}e\text{-}t$ 'shall announce'. Though Hackstein left the parallel unmentioned, this can also be taken to explain L. *ad-āxint* 'adēgerint' in Plautus (Aul., 50), *utinam mē diuī adaxint ad suspēdium* 'may the gods talk me into / lead me to hanging myself' (usually taken from $1^*h_2e\acute{g}\text{-}$ 'lead, carry'). Paulus ex F. 7, 27 (Lindsay 1913) mentions a frequentative verb in $-sāre$: *axāre* gl. *nōmināre*, and Paulus ex F. 3, 12 (Lindsay 1913) records *axāmenta* gl. *carmina*. A. J. Nussbaum (2007) has argued that the entire frequentative class arose from desideratives in $-s\text{-}$. According to R. Garnier (2010, pp. 112-113) the form $*axā$ that forms the base of *axāre* must be related to a lost sigmatic subjunctive (as in *capsa* / *capsit*). This unattested $*axit$ can then be equated to the Tocharian form if we start from $*h_2e\acute{g}\text{-}s\text{-}e\text{-}t$, the subjunctive of an athematic desiderative present $*h_2e\acute{g}\text{-}s\text{-}ti$ 'wants to say'.

On this view, we may reconstruct an archaic participle $*h_2(e)\acute{g}\text{-}s\text{-}ent\text{-}s$ (or $*h_2e\acute{g}\text{-}s\text{-}nt\text{-}s$ with the development $[\eta] > [en]$ in posttonic syllables) in the nominative singular, derived from the desiderative present, which would straightforwardly account for ASIF through Proto-Sabellic $*aksēf >$ Sabellic $*assf$ (regressive assimilation of the primary cluster is well attested in Oscan and Umbrian) $>>$ U. $*assef >$ Late U. (and the dialects of Umbrian) $*assef$ or $*assif$. As we have seen above, Late Umbrian has undergone merger of word-final $/e/$ with the *Mittellaut* $/ε/$, $/i/$. Similarly, $/e:/$, which has been raised in Umbrian to $/ε:/$, becomes $/i:/$ before shortening in word-medial position (*habetu* / HABITV, SERSITV, L. *sedētō*) and (probably earlier) in word-final position (TRAHVORFI). This seems, however, not to be the case with U. *zēref*, SERSE 'sitting' ($< *sed\text{-}ē\text{-}nt\text{-}s$), where Osthoff's Law should have applied early on. There has been no compensatory lengthening after loss of the nasal, and $-ef$ shows no apparent raising in Umbrian. In fact, if the vowel was lost by final syncope, it has been restored. The nominative singular of Oscan participles in $*\text{-}ē\text{-}nt\text{-}s$ is rendered $-if$ (where $<i> = /ε/$), probably in analogy to verb forms of the 2nd conjugation that preserved the regular outcome of the long vowel. By contrast, Umbrian did not follow the model of TENITV, HABITV, etc.; the restored vowel was $/e/$ to judge from $-ef/ε$. This could be explained by analogy with the rest of the paradigm, where word medial $-ēnt\text{-}$ would regularly pass to $-ent\text{-}$.¹ Levelling may have followed a different path in Umbrian dialects. For instance, in the dialect of the Tabula Veliterna $*\text{-}ē\text{-}nt\text{-}s$ could have surfaced as $-ēf$, as in Oscan, in imitation of other forms of the 2nd conjugation, and the pattern was thereupon generalised to all suffixed present

¹ Alternatively, $/e/$ in the late version of the Iguvine Tables could be due to effacement of $-f$, since the *Mittellaut* had a tendency to merge with $/e/$ in final open syllables, as may be inferred from *ute* / OTE 'or' ($*a\acute{u}ti$), or FERINE, VAPEŔE, if they continue ancient locatives in $*\text{-}i$. Syncretism of the locative with the ablative in the consonant stems (with $-i$ as the surviving morph) cannot be ruled out, since an instrumental $*\text{-}eh_1$, as reconstructed by RIX 1994, would eventually yield a high vowel (cf. TRAHVORFI) instead of the attested NOMNE, etc.

participles except those of the 1st conjugation (a radically simplificatory process may have taken place in Latin, with the result that only the two basic types *-ent-*, *-ant-* have survived). The erratic orthography of the Iguvine Tables and the uncertainties of its syntax do not allow further assumptions.

To my mind, *ESARISTROM SE BIM ASIF* means ‘wishing to proclaim / thereby proclaiming his more sacred right’, ‘claiming for himself a better right’ (to take initiative and do something to repair the damage/abduction of the temple goods). This is in accordance with the fact that, as we have seen above, it is either the civil magistrate in charge or a high priest that must be assigned the mission of expiating the sacrilege (and we simply do not know whether the choice is not obvious because it depended on the actual circumstances of the city, for instance peace or war times).

