

THE MEDIAE IN UMBRIAN

Saying that the Umbrian alphabet is 'derived' from the Etruscan alphabet is as gross an oversimplification as saying that modern English is 'derived' from Common Germanic and leaving it at that. In the first place, which Etruscan alphabet? One would expect the Umbrians to have received the alphabet from their immediate neighbours: but since 'ignoti benefattori' can also be 'viaggiatori', this is not absolutely definite. For instance, the use of *k* rather than *c* in the Iguvine alphabet is an interesting fact but allows more than one interpretation. The important point is that Gubbio's neighbours Cortona and Arezzo are the *k*-area par excellence (e. g. Rix, *IF* 65, 1960, 132). On the other hand, if *c* had been written for voiceless and voiced velar stops before front vowels in the original Iguvine alphabet, it might just have been abolished after the far-reaching changes resulting from palatalization (*ç*, *ǰ*). The agreement with Oscan is anyway likely to be fortuitous as the Oscan choice of *k* as the exclusive rendering of the tenuis is probably due to Greek influence and in any event functionally conditioned by the use of *c* for /*g*/. At all events, one cannot deny that there was a continuing influence from the west, mainly from the Cortona area, and it is this rather than the ultimate point of origin (whether that be the same or different) that characterizes the Iguvine alphabet as we know it. Important here are e. g. the variety of *e* and *v*, circular *b*, \wedge in table V. Secondly, which Umbrian alphabet? Differences in the tables themselves have long been recognized (see e. g. Conway); but the minor inscriptions show notable divergences. The bronzes from Amelia and Todi have the grapheme transcribed *ř* in Iguvine also in initial position, and show a non-circular *b*; and now we suddenly find the voiceless velar plosive written *c* rather than *k* (CAMPOREALE, *Rend. Acc. Linc.* VIII, 22, 1967, 65; VETTER 231 does not count).

It is in this context of variant scribal practices with different origins and under the influence of different areas of Etruria that

we must consider the representation of the mediae (1) in Umbrian.

In the Iguvine alphabet only for the labial order does the correlation of voice receive graphemic notation, and that not consistently: is this an innovation or a survival of an earlier stage? In other words did the earliest Umbrian alphabets have a grapheme *b*? It is the authoritative opinion of Lejeune (*Rev. Ét. Lat.* XXV, 1957, 101) that they did. Similarly Poultney considers the use of the grapheme *p* for the phoneme /*b*/ as due to analogy with the use of *t* and *k* for the voiced dental and guttural stops (*Bronze tables*, 26); so already Buck (*Grammar of Oscan and Umbrian*, 1904, 27), and this, if I am not mistaken, is the generally accepted view today. von Planta (*Gr.* I, 562) mentions this possibility in a footnote, but considers it more difficult than the view that *b* is an innovation. Similarly Hammarström (*Beiträge zur Geschichte des etr., lat. und gr. Alphabets*, 1920, 10) speaks of 'Unsicherheit bei der Verwendung eines neuen Zeichens'. Bottiglioni (*Silloge Ascoli*, 1929, 247) says that this hypothesis has 'tutta l'aria di un ripiego'. It is hardly necessary for me to give a complete record of the preferences of the many other Umbrian scholars.

There is no point in assuming (as Bottiglioni does *op. cit.* 248) that any Umbrian alphabet ever noted the voice correlation for the velar order by using a separate grapheme either in the manner of Oscan with its close Greek contacts or in the (later) manner of Latin by modifying an existing grapheme. As far as the dentals and labials are concerned, I give here a résumé of the evidence.

(1) The term *media* is here used as an abbreviation for voiced plosive, *tenuis* for voiceless plosive. This goes back ultimately to Greek μέσα and ψιλὰ ('simple, unaspirated'). According to BRUGMANN'S GRUNDRISSE, I¹, 1886, 263 (KVG I, 1902, 34) the opposition between *tenuis* and *media* amount to what we call *fortis* and *lenis*; so during the same period Bréal can write (*MSL* VII, 1892, 130): 'la douce et la forte, ou, comme on dit en linguistique, la moyenne et la ténue'. However, in the IE languages of ancient Italy we assume that voice and not tensivity was the distinctive feature of the correlation in the plosives; tensivity was a redundant feature. The usefully brief traditional terminology is perfectly adequate, provided we remember the distinction between general phonetic and particular phonemic.

