

An outline of the South Picene language

I: Introduction and phonology

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About twenty inscriptions from the East of Italy (550-350/300 BCE) written in the language conventionally named South Picene have been subject to different readings, analyses, and interpretations by the various authors who have dealt with them. This article is the first of two devoted to the phonology, morphology, and syntax of this ancient language of the Italian peninsula. The two articles together will provide a first tentative description of some aspects of the structure of South Picene – a member of the Sabellic subgroup of the Italic branch of the Indo-European language family – that may be largely shared by the scholars of Italic languages so as to represent, in part, a sort of summary of the results so far achieved in the field of the linguistic analysis of its epigraphic documents. The perspective from which South Picene will be examined is basically a synchronic one. This first article supplies general information on the language and a tentative phonological sketch.

KEYWORDS: South Picene language, South Picene inscriptions, Picentes/Piceni, Sabellic languages, Italic languages.

1. Introduction

The South Picene language is attested in 21 or 23 inscriptions from the Adriatic slopes of the Italian peninsula dated between the sixth and third centuries BCE. Most of these inscriptions are from an area bounded by the Chienti River on the north, the Sangro River on the south, the Apennines on the west, and the Adriatic Sea on the east (modern regions of the Marches and Abruzzo), but an inscription from Cures, in the heart of the territory traditionally labeled Sabina (near the present-day town of Fara in Sabina, Lazio), and perhaps two inscribed helmets discovered in Bologna and Canosa di Puglia (Apulia) are to be referred to the same epigraphic corpus.¹ The core area of the South Picene inscriptions is found in the Augustan *regiones* V (*Picenum*) and IV (*Samnium*). The denomination ‘South Picene’ usually applied to this set of inscriptions establishes a link with the cultural aspect of Picenum south of the Esino River as well as a distinction with the North Picene language, also attested epigraphically (four inscriptions from the Pesaro area (Novilara) in the northern Marches; see Agostiniani 2000), but apparently unre-

lated to South Picene as well as to any other known language of ancient Italy. In both cases, ‘South Picene’ and ‘North Picene’ are terms that do not reflect precise historical-geographical facts. To the inadequacy of the label ‘South Picene’ for a language that, territorially, extends widely beyond the southern boundary of Picenum, we must also add the historical unreliability of this denomination. With the aim of rectifying such a situation, Alessandro Morandi introduced in 1974 the conventional denomination of ‘Middle Adriatic’ (“medio-adriatico”) to apply, with a substantially unitary sense, both to the protohistoric cultural complex of the central band of Italy facing the Adriatic Sea and the linguistic reality of the inscriptions uncovered there (Morandi 1974: 12). The term, however, did not enjoy great favor among the scholars of Italic languages perhaps because, as Marinetti (1985: 7) indicates, it leads to identifying the context of production of the 21 or 23 inscriptions with the complex Iron Age civilization of the Adriatic band of the Italian peninsula between the Esino (or, perhaps better, the Foglia) and the Aterno rivers known to the archaeologists as ‘Middle Adriatic cultures’ (see Cianfarani 1970, 1976). In a context like ancient Italy, in which the areas of material culture do not always coincide with the areas of epigraphic production, borrowing a term of reference from the archaeological field for a linguistic reality risks being limiting for both sectors.² In this article, I continue the practice of calling the language of the 21 or 23 inscriptions ‘South Picene’.

1.1. Conventions

The South Picene material contained in this article is cited from Crawford’s (2011) edition of the South Picene corpus. I follow Crawford’s readings for the texts unless otherwise noted and his conventions for formatting. Square brackets [abc] enclose wholly or partially erased characters; a single square bracket [or] signals the beginning or the end of a sequence of erased characters that extends beyond the form within which it occurs; braces {abc} enclose letters engraved in error; less-than and greater-than signs <abc> enclose letters engraved in error and corrected by the editor; the underdot *a* indicates characters that, when taken in isolation, are uncertain. Square brackets [abc] also indicate a phonetic transcription and slashes /abc/ indicate a phonemic transcription. An asterisk (*) identifies a form that is reconstructed, not actually attested. Oscan and Umbrian forms in native alphabets are transcribed in boldface type; forms of the two languages in the Republican Latin alphabet are in italics; Oscan forms in Greek alphabet are transcribed in a Greek font.

1.2. Inscriptions

The dating of the surviving South Picene inscriptions, based in most cases exclusively on epigraphic evidence, is difficult and uncertain. The oldest inscription seems to be that on the so-called Warrior of Capecstrano, usually dated to the mid-sixth century (d'Ercole & Cella 2007: 40; La Regina 2010: 239). The youngest texts, apart from the two inscribed on the two bronze helmets doubtfully attributable to South Picene (from the late fourth or early third century; Marinetti 1985: 45, 252, 2015: 385), belong to the fourth century (La Regina 2010: 239). The epigraphic work on the South Picene documents began around the middle of the nineteenth century with the discovery, recovering, and publication of important texts such as the inscriptions from Sant'Omero (1843), Crecchio (1846), Acquaviva Picena (1848), Bellante (1875), and Castignano (1890) (Marinetti 1985: 11-13, 2000: 134). (In parentheses, the year of discovery of the documents.)

Table 1 supplies a list of the 21 known inscriptions that surely can be attributed to South Picene also indicating, for each of them, the reference abbreviation proposed by Marinetti (1985), the discovery site, the type of support, the number of complete (or almost complete) orthographic words that can be individually recognized,³ and the current location.