The sequence *VESCLIS VINV ARPATITV* is in my view the apodosis of the sentence and the only explicit expression of the nature of the rite, consisting of a libation that celebrates the consecration of the new statue or treasure. As observed above, the imperative form *ARPATITV* has a transitive meaning ‘besprinkle sth. with’, and its DO is consequently the statue or conceivably the set of treasures (or alternatively the altar or the temple itself), which are consecrated with pouring of wine and probably vessels of grain. In this sense it is similar to L. *libāre*. As has been recognised from the beginning, this is a future imperative in **-tōd*, the mood expressing a direct instruction for both the 2nd and 3rd person, well attested in Greek and Indo-Iranian and present in ancient legal language, even in identical forms, in Italic (L. *agitō*, O. *ACTV(D)*, U. *aitu* < **h₂eg-e-tōd*) and Celtiberian (e.g. in my view *usaketuz* ‘let (him) draw’ < **uχs-agetūd* < **(H)ups=h₂eg-e-tōd*).¹

I shall finish this section with some considerations on a usually neglected but crucial problem for the analysis of an ancient text: word order. As often happens, the expected word order patterns of a SOV language (taking into account that legal language behaves even more rigidly in this respect) have been twisted beyond recognition to fit expectations on morphology and syntax often dictated by prejudice. For instance, the personal verb always tends to occupy the absolute final position of the clause unless there is a comparatively superfluous coda to its right (e.g. a dative for the beneficiary of the action or an adverbial). This admits of no discussion in the case of the future perfect (*ATAHVS*), the final imperative

¹ Formerly read as *usabituz* (MLH IV, K.1.1, Contrebia Belaisca/Botorrita). For a recent assessment of the ending **-tōd* and its uses, see POCETTI 2018, who stresses the difficulties associated with the label “future imperative”, and points to the different nature and situation of the subject of the utterance: present vs. distal, definite vs. indefinite. One could, however, also put it in the following way: originally, the presence of an imperative in **-tōd* crucially depended on the existence of a preceding subordinate clause. Therefore, we may speak of a relative tense. It is not the future that is involved as opposed to the present of the speech act. It is only that the action mentioned in the imperative usually follows the logical premise, and is to be carried out whenever the premise obtains. This is why the ablative **tōd* of the anaphoric pronoun was appended to this form: it referred to the previous moment in discourse that included the precondition for the instruction. This imperative would not have been specified for person, and this category would be systematically retrieved from the preceding (relative, conditional) clause.

(ARPATITV, ESTV) and the signature (SISTIATIENS). The form FAÇIA and its complements, however, have been subject to a number of unwarranted misapprehensions from the beginning.

As we have seen, most modern scholars have been adamant that ESARISTROM was a noun. Unless it was a genitive plural agreeing with VELESTROM, it necessarily followed that it must be governed by FAÇIA (as per Thurneysen, Bottiglioni, Pisani, Pulgram). For these scholars, VELESTROM, which as we have seen is the obvious DO or predicative complement of FAÇIA, should be analysed as a gen. pl. 'of the Veliterni'. Alternatively, the word order is (tacitly) considered, and a sequence OV/SV ESARISTROM SE is favoured. The form SE is pressed into service as the required verb, and ESARISTROM as its predicative complement ('let – the abovementioned – constitute a criminal act') or, accepting it is an existential verb, its subject ('let there be a sacrifice'). Unfortunately, as we have seen, SE cannot go back to the same preform as U. *si* and L. *sit*, and the problem remains unresolved. Only Morandi, reprising the analysis of VELESTROM as a genitive plural mostly abandoned by modern research, interprets ESARISTROM as a sort of explanatory coda that informs the reader about which of the Veliterni may actually be involved: 'whoever of the Veliterni does it, *namely* of those related to the temple'. As we have seen, however, the translation of VELESTROM as 'Veliternorum' suffers from its own, insurmountable problems.

To sum up, if ESARISTROM is an adjective attributed to BIM, unrelated syntactically to either FAÇIA or SE, and ESARISTROM BIM is in turn the DO of the participial form ASIF, the expected word order obtains: the participle ASIF agrees with PIS 'whoever does ... (pro)claiming' and is preceded by its DO, conforming to the norm. And the same norm applies to the preceding VELESTROM FAÇIA. What is more, the text shows a regular word order determinans + determinatum in the adjective + noun phrase ESARISTROM BIM. The alleged chain of accusatives BIM, ASIF and, for some scholars, SE, preceding the ablatives VESCLIS and VINV and accordingly impossible to fit in the syntactic structure (either as specifications on the nature of the ESARISTROM 'sacrifice', or as the DO of ARPATITV) is thereby eliminated. VESCLIS VINV ARPATITV also conforms to the norm in that the complements precede the verb.