The following correspondences are normal:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
T.I. Latin alphabet:	<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>rs</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>b</i>
T.I. Umbrian alphabet:	<i>t</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>ř</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>p/b</i>

1 *totar* : *tutas* 2 *ditu* : *titu* 3 *dirsa* : *teřa* 4 *ocar* : *ukar*
 5 *gomia* : *kumiaf* 6 *perca* : *perkař* 7 *cabriner* : *kapru* : *kabru*

The point here is that, assuming that the language of the tables is more or less the same whichever the alphabet employed, the native alphabet consistently underdifferentiates, as has been realized (with some earlier dissent) for almost a century and a half. A partial exception is constituted by 7, which requires closer attention. The following statistics on the graphic representation of /b/ are based on data given by von Planta I, 561.

pr : *br* I 1 : 0, II-V 4 : 3

mp : *mb* *mb* never occurs

other *p* : *b* I 11 : 7, II-V 0 : 24

As regards the difference in the statistics between *br*, *mb* (Latin alphabet *abrof*, *combifiatu*, Umbrian alphabet *apruř*, *kumpifiatu*) and *b* in general, a phonemic neutralization often results in both graphemes occurring for the archiphoneme, especially if the neutralization involves an intermediate phone rather than merely the absence of one member of the correlation; moreover, at least for *mp*, one might be tempted to consider the neutralization quite recent and not yet represented in the (possibly archaizing) spelling of the tables in the native alphabet. Another consideration is that the neutralization may not have been extended to all words showing the cluster *pr*: this is clearly the case with *tr* > *dr*. Thus if beside Vett. 233 *Cubrar Matrer* we find *Cupras Matres* (CAMPOREALE, *loc. cit.*), we cannot be sure whether to approach the difference as linguistic or as purely orthographic. If it is the latter, then *Cupras* would be a strong argument for the assumption that the grapheme *b* in the Iguvine tables is a recent introduction. As far as *ř* and *d* are concerned, *dunum dede* on the Todi bronze no doubt has the voiced dental plosive in word initial position and possibly medially also: an interpretation as = Iguvine **tunum teře* is also possible: less likely is **řunum řeře* (so AUFRECHT / KIRCHHOFF I, 1849, 85; BRUGMANN, GRUNDRIS I, 1886, 283 'Assimilation') as already realized by Pauli (*Altital. Stud.*, V, 1887, 89) and now generally admitted except by Bottiglioni (*Manuale* 82, *Silloge Ascoli* 256: 'sandhi'). True the

Amelia inscription writes *t* in positions of neutralization (-*nt*-, -*tr*-), but the examples are names and there may be chronological and dialect differences. Similarly the use of initial *d* or *ř* in *Duvie* for *dī*- or a later development thereof (cp. Iguvine *Iuvie*) is ambiguous: it could denote a spirant and therefore support the interpretation *řunum* etc., but it could simply still be at the stop stage: thus Osc. *diuvilam* (beside *iúvilam*) proves nothing about the nature of Osc. *d*. 'Wenig anzufangen ist mit den vier Grabziegeln 293 aus der Umgegend von Tuder' as von Planta I, 29 puts it. Nevertheless the evidence of the minor inscriptions all told does not favour the outright rejection of Bottiglioni's view.

Various explanations are theoretically possible for the above situation:

1) Earlier Iguvine alphabet(s) had both *d* (formally Greek and archaic Etruscan *r*) and *b*. When intervocalic *d* > *ř*, the grapheme *d* was reserved for *ř* and *t* was used to represent the voiced dental plosive as well as the voiceless one by analogy with the velar order and due to continued Etruscan influence.

2) Earlier Iguvine alphabets had *d* (development as in 1) but not *b*, the inconsistent occurrence of which is a later innovation due to foreign, presumably mainly Latin, influence.

3) Earlier Iguvine alphabet(s) had neither *d* nor *b*. *d* was represented by *t*, *ř* (whether it already existed at the time of the first Umbrian alphabet or developed later) by an obsolescent Etruscan variant of *r*; *b* as in 2).

The first theory is, as we have seen, now widely preferred. The probable occurrence of a separate grapheme for the voiced dental stop in the minor inscriptions suggests (but hardly proves, cp. the *c* : *k* divergence) that this was also once the case for the Iguvine alphabet. Moreover the use of Greek (or archaic Etruscan) *r* to represent /*d*/ has a good parallel in Oscan. But there are some difficulties.