Table 1. The South Picene inscriptions

REF. ABBR.	DISCOVERY SITE	TYPE OF SUPPORT	NO. OF ORTH. WORDS	CURRENT LOCATION
AP.1	Acquaviva Picena, AP	stele	7	Lost at the end of the 19th century. Reading possible by apographs.
AP.2	Castignano, AP	sandstone cippus	14	Ascoli Piceno, MCiv
AP.3	Belmonte Piceno, FM	sandstone stele	14	Bologna, MCiv
AP.4	Falerone, FM	sandstone cippus	2	Ancona, MANM
AP.5	Servigliano, FM	sandstone stele	3	Ancona, MANM
AP.6	Belmonte Piceno, FM	fragment of sandstone	2	Ancona, MANM
AQ.1	Castel di Ieri, AQ	limestone cippus	10	Napoli, MN
AQ.2	Capecstrano, AQ	statue of a man	–	Chieti, MANA
AQ.3	Castel di Ieri, AQ	limestone cippus	6	Chieti, MANA
CH.1	Crecchio, CH	sandstone stele	25	Napoli, MN
CH.2	Pescara Valley, PE ^a	spiral bronze bracelet	11	Chieti, MANA

MC.1	Loro Piceno, MC	sandstone stele	8	Ancona, MANM
MC.2	Mogliano, MC	sandstone stele	4	Ancona, MANM
RI.1	<i>Cures-Fara</i> in Sabina, RI	limestone cippus	10	Farfa, MAbb
TE.1	Sant'Omero, TE	sandstone cippus	8	Lost in the 1980s. ^b
TE.2	Bellante, TE	sandstone stele with a central human figure in relief	9	Napoli, MN
TE.3	Bellante, TE	sandstone stele	1	Napoli, MN
TE.4	Campovalano, TE	pyxis	–	Chieti, MANA
TE.5	Penna Sant'Andrea, TE	stele in local stone with the representation of a human face on the top	20	Chieti, MANA
TE.6	Penna Sant'Andrea, TE	stele local stone with the representation of a human face on the top	3	Chieti, MANA
TE.7	Penna Sant'Andrea, TE	stele in local stone	12	Chieti, MANA

ABBREVIATIONS: AP = Province of Ascoli Piceno; AQ = Province of L'Aquila; CH = Province of Chieti; FM = Province of Fermo; MAbb = Museo dell'Abbazia; MC = Province of Macerata; MCiv = Museo Civico; MANA = Museo Archeologico Nazionale dell'Abruzzo; MANM = Museo Archeologico Nazionale delle Marche; MN = Museo Nazionale; PE = Province of Pescara; RI = Province of Rieti; TE = Province of Teramo.

NOTES: ^a The site was probably a sanctuary or a necropolis between Popoli and Lettomanoppello (La Regina 2010: 266). ^b In the Museo Civico, Teramo, at least from 1961.

Map 1 shows the localization of the places where the inscriptions were found.



Map 1. Discovery sites of the South Picene inscriptions: 1. Mogliano; 2. Loro Piceno; 3. Falerone; 4. Servigliano; 5. Belmonte Piceno; 6. Castignano; 7. Acquaviva Picena; 8. Sant'Omero; 9. Bellante; 10. Campovalano; 11. Penna Sant'Andrea; 12. Castrano; 13. Pescara Valley (middle sector); 14. Crecchio; 15. Castel di Ieri; 16. *Cures-Fara* in Sabina.

The feature that most characterizes the South Picene inscriptions as a whole is their obscurity. Seven of them (AP.1, AQ.1, AQ.3, CH.1, CH.2, RI.1, TE.1) are largely unintelligible. Of two inscriptions (AP.6, TE.3), only a very short fragment (few letters) survives. Another two inscriptions (AP.4, AP.5) consist only of names. Only the remaining ten inscriptions (AP.2, AP.3, AQ.2, MC.1, MC.2, TE.2, TE.4, TE.5, TE.6, TE.7) can be given credible interpretations, at least in part. The connection with necropolises, the presence of onomastic elements, and/or references to burial (such as *iepeten esmen* ‘in this tomb’ in CH.1) anyway let us recognize a funeral content for the inscriptions on stone (except AQ.3), even when the overall sense remains obscure.

Besides the fragmentary nature (AP.2, AP.6, AQ.A, AQ.3, RI.1, TE.1, TE.3), an important factor that contributes to the obscurity of the South Picene inscriptions is the occurrence of several words that are unanalyzable not only morphologically, but also semantically. For the longer texts, there is also an intrinsic difficulty that does not just depend on their length. We are dealing with texts of complex content, complex also in their textual structure because of the attempt at rhythm (and also in alliteration, as in TE.2: ... *viam videtas t<i>t<e>s tokam alies esmen vepses vepeten*) which inevitably causes disruption of the normal flow of a sentence (Marinetti 1981: 153-158, 1985: 85-88, 2000: 136; Watkins 1995: 131-134). The surviving South Picene known inscriptions, we must bear in mind, document a diaphasic/diamesic variety of the South Picene language that does not faithfully reflect the syntax of the ordinarily spoken speech form.