6. THE COROLLARY

There is more or less general consensus as to the structure of the final sentence, equally consisting of protasis + apodosis: SEPIS : TOTICV : COVEHRIV : SEPV : FEROM : PIHOM : ESTV must mean something like 'if somebody (does it) with the knowledge of the assembly of the people, let the [-ing] be licit'. Scholarship has generally relied on the idea that COVEHRIV is a match of L. *cūria*. As observed by B. Vine, however (1993, pp. 376-377), the triple interpunct after TOTICV may be intended to separate this form from the ablative absolute COHVERIV SEPV, and the sequence may be translated as 'in public, with the knowledge of the curial priest'. On the thematic form SEPV and its ultimate relation to O. SIPVS (Bantia, ST, Lu 1) cf. R. Wallace (1985b), who correctly traces both forms back to *sēp-uo-

This is consequently not a typical example of the absolute *participial* construction in the ablative case of the type attested in *L. curia sciente, populo praesente, O. toutad praesentid* (ST Lu 1, Bantia). The “Volscian” construction is quasi-participial, where the verb ‘to be’ is implicit, and thus roughly comparable to Sp. ‘(siendo) sabedora la curia (de algo)’ vs. ‘sabiendo la curia (algo)’.¹ The adjective *PIHOM* is of course identical to *L. pium* ‘pure, licit’, etc. (see the whole list of cognates in *EDLIL*, 468), and *ESTV* is equally unproblematic (see *O. estud/ESTVD*, *L. estō*, *EDLIL*, 599).

According to a number of authors, in the wake of J. Untermann (1956), *FEROM* means ‘removal’. For Untermann, this naturally presupposes that the object(s) in question were never to be carried away by unlawful means. Since the attribution of *ATAHVS* to **teh₂g-* ‘to touch’ is phonetically impossible, however, H. Rix (1992) and B. Vine (1993) have more cogently favoured its association with **(s)teh₂-* ‘to steal’. By this subtle shift in semantics, something is gained and something is lost, however: whoever lays hands on sacred objects in order to make any sort of improvement on them can be additionally said to need a permit, since there is no question of the assembly removing the treasure or statue without an important motivation *and* without the remover being invested with the authority to do so.

But things change if we translate *ATAHVS* as ‘has stolen’. One immediately wonders why the last sentence was deemed necessary at all. In fact, it is somewhat outlandish that *ATAHVS* ‘has stolen’ is straightforwardly opposed to *FEROM* ‘to (re)move (for good reasons)’ in the same text, since the semantic content of the first verb is specific enough to leave no room for doubt that the removal is illegal, unauthorised and sacrilegious. Why say that a crime must be expiated, and then that under some circumstances, which in fact invalidate the premise (which is a straightforward crime, not the neutral act of carrying away an object due to any sort of misunderstanding or to spurious reasons), this does not constitute a crime at all? In more abstract terms, once the deontically *marked*, prohibited action has been stated, it is idle to add that the consequences do not apply to the opposite situation (a legal, permitted action).

The infinitive *FEROM*, in addition, is not prefixed, so that it can hardly be taken to mean ‘carry away’. Since there was little room for rhetorics in such a short text, it would have been much easier to say that sacred objects were not to be removed, under any circumstances, unbeknownst to the authorities. This is why some scholars have advanced an alternative interpretation, and translated *FEROM* as ‘to celebrate a procession’ (Thurneysen 1921), ‘to offer (a sacrifice)’ (Murano 2014), or as ‘sacrificial act’: ‘let the sacrifice be spared / cancelled (since there is no *esaristrom* any longer)’ (Antonini 2011).

FEROM PIHOM ESTV is in my view not added in order to introduce vacuous exceptions to the preceding injunctions, but to sanction them: the procedure undertaken after the offence has been committed is approved by the officials, the

¹ Cf. a cursory treatment of this problem in RUPPEL 2013, pp. 122-123.

authorised person is the referent of *PIS*, not that of *SEPIS*, and *FEROM* must not be interpreted in the concrete sense of removing an object from its usual location, but in the abstract sense of proceeding with a series of rituals, for which formal endorsement cannot be taken for granted without either tacit consent (that is, if the authorities are informed and do not voice their opposition) or explicit approval (possibly including calendar specifications, attendance by higher officials or priests, etc.). On the signature, 'X and Y, (as) magistrates, signed / established', see especially Wallace (1985a) and Beckwith (2005).

A tentative translation would run as follows:

'If someone has committed an act of destruction affecting the sacred hoard of the goddess Declona, (then) whoever makes up for it, vindicating his superior right to do so, should besprinkle (it) (pour a libation) with vessels of food and with wine. If anyone (does this) with the consent of the public assembly (or: in public, with the knowledge of the curial priest), let the procedure be considered lawful'.

APPENDIX: SABELLIC /U/ AND ITS FATE

As is well known, Oscan has undergone a sound change [u] > [ɪu], systematically spelt <iu>, after coronal consonants: cf. *Niumseís*, a personal name in the Pre-Samnite inscription of *Niumsis Tanunis* (Capua, final decades of the 5th c. BC), which may be an Oscan name, however, and such Oscan forms as *tiurri* 'tower' (ST Po 34-39, Pompeii), *diumpais* 'female divinities' (ST Sa 1, Agnone),¹ *últiumam* 'last' (ST Cp 31, Capua), *siuttiis* (gentilic name, ST Po 1, Pompeii), *éitiuvam*, *éitiuvad* 'money' (ST Po 3, 4, 10, 13, 16, 17, Pompeii). Starting from this observation, a number of subtle chronological and dialectal differences in the phonetic treatment of /u/ have been put forward.