In the first place, the 'resuscitation' of *d* and *b* is easy enough in the case of Latin and Oscan, but Umbrian may have been in less close contact with Greeks and the Greek alphabet at the time in question; but this is probably not a very important point. The choice of a variant of *r* to represent *d*, although there was little option, rather recalls the Oscan and Novilara solution (note however that the letter shape is different). Reference to the archaic model alphabets may be all right from a chronolo-

gical point of view, although we cannot be certain (abolition of dead letters in theoretical alphabets), but is clearly incorrect or at least insufficient with regard to the shape of the letter, unless, of course, one could suppose that certain later theoretical alphabets were adapted to the practical alphabet in the matter of the shape of *r*, and, still preserving the 'dead' *d*, employed the obsolete *r*-shape for it (cp. the positional changes found both in Greek and Etruscan (Vetulonia) model alphabets). This would at one blow explain the situation in both Oscan and Umbrian, without the necessity of assuming any direct connection between them (the actual shape of *d* in Oscan (ϑ) is a variant of Campanian Greek origin, and similar secondary Greek influence must be assumed for Novilara; since Oscan seems to have had some later contact with the Novilara alphabet (ϑ), a pincer action cannot be ruled out). Bottiglioni's 'tracce evidenti' of archaic *r* (*Manuale* 15) could perhaps find some other explanation(s). Mommsen (*Unterit. Dial.*, 1850, 25) (2) suggests two explanations for the phenomenon: 'wenn δ im griechischen Alphabet im oskischen *r* sei, so könnte ϑ im griechischen Alphabet im oskischen *d* werden, oder weil in der That zwischen *d* und *r* eine nicht geringe Lautverwandtschaft statthat (vgl. *arvorum advorum, merides medides* etc.)': the former is presumably correct, though of course Bottiglioni prefers the latter (*Silloge* 241ff.). A very nice parallel is provided by the (very probable) use of *h* for *i* in two Venetic inscriptions from Idria Is 1 and 2 in the recent edition of Pellegrini/Prosdocimi *Laivnai Vrotai*. The objection to the assumption suggested above that this happened in an Etruscan model alphabet, and it is probably a fatal objection, is that we have no evidence at all for such a development in any extant model alphabet of any period.

Then again, the idea that the grapheme *d* came to be replaced by *t* when *d* > *ř* is not altogether satisfactory: 'non può non apparire strano' as Bottiglioni puts it (*op. cit.* 256). Of course *ř* is on various counts a separate phoneme and not an allophone of *d*; but its distribution in large part reflects its origin, so that it is safe to say that spelling /*d*/ with the grapheme *t* causes more con-

(2) It is a fascinating thought that the copy of Mommsen's book that I am using here in California bears on the blank page next to the cover the signature: Dr. Carl Pauli, Lauenburg i/G. 1867. From another volume I have received a somewhat belated invitation to the Magister-Promotion of W. Schlüter (the well-known Old Saxon expert) in Dorpat at noon, Weds. 30th Sept. 1892.

fusion than spelling /d/ with the grapheme *r̄*; thus e.g. both /d/ and /t/ occur word initially, but apart from the odd case like *utur*, only /r̄/ occurs intervocalically and only /d/ initially. On the other hand there is some force to the observation (cp. von Planta I, 48) that in respect of articulatory features *d* and *t* differ only in the matter of voice, whereas voice is about all *d* and *r̄* have in common. The assumption of the innovation *t* for /d/ is at all events less than satisfactory, since alphabets are often functionally wanting in their origins, but later changes tend to make up for rather than to increase the deficiencies. Thirdly, as von Planta noted, the fact that the spelling *p* for /b/ is best attested in those tables that are considered the least recent hardly points to an innovation, although we must remember that in epigraphy as in historical linguistics 'innovatory' is not necessarily synonymous with 'more recent' nor 'conservative' with 'archaic'. Finally, we have already noted that the none too recent *Cupras* could be very damaging to solution (1).