1.3. Script

All known South Picene inscriptions are written in an enchorial alphabet probably derived from a south Etruscan model (as suggested by the use of the letter *q* for [k]) via an early Sabellic intermediary (Stuart-Smith 2004: 33-34, 38, 66), with similar Greek influence as the Oscan and Umbrian alphabets (Morandi 1982: 67; Wallace 2007: 8).⁴ The alphabet is transcribed as follows (after Marinetti 1985: 59): *a b g d e v h i k l m n o p q r s t u f í ú*.⁵ Given that there are no preserved South Picene *abecedaria*, the order in which these letters are here listed is hypothetical, with the ‘new’ signs *f*, *í*, and *ú* placed at the end of the alphabetic row. The scribe who incised the text of TE.5 also used twice a sign with the shape of a six-point star to spell a sound whose phonetic properties escape us (only in **idom* and *e*elsít*). This sign, transcribed *σ* by Rix (2002: 68) and Crawford (2011: 197) (but *ś* by Marinetti 1985: 53), does not occur in any other South Picene inscription.⁶

The readings of Radke (1962) and La Regina (1978) played an important role in the decipherment of the South Picene alphabet, since the two scholars realized that the signs . (Radke) and : (La Regina) were not punctuation marks but reduced forms of the letters O (transcribed as o) and 8 (transcribed as f) that we can see in other alphabets of ancient Italy (Marinetti 1985: 54, 2000: 135; Stuart-Smith 2004: 66).

Only some of the Latin letters today employed to transliterate the South Picene alphabet are always and exclusively used with their IPA value. Based on a comparison of the attested South Picene words with their cognate forms in the closely related Italic languages O(scan), U(mbrian), and L(atin) (and their P(ROTO-)S(ABELLIC), P(ROTO-)I(TALIC), and P(ROTO-)I(NDO-)E(UROPEAN) etyma), the following phonetic values can be recognized, with varying degrees of certainty (when a comparison is possible), to the letters of the transliteration system in use for South Picene.

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|---|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| a | A/A | (i) short open central unrounded vowel [a]: <i>manus</i> ‘hand’ ABL PL (AP.2) (O <i>manim</i> , μανο[υμ ACC SG, U <i>mani</i> ABL SG, L <i>manus</i> < PI * <i>man-u-</i> < PIE * <i>mon-u-</i>). |
| | | (ii) long open central unrounded vowel [a:]: <i>matereih</i> ‘mother’ DAT SG (AP.2) (O <i>maatreis</i> GEN SG, U <i>matres</i> GEN SG, L <i>māter</i> < PI * <i>mātēr</i> < PIE * <i>méh₂-tr-</i>). |
| b | B ⁷ | voiced bilabial stop [b]: <i>ombriēn</i> ‘Umbrian’ LOC SG (CH.2) (L <i>Umbria</i> and <i>umber</i>). |
| d | D | (i) voiced dental stop [d]: <i>dúnoh</i> ‘gift’ DAT SG (CH.2) (O <i>dunúm</i> , δουνουμ ACC SG, U <i>dunum</i> ACC SG, L <i>dōnum</i> < PIE * <i>doh₃-no-</i> or * <i>deh₃-no-</i>). |
| | | (ii) unclear value: <i>kduú</i> ‘to be called’ 1SG PRS ACT IND (CH.1) (L <i>cluere</i> < PIE * <i>kl(é)u-</i> ‘to hear’ AOR); <i>qdufeniú</i> [praenomen] DAT SG (TE.7) (L <i>Clufennius</i>). It is impossible to identify with precision the sound represented by <i>d</i> in the sequences <i>kdu</i> and <i>qdu</i> . Two proposals are: voiced dental fricative [ð] (Rix 1994: 114-115); alveolar or dental with tap or flap articulation (Wallace 2007: 15). |
| e | E | (i) short open-mid front unrounded vowel [ɛ]: ⁸ <i>estas</i> ‘this’ GEN SG F (AP.3) (O <i>estu</i> ACC SG M, U <i>este</i> ACC SG N, L <i>iste</i>). |
| | | (ii) long close-mid front unrounded vowel [e:]: <i>videtas</i> ‘to see’ 2PL PRS ACT (TE.2) (L <i>vidēre</i> < PI * <i>widē-</i> < PIE * <i>uid-eh₁-</i>). |
| f | ; | voiceless bilabial fricative [ɸ] (or, perhaps, voiceless labiodental fricative [f]): <i>safinús</i> ‘Sabine’ NOM PL (TE.5) (O <i>safinim</i> NOM SG ‘Samnium’, L <i>Sabini</i>); ⁹ <i>oftorim</i> ‘stele’ (<i>vel sim.</i>) ¹⁰ ACC SG (CH.1) (with a consonant cluster that looks similar to that of O <i>scriptas</i>). |