Recently, N. Zair (2014, p. 119) has argued in favour of a change /u/ > /y/ in Southern Oscan in the Greek alphabet (Lucania and Bruttium) and in the Tabula Bantina in the Latin alphabet, and a change [u(:)] > [y(:)] > [ɪu(:)] in Northern Oscan in the national alphabet (Campania and Samnium). In both cases, we are dealing with fronting induced by a preceding coronal. The latter evolution inverts the intrinsically more plausible order [u] > [ɪu] > [iy] > [y] (palatalisation of /u/ followed by fronting), originally favoured by Lejeune (1970, p. 298) for this process. More recently, adducing the similar case of Boeotian and Tsakonian, J. V. Méndez Dosuna (2018) shows that the vowel fronting [u(:)] > [y(:)] following coronals traditionally assumed for Greek dialects is illusory, and instead contends that the spelling in Oscan <iu>, as in 3rd c. BC Boeotian Greek <ιου>, must reflect the palatalisation (backing) of a coronal consonant before a high back vowel. This process has parallels in other ancient Indo-European languages, for instance in Palaic and Lydian, where the consonant has undergone full palatal-

¹ Definitely not a loanword from Greek *νύμφη* 'nymph' (see PRÓSPER 2015). The Greek loanword *perissty[leis]* (ST Cm 3, Abella, 100 BC), which introduces an innovative Greek ypsilon in the Oscan national alphabet, neatly indicates that Oscan had no /y/ at that time and place. Incidentally, it also demonstrates that /ɪu/ never became /iy/ in Central Oscan.

isation to judge from the distinct spelling (see most recently Yakubovich 2022, pp. 203-204).

This change did not affect /u:/ from IE /o:/, which might be put down to the fact that short vowels are more prone to coarticulation, or, less probably, to [u] > [ju] being earlier than currently assumed, so that its inception would predate the final stage of the raising /o:/ > /u:/ that could have constituted new input for this allophonic rule. By that time, as we will see, either the glide was segmentalised, became phonemic and ceased to be automatically generated by context, or the change was reverted and the glide absorbed.

As observed above, N. Zair (2014) has argued in favour of a change [u] > [y] in Southern Oscan. This is mostly intended to come to terms with apparent examples of <I> for expected <v> from /u/ in the Tabula Bantina (ST Lu 1, Bantia) (see below for Oscan in the Greek alphabet). On closer inspection, however, this conclusion is not borne out: O. MANIM 'hand' remains unexplained and is usually believed to be analogical to the ablative *manūd > *manīd. In fact, in view of N. Zair's (2014, p. 117) novel reading μανο[υμ] (ST Lu 62, B7, Roccagloriosa), MANIM may well have been a nonce formation. As is well known, the language of the Tabula Bantina imitates Latin legal language, which may have occasionally led the author of the text to morphosyntactic confusion. As has long been ascertained, MANIM ASERVVM is the Oscan counterpart or calque of the expression *manum asserere*, *manu asserere* 'to lay hands on'. While one may reasonably suspect that *manū* was originally an accusative dual form meaning 'both hands' and not an ablative,¹ the creators of Late Oscan legal language may have hesitated between using the accusative or what synchronically could only be analysed as the ablative of a -u- stem, whence the accidental conflation of both endings: the Oscan scribe possibly intended to write an ablative *manīd and unconsciously corrected himself half way through. On a more refined view of the process, the first drafters of the legal text introduced an error that may have been inadvertently copied and perpetuated.² The Tabula also attests a spelling hesitation PETIROPERT, PETVROPERT 'four times', but this phenomenon is amenable to other explanations: the proposed base *k^hetur is nonexistent, and therefore the medial vowel cannot have been reinserted in analogy to it after medial vowel syncope.³ As for other forms found in the Tabula Bantina, EITVAS, EITVAM definitely do not point to anything but [u]. Pace Lejeune (*ibidem*), the form *ēitiv[ad]* (ST Sa 18, Aufidena) can hardly be taken seriously and looks like a trivial omission in view of the extremely common *ētiuvam*, *ētiuvad* (ST Po 3, 4, 10, 13, 16, 17, Pompeii). The same applies to relevant forms in the same document left uncon-

¹ As is probably the case with the singular *genū* 'knee': if it really contains a long vowel, it must originally have been a dual form **genu-h₁* 'both knees'.

² Cf. for the general problem DECORTE 2016. Confusion could additionally have been fuelled by the apparently more perfect coincidence of the meaning ascribed to the Oscan formula with the similar Latin legal formula *manum inicere* 'laying hands on for a judgment debt'.