If one preferred to reject solution (1), a choice between (2) and (3) would depend most of all on the assessment of the importance of the minor inscriptions. In this connection one must note that theoretically 'Umbrian possessed the grapheme *d*' is not the same thing as 'Iguvine (once) possessed the grapheme *d*'. And whatever the phonetic value(s) of /r̄/, its graphic rendering by a type of *r* is hardly out of the question (suggestive are Prosdocimi's comments on the biphonemic (*rs*) Latin analysis of monophonemic Umbrian *r̄*: *AMAT* XXXIV, 1969, 123; a different view Scardigli (3), *Proc. 4th Int. Congress of Phonetic Sciences*, 1962, 762). And we have seen that it is not absolutely certain that the grapheme transcribed *r̄* in Iguvine ever has the value *d* in the minor inscriptions. On the other hand, the assumption of structural divergences between the alphabets of the minor inscriptions and the Iguvine is not as easy as the recognition of formal differences, and we have in Faliscan a good parallel for solution (2). Its use of the same grapheme for *u* and *u* and its adoption of *o*, presumably from Latin alphabets to the south rather than independently from Greek show it to have been more open to foreign influence than Umbrian, at least in its origins. Nevertheless the situation with the mediae

(3) His suggestion to write *d* for *r̄* was in fact put into practice by Bücheler in his *Umbrica*, 1883, 178.

exactly matches that posited for Umbrian by solution (2): *d* but no *b* originally or, of course, *g*. Hammarström was surely correct in explaining (*loc. cit.*) the lack of *g* in alphabets derived from Etruscan as due to the prior application of the grapheme *c* for the tenuis before front vowels: *b* and *d* could be introduced from Greek or 'resuscitated', *g* could not because it already had another use, albeit a far less important one. But a supporter of solution (3) might point out that in the alphabets of the Indo-European languages of central ancient Italy there is progressively less adequate graphemic representation of the mediae as one proceeds from south to north, or in other terms, the further one gets from direct contact with the centres of Greek Italy (4):

Oscan	<i>g</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>
Archaic Latin		<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>
Faliscan			<i>d</i>
Iguvine		(<i>b</i>)	

However on the east coast Greek influence seems to have been stronger again: the Novilara alphabet has separate graphemes for at least some of the mediae; but note the absence of 'resuscitation' in Venetic to the north.

This distribution plus the fact that *p* sometimes occurs for /*b*/ could lend some support to solution (3). With both solutions (2) and (3) *b* is taken as a later borrowing. One thinks of Latin; but I see that Heurgon considers the graph \wedge for /*m*/ at Cortona and thence Gubbio not as some sort of simplification of *m* but simply as Greek lambda, natural « en ces temps d'influence hellénique » (*Studi L. Banti*, 1965, 177 ff.). So perhaps Greek is not to be ruled out either; nor can the Novilara alphabet — see Whatmough, *PID* III, 1933, 214. At all events, there is no problem in the fact that just *b* was introduced but not *d* or *g*. The existence of *r* (and *ř* and *ç*) rather precluded a loan for the representation of the voiced dental stop, but no such obstacle stood in the way of *b*. Similarly the existence of *c* for tenuis (and media?) in other Umbrian scripts and in Etruscan may have stood in the way of the use of *c* for *g* as in Oscan in much the same way as the use of digamma for *u* in Etruscan may have stood in the way of its use for *f* in Faliscan (the adoption of a single graph for

(4) The examples of *p* for *b* in Latin and *t* for *d* in later Faliscan noted by Giacomelli (*Lingua Falisca*, 1963, 122 fnotes 38 & 39) are to be considered either for one reason or another too uncertain or Etruscanizing or both.

f is very early in Faliscan and unconnected with the later modification of the digraph *vb* in Latin).

All in all, I would admit that the now popular solution (1) which assumes the existence of *d* and *b* in the earlier stages of the Iguvine alphabet is still the least awkward, but it is not the open and shut case that many seem to think it is.

The above discussion has been strictly graphemic because I believe that the problem is strictly a graphemic one and not a linguistic one. However there are certain phonetic and phonemic considerations which could or have even recently been thought to be reflected in the development of the Umbrian alphabet and, for the sake of completeness, some mention must be made of them here.