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- g ◀ (i) voiceless velar stop [k]: *trebegies* [nomen] GEN SG (TE.5), compared with the Latin name *Trebecius*.
- (ii) unclear value: *amgenas* ‘?’. The occurrence of *g* in only one form besides *trebegies* which is, in addition, hard to etymologize does not help in understanding whether [k] is the phonetic value of the letter also in this case. Keeping in mind that ◀ or ▶ represents a velar stop undifferentiated with respect to voicing ([k] or [g]) in various alphabets of ancient Italy and that the South Picene alphabet includes a letter **K(k)** for [k] and [g], a second sound that might be reasonably thought associated to ◀ is [g].¹¹
- h □ (i) voiceless glottal fricative [h]: *heries* [nomen] GEN SG (AP.6) (O **hereiis** GEN SG, **heris** NOM SG, with a root *her-* perhaps from PIE **ǵʰer-* ‘to enjoy’; cf. L *horiri*).
- (ii) orthographic marker of vowel length: *tefeh* ‘you (SG)’ DAT (O **tfei**, **tif[e]** DAT, U **tefe** DAT, L *tibi* < PI **tebei*).
- (iii) orthographic marker of vowel hiatus: *súhúh* ‘his, hers’ ABL SG M (or N) (TE.1) (O **súvad** ABL SG F, U **svesu** LOC SG N (or F), L *suus* < PI **sowōd* (after the loss of **w*)).
- (iv) no value: *toitath* ‘people, community’ LOC SG (RI.1) (< PI **tout-āi*; Sabellic cognates of this word are shown below at *t*); *matereh* ‘mother’ DAT SG (AP.2) (< PI **mātēr-ei*); *patereh* ‘father’ DAT SG (AP.2) (< PI **pater-ei*).
- (v) unclear value: *qupírh* ‘well’ (AP.2) (< PI **kupr-ēd*¹²), *aríth* ‘art’ ABL SG (AP.2) (PI **art-īd*; cf. L *ars*), *adstaiúh* ‘to set up’ 3PL PRF ACT IND (AP.2) (< PS **ad-stajē-ō-nd*). In these forms, all from AP.2, with *h* from word-final **-d* or **-nd*, it is very unclear whether the letter has a phonetic value (see above *matereh* and *patereh*) and what sound it actually represents.
- i | (i) short close front unrounded vowel [i]: *titiúh* [praenomen] DAT SG (CH.2) (U **titis** ‘of Titus’ NOM SG, L *titus*).
- (ii) long close front unrounded vowel [i:]: *aríth* ‘art’ ABL SG (AP.2), with an ending *-ih* from PI **-īd* (O **-id**, U **-i**, OL **-id**, CL **-ī**), by supposing that *h* has a proper phonetic value and is not a marker of vowel length.
- (iii) voiced palatal glide [j]: *veiat* ‘to lie’ 3SG PRS ACT IND (MC.1) from PI **lex-jā-* ‘to lie down’.
- í ☒/☒/ (i) long close-mid front unrounded vowel [e:]: *nír* ‘man’ NOM SG (MC.1) (O **niir** NOM SG, U *nerf* ACC SG < PIE **h₂nēr* NOM SG).
- ☒ (ii) short close front unrounded vowel [i] (second member of diphthong): *qdifeniúit* [praenomen] DAT SG (TE.7), with an ending *-iit* from PI **-ōi* (O **-ií**, U **-e**, L **-ō**); cf. also *matereh* and *patereh* at *h*.
- (iii) voiced palatal glide [j]: *ombrién* ‘Umbrian’ LOC SG (CH.2), with an adjectivizing suffix *-í* from PI **-i* (O and U **-i**, L **-i**).

k	K	(i)	voiceless velar stop [k]: <i>koram</i> ‘commemorative stone’ ACC SG (AQ.2) (O kú rass ACC PL; perhaps from PIE * <i>kor-h₂</i> - ‘piece’).
		(ii)	voiced velar stop [g]: <i>akren</i> ‘land, territory’ LOC SG (CH.2) (U and L <i>ager</i> NOM SG < PIE * <i>h₂éǵ-ro-</i> ‘uncultivated field, pasture’).
l	l		voiced alveolar lateral [l]: <i>alies</i> [nomen] GEN SG (TE.2) (L <i>Allius</i>).
m	M		voiced bilabial nasal [m]: <i>tíom</i> ‘you (SG)’ ACC (TE.5) (U <i>tiom</i> < PS * <i>tē-om</i>).
n	N		voiced dental nasal [n]: <i>noútnis</i> [praenomen] NOM SG (AP.5) (L <i>Nōnius</i>).
o	o	(i)	short open-mid back rounded vowel [ɔ]: <i>postin</i> ‘along’ (TE.2) (O púst. ín ‘along’, U pustin ‘at each/every’, L <i>post</i> ; the Sabellic forms are from PI * <i>posti</i> ‘behind, after’ + * <i>en</i> ‘in’).
		(ii)	long open-mid back rounded vowel [ɔː]: <i>alíntiom</i> ‘Alintius’ GEN PL (TE.7), with an ending <i>-iom</i> from PI * <i>jōm</i> ; <i>fitiasom</i> ‘deed (?)’ GEN PL (TE.5), ¹³ with an ending <i>-asom</i> from PI * <i>āzōm</i> ; <i>adstaeoms</i> ‘to set up’ 1PL PRF ACT IND (CH.1), with a tense-mood marker written <i>-ú</i> in other contexts (see Zamponi <i>forthcoming</i> : 3.5.1.3). Long * <i>ō</i> before * <i>m</i> was probably lowered to become identical, or nearly identical, in quality with [ɔː] and was thus written with the letter normally employed for [ɔ] (cf. Weiss 1998: 710-712).
		(iii)	short close-mid back rounded vowel [o]: <i>tíom</i> ‘you (SG)’ ACC (U <i>tiom</i> , PS * <i>tē-om</i>), with a suffix <i>-om</i> probably pronounced [-om]; see the comment at <i>ú</i> .
p	p	(i)	voiceless bilabial stop [p]: <i>patereth</i> ‘father’ DAT SG (AP.2) (O patir NOM SG, L <i>pater</i> < PI * <i>pater</i> < PIE * <i>ph₂tér</i>).
		(ii)	voiced bilabial stop [b]: <i>qapat</i> ‘to lie’ 3SG PRS ACT IND (MC.1) (L <i>cubāre</i>). ¹⁴
q	Q/Q/ ◊		voiceless velar stop [k]: <i>puqloh</i> ‘son’ DAT SG (AQ.1) (O puklum ACC SG < PIE * <i>pu-tlo-</i>).
r	r		voiced alveolar rhotic, probably trill [r] or tap [ɾ]: <i>okreí</i> ‘citadel, upper town’ LOC SG (TE.7) (U <i>ocre</i> LOC SG, L <i>ocris</i> < PIE * <i>h₂ok-r-i-</i> ‘sharp edge’; cf. Greek ὄκρις ‘point, sharp edge’).
s	S		voiceless alveolar fricative [s]: <i>suaí</i> ‘if’ (O svaí , U sve < PS * <i>swai</i>).