³ Cf. PRÓSPER 2015, fn. 59. O. *pettiur* (ST Sa 17, Aufidena) somehow goes back to **k^hetūōr* with early assimilatory raising and abbreviation of the final vowel (> [u:] > [u] > [ju]).

sidered by Zair: TRVTVM ‘fourth’; cf. *trutas* (ST Cp 37, Capua)¹ and the 3rd p. pl. fut. perf. ANGETVZET ‘will have proposed’.

Other forms in the Latin alphabet in Oscan dialects equally lack any vestige of palatality: Marrucian EITVAM shows that the scribe simply considered the glide as subphonemic or that Marrucian never underwent palatalisation (ST Mv 1, Rapino). The widespread Paelignian and Marrucian SALVTA, if it is a derivative in *-ū-to-*, has undergone vowel shortening in medial syllables before /u:/ > /y:/ . This approach does not seem very promising, and we may reconstruct original *-u-to-*, which yielded a post-syncope paradigm m. **saluts*, f. **saltā*, which thereupon generalised a stem **salut-*. In that case, the possessive adjective **salu-to-* (< **s[H-u-]*) would not be deinstrumental after all (as per Pike 2007), and the long vowel in the isolated formation L. *salūs* (-t-) ‘health’ may have been simply refashioned on the model of *-tūt-* and the past participles in *-ūtus*.

Finally, Zair sees the alternation <u>, <o>, <ou> for /u/ in Southern Oscan in the Greek alphabet as proof of the sound change [u] > [y], but all I can gather from the available evidence is that either palatality was not noted or it had been given up.²

I.-X. Adiego (2015) has equally postulated a Proto-Oscan tendency to context-sensitive fronting of /u/ that shows different outcomes in northern and southern dialects. He reasonably believes Oscan <iu> in the southern, Pre-Samnite inscription of *Niumsis Tanunis* (Capua), to be indicative of Pre-Samnite populations adopting Oscan names. More recently, Adiego (2018) has argued for the existence of a South-Picene change /u(:)/ > /y(:)/. In his view, this has proved instrumental for the detection of South-Picene influence on the Northern Oscan dialects, and he illustrates this hypothesis with Marrucian CIBAT ‘lies’ (ST Mv 7, Teate) and the enigmatic Paelignian forms CLISVIST and FIRATA (ST Pg 9, Corfinium), where in his view the evolution /u/ > /y/ > /i/ is caused by South-Picene substrate. Still, this seems to me an exceedingly overarching conclusion, both regarding input and phonetic context. The change /u/ > /y/ should perhaps be restricted to the short vowel in this formulation, since, as we have seen, the fronting /u:/ > /y:/ is likely to be very early. This *ipso facto* excludes FIRATA and CLISVIST from the picture, since they respectively contained original /i:/ and /u:/ and are the product of independent processes (see above, 2.5.). In addition, we would expect the sound change to apply across the board to cases of Oscan /u:/ from /o:/, too.

¹ Note that rhotics are the coronals least likely to undergo palatalisation, as shown by **rud^hro-* ‘red’ in O. *rufriis* (ST Cm 14, Cumae), Pael. RVFRIES (ST Pg 47, Corfinium), SP. *rufra* (ST Sp CH 1, Crecchio).

² The observation that “it seems that **-u-* after a coronal became [y], as demonstrated by the use of <u> in συπτ, etc.” (ZAIR 2014, p. 115) is not tantamount to saying that “<u> is systematically used in the Greek alphabet to represent the result of **ū* after a dental” (cf. ADIEGO 2016, p. 132, accepting Zair’s conclusions). This is significant if taken to mean that <u> is always but also *exclusively* found there and, by contrast, is not found following non-coronal sounds. However, this is only an *argumentum ex silentio* until we find massive evidence suggesting that the opposite does not obtain. It may even be explained as a resource to mark full palatalisation of the preceding consonant distinctly, for instance [lu] > [λu], [nu] > [νu], [du] > [δu].

In point of fact, the hitherto considered cases of /u/ > /y/ (> /i/) that show a spelling <I> for original /u/ occur exclusively in velar and labial contexts, and only in two words or word families: **kup-ro* ‘good’, **kub-* ‘to lie down’. If we focus on the Pre-Samnite and Oscan evidence, we find **kub-* in Marrucian CIBAT (ST Mv 7, Teate) beside ENCVBAT (ST Mv 8, Serramon) ‘lies’ and in Paelignian ENCVBAT (ST Pg 10, Corfinium); and **kup-ro* in the recently unearthed Pre-Samnite CIPERVUM (Ital. II, 488, 500-450 BC, Atella, proprietor’s mark) ‘good (vase)’ and in the gloss *ciprum Sabine bonum* in Varro, *De Ling. Lat.* 5, 159. Whatever objections may be raised against the comparison of this change with the fronting in Latin *lubet/libet*, etc., the fact remains that the vowel is flanked in all the plausible cases by a velar and a labial consonant. The same would apply to the Paelignian verb or noun LIFAR (ST Pg 9, Corfinium), whether it is taken from **lub^h-ró-* ‘leaf’, from the zero grade of the root **leub^h-* ‘to wish, intend’, or from **leud^h-* ‘to grow’. In addition, the spelling of SP. *qupat* ‘lies’ (ST Sp Mc 1, Loro Piceno, and AP 3, Belmonte) and *qupírih* ‘well’ (ST Sp AP 2, Castignano), as opposed to *kuprí* (ST Sp AQ 2, Castrorano) belies the hypothesis of South-Picene influence on Northern Oscan: on the contrary, if this form had a phonemic front vowel /y/, it would probably never have been written with <q> (which was operative even before back vowels), especially since the use of <k> would have helped counteract the ambiguity of the sign <u> (purportedly standing at least for /y/ < /u/ and /u:/ < /o:/).