Already Müller in the first edition of his *Etrusker* (I¹, 1828, 46) realized that the difference between the representation of the Umbrian mediae in the native script and in the Latin script is basically a matter of orthography not phonology. The opposing view was advanced by Lepsius and found favour with e.g. Aufrecht/Kirchhoff (I, 1849, 69), who speak in terms of the High German Lautverschiebung, and Huschke (*Iguv. Tafeln*, 1859, 527) who ascribes to Umbrian the same lack of a voiced: voiceless opposition as is found in Etruscan (Etruscan has no correlation of voice although we cannot exclude the possibility of certain consonants having voiced allophones; it is not clear whether the distinctive feature of the plosive oppositions should be considered tensivity or aspiration). Both commentators talk rather loosely of there being little difference between tenuis and media ('ein leiser Unterschied' Aufr. Kirch. 83), an unfortunate idea revived by Conway ('originally the sound of the mediae was not very widely removed from that of the tenues' *AJPh* XI, 1890, 306) and again by Bottiglioni (*Silloge* 247, *Manuale* 80, 86). Conway posits relatively voiceless lenes. Similarly for Latin *c* and *g* Seelmann (*Aussprache*, 1885, 344) assumes that at first the opposition was not very noticeable but subsequent stronger differentiation motivated the later graphemic distinction. Now it sometimes happens that one writer calls the opinion of another mistaken when in fact the matter is debatable, but in this case the Conway-Bottiglioni position is mistaken in the full sense of the term, as already realised by Bréal op. cit., and based almost entirely on a failure to separate graphemic from phonemic factors satisfactorily. And anyway phonetic similarity may prove confusing

to a foreigner with a different native sound system, but can hardly per se (i. e. without a concomitant tendency to phonemic merger, which we have no reason to posit for Umbrian on the basis of the odd spellings and conditioned shifts assembled in its favour) cause consistent graphemic underdifferentiation. That must have some other cause, and in the case of Umbrian it clearly does, namely the lack of this phonemic opposition in the Etruscan language and consequently of this graphemic opposition in the Etruscan alphabet adopted by Umbrian.

In Etruscan there was a tendency (the spellings do not really allow us to go beyond that) to neutralization of the correlation of aspiration (if that it was) in the plosives for the positions of contact with liquids, nasals or *s*; see Müller-Deecke II, 1877, 417 ff; de Simone, *Griech. Entlehnungen im Etr.* II, 1970, 173 ff: e. g. *alqu* TLE 160, *alxu* Capua Tile; *Cutnal* CIE 2608, *Cuθnas* TLE 130, etc. It is not unlikely that the development involved a lenis phone in these positions. This is a phenomenon which exists also in Umbrian; although it is more limited there, we can still assume an isogloss. In Umbrian the correlation of voice was neutralized for plosives medially (the voiced type representing the archiphoneme) in the following orders:

- a) after nasals: dentals, velars and quite probably labials.
- b) before *r*: probably labials; dentals partially.

Therefore *ander*, *iuengar*, *abrof*, *adro* but *fratrus*, etc.

It is sometimes unclear how far these tendencies were generalized and whether they were already complete or only incipient in earlier Umbrian, since the spellings are naturally ambiguous in the native alphabet. But these neutralizations (as a synchronic or diachronic process) can hardly be invoked even as a partial explanation (so Bottiglioni) of the lack of separate graphemes for the dental and velar mediae in Umbrian, any more than, say, the neutralization of the opposition *t*, *p*, *k*: *d*, *b*, *g* after *s* in English (*stay*, *spit*, *scum*) can be expected to render one of the two series of graphemes superfluous in all positions for the language generally. Even as a diachronic process, conditioned changes of the type *pr* > *br* are not going to cause more than an occasional spelling confusion in other positions for *p* and *b*.

All in all, it is unnerving what good evidence can be adduced by those who would read a linguistic significance into the idiosyncrasies of the graphic representation of the mediae in the languages

of ancient Italy. The development of a dental stop to an *r*-like sound is easy to parallel: Lehiste (*Suprasegmentals*, 1970, 28) mentions American English and Finnish, to say nothing of the developments in South Italy itself noted by Bottiglioni — see Rohlf's, *Hist. Gramm.* I, 1949, 352. Finnish also provides an interesting parallel for a lopsided plosive system lacking in mediae: *p t d k* (/b/and/g/ occur only in loans). It is just that it is never necessary and mostly, on closer examination, less satisfactory to prefer the linguistic explanations for the spelling peculiarities discussed in this paper. The fact that Finnish has no *b* or *g* need not sway us unduly. As for *d* and *r*, at Athens before the adoption of the Ionic alphabet \wedge indicated γ , after it indicated λ , but any linguistic deductions would be quite misleading.

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