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- σ * unclear value (only in two forms in TE.5, as indicated above). Given that neither *oidom* nor *eoelsít* has a clear link to any other known Sabellic word, it is impossible to indicate a precise value for σ. Keeping in mind Kochetov's (2011: 1673) claim that front vowels, in particular the close ones, are the best palatalization triggers cross-linguistically, we may hypothesize that σ (occurring before the letters *e* and *i*) notes a palatalized sound. Two proposed etymologies of *oidom* and *eoelsít* suggest that the target of palatalization is the voiceless velar stop /k/.¹⁵ *oidom* might be the grammaticalized remnant of a former proximal demonstrative stem **k̑i-* attested in Umbrian and Latin (*cis* 'on this side') meaning 'on this side' (Dupraz 2012: 252-256). *eoelsít* is almost certainly a verb (3PL PRS ACT IND), probably from the past participle **ekskselso-* (cf. L *excelsus*): **eks-kelss-ē-nti* > *eoelsít* (Martzloff 2006: 66; cf. an analogous interpretation in Eichner 1988-1990b: 199). Due to the fact that the rather long text of TE.5 does not contain any occurrence of *h*, we cannot however exclude that σ is a peculiar, local notation of voiceless glottal fricative [h] (Marinetti 1985: 53). This value, after all, would also solve the problem of the presence in TE.5 of a consonant of which there is no trace in any other inscription.
- t /t/ voiceless dental stop [t]: *toúta* 'people, community' NOM SG (TE.7) (O *touto* NOM SG, U *totam* ACC SG; cf. Venetic *teuta* and Proto-Germanic **Þeudō-* 'people').
- u ^ (i) short close back rounded vowel [u]: see *kduúú* and *qdufeniúú* at *d*, *qupírth* at *h*, *qapat* at *q*, and also appendix for two proposed alternative values ([y] and [y:]).
- (ii) long close back rounded vowel [u:] (?): *persukant* 'to declare (?)' 3PL PRS ACT IND (TE.6) (U *sukatu* 'to announce, to proclaim' 3SG ACT IMP, from a denominal **soikāje/o-* to a noun **soiko-* 'declaration'), if the monophthongization **oi* really produced a long vowel (see Adiego Lajara 1992: 37-38; cf. *tefeh* 'you (SG)' DAT < PI **teβei*).
- (iii) voiced labio-velar glide [w]: *uelaimes* [praenomen] GEN SG (CH.1) (O *valaimas* GEN SG; probably in etymological connection with L *valēre*; see Nishimura 2016: 207-208). Cf. also *sui* 'if' above at *s* and the *u* ~ *v* orthographic alternation of *uepetín* 'tomb' LOC SG in MC.2 with *vepetí[n]* in MC.1.
- ú ^ (i) long close-mid back rounded vowel [o:]: *petrúnis* [nomen] NOM SG (AP.4) (L *Petrōnius*).
- (ii) short close-mid back rounded vowel [o]: *meittímum* 'gift, present (?)' ACC SG (AP.2), with *-úm* from PI **-om*; *qolofftúr* 'to erect' 3SG PRS PASS IND (AP.2), with *-túr* from PI **-tor* (if not **-tōr*; see Zair 2014: 378). Short **o* before word-final **m* or **r* was probably raised to become identical, or nearly identical, in quality with [o:] and was thus sometimes written with the same letter used for [o:] (Rix 1993: 338-339; Weiss 1998: 710; Nishimura 2012: 385).

- (iii) short close back rounded vowel [u] (second member of diphthong): *aú/daqum* ACC SG M (AP.1), if cognate with L *audāx*; see also *toúta* at t.
 - (iv) voiced labio-velar glide [w]: *kaiúeis* [praenomen] GEN SG (AQ.1) (O **gaavieis** GEN SG, [γ]αϜις NOM SG, L *Gavius*).¹⁶
- v ➤ voiced labio-velar glide [w]: *viam* ‘street, road’ ACC SG (TE.2) (O **viam** ACC SG, U **via** ABL SG, L *via* < PIE **uih₁-eh₂-* ‘pursuit’).