All things considered, these materials do not (indirectly) point to a regular sound change that operated across the board in every context in South-Picene, but to dissimilation (a phenomenon which, in spite of being cross-linguistically sporadic, often displays a fairly regular behaviour in Italic). Since, however, this phenomenon depends on the listener’s expectations and as a consequence is structure-preserving and categorical, it is not likely to have given rise to [y], but to [i], which was *ipso facto* phonemicised as /i/.

According to I.-X. Adiego (2018, partly expanding upon former literature), SP. *kduú* ‘I am called’, *qdufeniú* ‘for Clufenius’, *pdufem* (respectively ST Sp TE 7, Penna Sant’ Andrea and CH 1, Crecchio),¹ which should have been spelt <kl> and <pl>, bear witness to the realisation [y] of the sign <u>. This would be indirectly suggested by the dentalisation of the preceding lateral. There is, however, no direct indication of this fronting, which should have occasionally been parsed as /i/ and reflected as <i>. In line with J. V. Méndez Dosuna’s formulation, and taking into account the observation that delatization of laterals usually occurs in palatal contexts in which *yod* immediately follows,² I deem it more likely that South-

¹ While, given the obscure context, this can hardly be substantiated, we have to bear in mind the existence of a root **pleud-* ‘flow’ (> ‘pass, go forward’), undoubtedly an extension of **pleu-* ‘to swim’ (cf. LIV, 488). The only reason to reconstruct a final plain voiced stop is Germanic **fleutan* (in ON. *fljóta* ‘flow’, etc.). If the Italic form were related, Germanic would become the odd one out, and could be suspected of being an early Baltic loanword, or maybe the extensions **dh₃-* and **d^hh₁-* displayed some degree of free variation from the outset. On this view, the phrase *pdufem okrikam* (< **plufi-m/pluf-ŋ okrikām*) could mean ‘moat/pass/causeway of the citadel’ or something similar.

² Cf. MATISOFF 2013.

Picene shares the Oscan backing of coronals preceding /u/, which explains the consistent orthography <u> displayed by South-Picene texts thus far. The fact that <q> is used in *qdufeniúi* disallows the description of the phonemic content of <u> as a front vowel /y(:)/: in the present state of our knowledge, only back vowels are found following <q> (with or without an intervening sonorant or fricative). The distinction <q> vs. <k> is a merely indexical resource, not allophonic writing, and *visually* anticipates the presence of <u> as opposed to <i>. This would be difficult to explain if <u> represented a high front rounded vowel /y/: the spelling <qdu> partly teamed up with <qlú> (in *múfqlúm*, *brimeqlúi*) for one reason: <q> anticipates a mid/high back vowel <u> /u/, and palatality must be ascribed to the preceding coronal. Accordingly, the evolution of laterals in this context would roughly run as follows: -lu- > -l̥u- > -ðu-. Palatality itself is not noted in writing, either because the glide has been absorbed somewhere down the line, as, for instance, in most American English varieties (a possibility favoured in the above cases by the complex cluster), or simply because it remained subphonemic and therefore was never reflected in the South-Picene script. The same process of delatization is also visible in Oscan, where there was palatalisation of /d/, but definitely not raising of /u/: cf. O. *diumpais* (ST Sa 1, Agnone).

Of course, this would not preclude the occurrence of /d/ for /l/ before palatal vowels, witness SP. *d[i]kdeintem* (ST Sp AP 3, Belmonte)¹ and the new reading *brimekdinai* for *brimeidinai* (ST Sp TE 7, Penna Sant'Andrea) by J. Clackson (2016), where we find -l̥i- > -l̥i- > -ði-. The same applies to the Oscan divine name *liganakdikei* (ST Sa 1, Agnone), and to O. *σερευκιδιμαμ* (ST Lu 62, Roccagloriosa), *σακαρακιδιμαι* (ST Lu 23, 24, Crimisa), all of them now convincingly analysed by I.-X. Adiego (2022) as containing the cluster -kl-.

Summing up my present views:

1) Once we discount forms reflecting the early change /u:/ > /y:/ (> /i:/), no Sabellic language can presently be proved to have had a context-free *Lautgesetz* [u] > [y] that gave rise to a new phoneme /y/ (in turn *ex hypothesi* distinct from /i/). In fact, such a tenet could only be confirmed by abundant cases of orthographic confusion of the resulting /y/ with /i/. These are not certain to exist, and in fact the idea is supported by a single example: O. MANIM 'hand' (ST Lu 1, Bantia) for expected †MANVM, which, as explained above, may be morphosyntactic and not phonetic.

2) There is nothing atypical in the idea that /u/ experienced no changes in Proto-Sabellic but /u:/ was spontaneously fronted or centralised. In fact, divergent evolution of /u/ and /u:/ has many parallels. For instance, Indo-European /u:/ passed to /ɨ:/ by the first Common Slavic vowel shift, but /u/ remained untouched. Similarly, Proto-Celtic /u:/ has been fronted to /y:/ and eventually /i:/ in Brittonic. In Middle Central and Western Dutch, /u:/ was fronted to /y:/ (see De Vaan 2017, pp. 391-403). The same is happening right now in Canadian and Southern British English, where /u:/ has been fronted to /y:/, or some High

¹ Which, in all likelihood, is an erroneous reading and therefore cannot be used. Cf. *Ital.* 1, 182.

German dialects, like Alsatian and some subdialects of the neighbouring regions of Baden-Württemberg and Switzerland, where fronting of /u/ has a much more restricted scope. Both /u:/ and /u/ are being fronted in Maori English, but the former is progressing faster. In Sabellic, this constitutes the first stage of a drag chain 1. /u:/ > /y:/, 2. /o:/ > /u:/, which meets the conditions expressed in William Labov's principle III' (see p. 22, fn. 1). For the time being, we have evidence for this change in Umbrian, "Volsian", Oscan and probably Paelignian.

3) South-Picene, Oscan and possibly Pre-Samnite (whatever its dialectal relationship to the former) share a tendency to context-bound consonant backing, that is to say: a) retraction of the point of articulation of coronal consonants (cf. E. *two* ['tu:]), which can be termed 'full palatalisation', or more likely b) emergence of a palatal glide (cf. E. *lewd* ['liu:d]), which is called 'secondary palatalisation'.¹ The triggering sound is a following high vowel: Cu- > -Ci-, Ci/i- > -Ci/i-. According to N. Bateman (2011, p. 597), "if high vowels that are further back trigger palatalization, so do high vowels that are further front", which is consistent with the available evidence. The Pre-Samnite evidence furnished by *Niumseis* is at best ambiguous, but not contradicted by other testimonies. The Pre-Samnite superlative forms *Φολαισυμος* and [-]τισυμαδ show no trace of palatalisation, which, as in the case of O. *supruis*, may be down to the resistance of sibilants to secondary palatalisation or to the fact that this phenomenon did not reach, or had not yet reached, this dialect.²

The postulation of two independent and opposed changes associated with the same context, namely coronal backing caused by a following /u/ in Central Oscan and vowel fronting of /u/ caused by a preceding coronal in Southern Oscan (and possibly south-Picene), is not borne out, and cannot be regarded as reflecting consecutive stages of a single process.

Velar and labial consonants are not targeted by the change Cu- > -Ci-. We must leave the possibility open, however, that non-coronal stops have also undergone the shift Ci/i- > -Ci/i-, which would be the expected thing to happen from a typological point of view. Under a unified account, we could say that Sabellic coronals are backed by the action of a following high vowel.

4) In Oscan (and perhaps Pre-Samnite), as in some Greek dialects, Cu- > -Ci- is visible because the palatality of the coronal is parsed as phonemic at least in some places and, crucially, reflected by some writing systems and not others (which must be regarded as intentional on the part of the scribal schools that adapted the script to a new language system): the examples known to me are written in the Oscan national alphabet. Southern Oscan in the Greek alphabet only attests <υ> in the name νυμσδηις (ST Me 1, 2, Messina), which, according

¹ See BATEMAN 2011. Option b) would go some steps towards explaining the erratic behaviour of /su/, spelt <siu> in the name *siuttiis* (ST Po 1, Pompeii) but <su> in *supruis* 'above' (ST Cp 37, Capua; unreformed alphabet), *supim*[-] (ST Si 1, Roccamonfina); conceivably a superlative **sup-izōmo* > **supimo* 'lowest', since rhotics and sibilants are comparatively refractory to this process.

² At any rate, forms like πυσμοι and φυφουδ in the same document and the early date of this document definitely speak against the use of <υ> for a rounded front vowel.

to N. Zair (2014), is crucially due to colonisation of Sicily by speakers of Central Oscan, who may be held responsible for a spelling habit ignored by Southern Oscan in the Greek alphabet or may have had a glide that did not exist in Southern Oscan. South-Picene orthography shows no trace of the glide, indicating, again, that it has been absorbed (cf. American E. *lewd* [ˈluːd]) or is discounted as subphonemic, or, finally, that at least some consonants have undergone full palatalisation (as often happens with [lu] > [λu], [nu] > [ɲu], [du] > [ɟu]). Only “deltacism” of laterals at the last stages of the evolution [lu] > [ɭu] > [ðu] > [ɟu] betrays its erstwhile existence, since /l/ has been delateralised and merged with the contextually lenited outcome of Italic /d/. The change *Ci/ī-* > *-Ci/ī-* is never reflected in writing, and, again, can only be indirectly recovered in the case of /l/, which becomes /d/ in Oscan and South-Picene.