1.4. State of the art

South Picene has received a considerable amount of scholarly attention following Anna Marinetti’s new reading and publication of the corpus (Marinetti 1985). Marinetti (2000), Rix (2002), La Regina (2010), and Crawford (2011) present the most recent editions of the surviving texts. The more or less recent works that follows propose analyses and interpretations of single inscriptions: Adiego Lajara (1990a) (CH.2), Dionisio (2011) (AQ.2), Calderini, Neri & Ruggeri (2007) (AQ.2), Eichner (1988-1990a) (AP.2), Eichner (1988-1990b) (TE.5), Giacomelli (1976) (MC.2), Marinetti (1978) (AP.3), Martzloff (2005) (AP.2 and TE.5), Martzloff (2006, 2009, 2018) (TE.5), Martzloff (2015) (AQ.2), Pisani (1974) (MC.2), Morandi (1985, 1987; RI.1),¹⁷ Radke (1970) (MC.2), Stuart-Smith (2000) (AP.4 and CH.2), Weiss 2002 (TE.1), Zavaroni (2007) (AP.3). Specific aspects of the language are examined in various articles including Adiego Lajara (1990b) (archaisms), Adiego Lajara (1992) (linguistic position, vocalism, diphthongs, and perfect in -ō), Benucci (1997) (syntax of the verb and clitic deictics), Marinetti (1984) (analysis of verb forms), Martzloff (2011a) (genitive plural), Martzloff (2011b) (gerundive), Meiser (1987) (isoglosses that may unite South Picene and Umbrian), Prósper (2018) (personal names), Rix (2009) (similarities and differences with Umbrian), Triantafillis (2009) (genitive singular of *o*-stem nouns), Weiss (1998) (word-final syllables), and Zair (2014) (perfect in -ō). Some works were also dedicated to the semantics and etymology of specific words: Adiego Lajara (1995) (*vepses*), Clackson (2016) (*brímeqlúú* and *brímeidinais*), de Simone (1987) (*prai-stakla*), Hadas-Lebel (2015) (*toutā-* and *okri-*), Marinetti (1982) (*apai-*), Martzloff (2007) (again *vepses*), Rix (1994) (*kduúú*), and Vine (2006) (*qolofitúr*). A significant number of South Picene words are compared with their Italic cognates in Untermann (2000) and de Vaan (2008).

The only overall discussion of some salient features of the language so far published are that of Pisani (1964: 230-232), outdated, and that of Morandi (1974: 102-105) (cf. also Morandi 1982: 576-577).

1.5. Genealogical position

The language of the South Picene material reflects a member of the Sabellic (or Sabellian) group of Italic languages (see Adiego Lajara 1992: 11-12 and Clackson 2015: 9-11). Recognized as an Italic ‘dialect’ since 1848 (Henzen 1848; De Minicis 1849) and, specifically, as a Sabellic ‘dialect’ since 1850 (Mommsen 1850: 339; Corssen 1861: 5; Lattes 1891: 175-176), in the works by Radke (1962) and Devoto (1967), South Picene ends up being specifically identified as a direct predecessor of Umbrian. The evidence gathered in favor of the Umbrian character of the language (see also Prosdocimi 1979: 137, Meiser 1996: 187-190, and Rix 2003: 160-161, 2009) is, however, weak (Durante 1968-1969: 341; Clackson 2015: 27), and the historical data in support of this hypothesis are scarce (Morandi 1974: 106, 1978: 578). According to other authors (thus Adiego Lajara 1990b, 1992: 64), it is rather with Oscan that Umbrian shares an immediate stage of development within the Sabellic group. Supporters for this view argue that evidence for a stage of Oscan-Umbrian unity, that sets them apart not only from South Picene, but also from the language of the Pre-Samnite inscriptions from Campania and Basilicata (sixth and fifth century), comes in the form of third person plural secondary ending *-ns* that developed from Proto-Sabellic **-nd* (see Wallace 2007: 5 and Fortson 2017: 848-849). Whether Oscan and Umbrian together constitute an actual sub-grouping of Sabellic, and whether South Picene and Pre-Samnite are isolate members or constitute a separate, second sub-group of Sabellic (see Rix 2009: 251-254) is currently a matter of scholarly debate.

1.6. Dialects

A dialectal division within the core area of discovery of the South Picene inscriptions is highlighted by the two different phonetic shapes under which the dative singular ending of *o*-stem nouns appears (Adiego Lajara 1992: 78-79; Weiss 1998: 708). In certain places (Acquaviva Picena and Penna Sant’Andrea), the suffix is [-o:i], as in Proto-Italic (and it is written *-úi* or, in one instance, *-úí*; see example (14) in Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.1); in other places, in the southern portion of the area (Sant’Omero, Pescara Valley, and Castel di Ieri), it likely sounded [-ɔ:] (and it is written *-oh* or, in one instance, *-úh*; see again example (14)). The inscription CH.2, from the Pescara Valley, attests that also the word-final diphthong **ei* was subjected to monophthongization in that area (see *tefeh* ‘for you (SG)’, probably [tɛϕɛ:], from PI **teβei*). Whether the latter process was shared with other southern varieties of South Picene is, how-

ever, a question destined to remain unsolved because of absence of data. Interestingly, while AQ.1, from Castel di Ieri, maintains the diphthong **ei* of the Proto-Sabellic genitive singular ending **-eis* (O *-eis*, *-eís*, U *-es*), reflected as [-eis] (*-eis*), in the inscriptions from Mogliano, Bellante, Campovalano, Penna Sant'Andrea, and Crecchio the same suffix is monophthongized to [-es] (*-es*; see example (12) in Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.1). This indicates, as Adiego Lajara (1992: 70) notes, that the processes of monophthongization of diphthongs was not a unitary phenomenon in South Picene.

It is also possible that *iepet-* 'tomb' in CH.1 (Crecchio) reflects the local pronunciation (/jɛpet-/) of a root that elsewhere sounded /wɛpet-/ (Loro Piceno and Bellante *vepet-*, Mogliano *uepet-*,¹⁸ Acquaviva Picena *uv[e]pet-*; cf. also *uepet-* in RI.1 from Cures), with word-initial /w/ from **l* as in Umbrian (cf. *vapeře* 'stone' LOC SG also from PI **la/eped-*). If Rix (1992: 38) is right to read *úúkúh ko* and interpret 'in the grove' (< PS **loukōd* = *kom*) in the 'Palaeovolscian' text from Satricum (now read and interpreted differently in Crawford 2011: 155), this form shows the same development of word-initial **l* apparently attested at Crecchio (Clackson 2015: 12).

1.7. Extinction

South Picene underwent two different fates within the core area of its inscriptions. In Picenum, at some undefinable date, the language gives way to Latin as a consequence of the process of Romanization that involved the region in the third, second, and first century BCE (see Bandelli 2007). In Samnium, the language seems to have been replaced by other Sabellic varieties before the Romanization of the region (apparently in the course of the fourth century). This is indicated by the discovery of documents later than the fourth century in varieties that align with the Oscan type in places near where the inscriptions CH.1 (Crecchio), AQ.1 (Castel di Ieri), AQ.2 (Capestrano), and AQ.3 (Castel di Ieri) – all probably dating before the fourth century – were found. The varieties in question are Paelignian (about 60 inscriptions from the mountain area to the east of the former lake Fucino where Castel di Ieri is), Marrucinian (three inscriptions from Rapino, Castiglione a Casauria, and Tocco da Casauria within a 25-mile radius of Crecchio), and Vestinian (two inscriptions from San Benedetto in Perillis and Navelli within a four-mile radius of Capestrano).¹⁹

It has been suggested that Paelignian, Marrucinian, and Vestinian, more than taking over, continue South Picene (specifically its southern spoken varieties), and show an Oscan appearance

as a result of subsequent Samnite influence (Marinetti 1985: 43-44; Meiser 1987). A different and, in my opinion, well argued interpretation, is given by Adiego Lajara (1992: 104-116) according to whom the latter varieties would then show some South Picene substrate influence, but historically belong with Oscan (cf. also Adiego Lajara 2018). This second interpretation supposes ethnic movements from the territory of the Frentani or other areas of Samnium and perhaps also from Umbria for which we have no historical witnesses (Durante 1968-1969: 342-343, 1978: 814).

2. Phonology

Keeping in mind that the transcription of South Picene in the 21 inscriptions being surely attributable to this language is not phonetically accurate (1.3) and that this corpus is too small for us to isolate minimal pairs (the most straightforward means of establishing phoneme boundaries), all statements about the South Picene phonology and all phonemic transcriptions supplied in this section must be taken as tentative.

2.1. Phonemes

A plausible chart of the consonantal phonemes of South Picene is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Consonant phonemes in South Picene

		Labial	Dental/alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Stop	Voiceless	p	t		k	
	Voiced	b	d		g	
Fricative	Voiceless	ϕ	s			h
Nasal	Voiced	m	n			
Rhotic	Voiced		r (or r)			
Lateral	Voiced		l			
Glide	Voiced	w		j		

The following word pairs show the occurrence in analogous contexts of some consonants sufficiently phonetically similar to be suspected of being allophones of a single phoneme.²⁰

/p b/	<i>povaisi</i> ²¹ /pɔwaisi/ (TE.5) ‘?’ <i>boúediín</i> /bɔwɛdie:n/ ‘in the <i>Pagus Boedinus</i> ’ (AQ.3) ²²
/b φ/	<i>trebegies</i> /trɛbɛkies/ ‘of Trebecius’ (TE.5) <i>tefeí</i> /tɛfɛi/ ‘for you (SG)’ (TE.7)
/b w/	<i>bie</i> /bie/ ‘?’ (CH.1) <i>viam</i> /wia:m/ ‘road’ (ACC) (TE.2)
/t d/	<i>tefeí</i> /tɛfɛi/ ‘for you (SG)’ (TE.7) <i>defia</i> /dɛfia/ ‘?’ (CH.2)
/k g/	<i>okrei</i> /okrei/ ‘in the citadel, in the upper town’ (TE.7) <i>akren</i> /agre:n/ ‘in the land, in the territory’ (CH.2)
/φ w/	<i>fitias</i> /fɛ:tias/ ‘?’ [noun] (ACC SG) (RI.1) <i>vepeten</i> /wepeten/ ‘in the tomb’ (TE.2)
/m n/	<i>atím</i> /ate:m/ ‘?’ (AP.3) [e]smín /ɛsme:n/ ‘here’ (lit. ‘in this’) (MC.1)

For the enigmatic sound of *d* in *kduúú* ‘I am called’ (CH.1) and *qdufeniúú* ‘for Clufennius’ (TE.7), based on the probable etymology of the two words indicated in 1.3, the status of allophone of alveolar lateral /l/ between the voiceless velar stop /k/ and the close back vowel /u/ is a possible attribution.²³

Table 3 shows the hypothesizable vowel system of South Picene characterized by seven vowel qualities and a duration-based short/long contrast.

Table 3. Vowel phonemes in South Picene

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i i:		u u:
Close-mid	e:		o:
Open-mid	ɛ		ɔ
Open		a a:	

We must not forget that evidence for /u:/ is weak, *persukant* ‘they declare (?)’ being the only word in the corpus in which we may suppose the vowel occurs (see 1.3). Two factors, however, lead us to posit long /u:/ together with its short counterpart in the back area. First, there is enough evidence for concluding that /u:/ is a distinctive phoneme in Oscan, Umbrian, Latin, and even Proto-Italic. Second, the presence of long /u:/ besides short /u/ confers the expected symmetry on the vowel system.