5) The change **kup/b-* > **kip/b-*, **luβ-* > **liβ-*, mostly attested in Oscan dialects (and once in Pre-Samnite) is not a “Neo-grammarian” change. On the contrary, it is dissimilatory in nature, ultimately caused by the listener and restricted to a very specific context. It implicates a categorical fronting of /u/ to /i/ and therefore is entirely unrelated to the sound changes otherwise affecting /u/. In fact, this phenomenon is reminiscent of the dissimilatory error in the Venetic personal names *FEVCONTIS* (*CIL* III, 10722-10724) and *FEVA* (*CIL* III, 10725), thus far only found to the north of the Venetic core territory, specifically in Emona/Šmarata (present-day Slovenia) and ultimately identical to Ven. *who.u.go.n.ta*, *ho.u.vo.s.*, respectively. Since, in turn, these names go back to **folgont-* and **folgu-o-*, the presence of /eṽ/ can only be put down to inexperience on the part of Celtic-speaking scribes, and is hardly an argument in favour of Venetic /eṽ/ > /ou/. On the contrary, it can only mean that Celtic scribes were aware that they ran the risk of mistaking Venetic /eṽ/ for their own diphthong /ou/, and consequently committed hypercorrection. Cf. Prósper (2018b, 2019a) for details.

Conversely, I have contended with a vast number of examples that Venetic /eṽ/ was retained everywhere (cf. Prósper 2018b). The change /eṽ/ > /ou/ habitually posited for *lo.u.derobos* ‘children’, *lo.u.dera.i.* ‘daughter’ or a divine name (as opposed to Gk. ἐλεύθερος ‘free’) and *klovetlo* ‘temple’ (< **kleue-tlo-*) in the wake of M. Lejeune (*LV*) is unnecessary, especially in view of the possibility of reconstructing **kloue-tlo-* ‘place for purification’ (either with original /o/ grade of the present form or based on the causative stem). **lou^{dh}er-o-* or **lou^{dh}-ero-* may be considered as equally valid original segmentations. To this we may now add another three examples of *-euV-*: a family name *krevin.iaios*. (*LV*, 241, Lozzo di Cadore), from an adjective **kreu^h2i-no-* ‘bloody, blood-thirsty’ (probably a close match of L. *crūdus* ‘raw’ from **kreu^h2i-d^h(h₁)o-*), *moltevebos*, a *-tu-*stem in the dat. pl. (tavola d’Este in the Paduan alphabet, cf. A. Marinetti 1998) and the personal name *ra.i.tevii.o.i.* (*LV*, 62, Este, and therefore in Lejeune’s “innovative” area), possibly from **u^h1ġ-teu-o-* ‘smiter’.

To my mind, this settles the question. But, even if one ignored the counterexamples and the inconsistencies of the geographic distribution of these diphthongs (for instance, *lo.u.dera.i.* is the only form that makes Valle di Cadore in-

novative in this sense with respect to the rest of Venetia Carnica, which simply begs the question), and were adamant that these two forms have undergone an inherently *assimilatory* change /eṽ/ > /ou̯/, one would also have to accept that the triggering factor was the concomitant presence of a preceding [ɪ]. As a consequence, even if there actually *was* a Venetic change /eṽ/ > /ou̯/, it would be confined to the context *leṽ- (or to similar contexts fulfilling the same conditions). For the time being, this possibility is contradicted by the existence of LEVXSIVS (EDCS-56000354, Este), from *leṽks-ó-, the derivative of a neuter *léyk-os- in Skt. *rocas-* (in fact attested where the shift /eṽ/ > /ou̯/ is said to have taken place), and CLEVSIVS (EDCS-08000771, Verona), from *kleṽs-ó-, the derivative of *kléy-os- ‘glory’ in Skt. *śravas-*, Gk. κλέος, etc. Again, the distribution of these names, together with the fact that they cannot be Celtic, is directly diagnostic of their Venetic ancestry.

6) Only one of the dialectal changes considered has been thus far detected in Umbrian. Intervocalic /d/ was fricativised and /l/ and /d/ merged as a fricative sound when followed by a palatal vowel or -i- (except in clusters like *pl-*, *kl-*, and anyway not quite consistently). The resulting [ð] gained phonemic status and, as a consequence, received a distinct spelling in both alphabets. This seems to suggest that -li- became -ðl- early on, and that other coronals were probably palatalised at that time, too. See the dossier in Meiser 1986, pp. 206-238.

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