The short open-mid back vowel /ɔ/ was probably close-mid before word-final /m/ as well as, perhaps, word-final /r/. By contrast, the long

closed-mid back vowel /o:/ was probably open-mid before word-final /m/ (1.3): /meitiməm/ [ˈmeitimom] ‘gift, present (?)’ ACC (spelled *meitimúm* in AP.2, with the ending written *-úm* from PI *-om), /ale:ntio:m/ [ˈale:ntio:m] ‘of the Alintii’ (spelled *alíntiom* in TE.7, with the ending written *-iom* from PI *-jōm).²⁴

It is possible that the vowel system of certain (monophthongizing) southern varieties of South Picene had two additional members: (i) long open-mid front /ɛ:/ (cf. *tefeh* ‘for you (SG)’, probably /teɸɛ:/ (from PI *teβei) in the Pescara Valley (TE.7) and *k]áúieh* ‘for Gavius’, probably /ga:wíɛ:/ (from PI *gāwiōi), at Castel di Ieri (AQ.1)) and (ii) long open-mid back /ɔ:/ (cf. the forms from Sant’Omero, the Pescara Valley, and Castel di Ieri with the dative singular suffix *-oh* or *-úh*, probably /-ɔ:/ (from PI *-ōi), in example (14) in Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.1).

The following word pairs show the occurrence in analogous contexts of some phonetically similar vowel segments.

/i	ɛ/	<i>pid</i> /pid/ ‘anything’ (ACC SG) (TE.5)
		<i>iokipedu</i> ²⁵ /jɔkipedu/ ‘?’ (CH.1)
/ɛ	a/	<i>petroh</i> /petrɔ:/ ‘to Petro’ (TE.1)
		<i>patereh</i> /paterei/ ‘for the father’ (AP.2)
/a	a:/	<i>patereh</i> /paterei/ ‘for the father’ (AP.2)
		<i>matereh</i> /ma:terei/ ‘for the mother’ (AP.2)
/a	ɔ/	<i>apúnis</i> /apo:nis/ ‘Aponius’ (AP.3)
		<i>opsút</i> /ɔpsɔ:t/ ‘he made’ (AQ.2)
/ɔ	o:/	<i>anaíum</i> /anaɔm/ [ˈanaɔm] ‘Annaeus’ (ACC SG) (AP.1)
		<i>raeliom</i> /raelio:m/ [ˈraelio:m] ‘?’ [noun] (GEN PL) (CH.1)
/o:	u/	<i>safínis</i> /saɸi:nos/ ‘Sabines’ (TE.5)
		<i>manus</i> /manus/ ‘with the hands’ (AP.2)

2.2. Accentuation

The Italic accent is hypothesized as fixed and not phonemic. In Proto-Italic, it is generally thought to have been a stress accent falling on the initial syllable of the word (see Nishimura 2014). That this situation continued in Proto- or Common-Sabellic is indicated by the fact that short vowels were lost before word-final *s in all descendant languages (as in South Picene *meitims* /meitim-s/ ‘gift, present (?)’ NOM SG (TE.5) < **meitim-os*; cf. *meitimúm* /meitim-om/ ACC SG). That the same situation has (substantially) maintained itself also in the independent history of South Picene is revealed by the fact that, in this language, short vowels are sometimes syncopated in word-medial open syllables (cf. *aitúpas* 2SG PRF ACT SBJV (TE.5), normally compared with Umbrian *eitipes* ‘to resolve, to decree, to enact’ 3PL PRF

ACT IND; if its interpretation as a compound is correct, the first element would be reconstructed as Proto-Italic **ag-et-* (> Proto-Sabellic **ag^let-* > **ag^lt-* > South Picene /ait-/); Nishimura 2012: 388).²⁶

The position of stress accent on the initial syllable of the word in South Picene appears also suggested by the possibility we have, accepting this hypothesis, of recognizing precise metrical schemes in those inscriptions that show ‘indexes of poeticity’ like, for example, TE.2, that finishes thus revealing an exact association of accentual trochees and dactyls (Costa 2000: 91; Mercado 2012: 293-296; Martzloff 2018: 225; Martzloff & Machajdíkóvá 2018: 105-106).²⁷

v. 1	<i>postin viam videtas</i> [ˈσσ ˈσσ ˈσσσ]	Along the road you (PL) see
v. 2	<i>t<i>t<e>s tokam alies</i> [ˈσσ ˈσσ ˈσ(σ,)σ] ²⁸	the memorial stele of Titus Allius
v. 3	<i>esmen vepses vepeten</i> [ˈσσ ˈσσ ˈσσσ]	(who has been) left in this tomb

We cannot exclude, however, possible exceptions to this generalization. For the fact that the unstressed long vowels of Proto-Italic underwent shortening in Umbrian, on the basis of some forms of this language recorded with a long vowel occurring before the suffix **-kl/-cl** (**kumnahkle**, **mantrahklu**, **aiiehclu**, **aiiehcleir**), it was hypothesized that this morpheme causes stress to shift to the vowel immediately preceding (Meiser 1986: 146). The suspicion that also the South Picene cognate morpheme **-kl** (see Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.10) was a prestressed suffix is raised by the fact that one of the two forms in which it occurs, *praistaklasa*, in TE.5, lends itself to be interpreted as a rhythmic structure identical to *pidaitúpas* of a preceding verse of the same inscription (v. 2) that could have the same number of syllables and distribution of stresses as the verse in which *praistaklasa* occurs (v. 5).

v. 1	<i>oidom safinús estuf eelsít</i> [ˈσσ ˈσσσ ˈσσ ˈσσσ]	On this side (?), the Sabines erect (?) here,
v. 2	<i>tíom po/vaisis pidaitúpas fitiasom</i> [ˈσσ σˈσσ σˈσσσ ˈσσσ (?)]	you (ACC), [-? -] (in respect of) anything you have decreed (?), [a monument (?)] of (your) deeds (?)
v. 3	<i>múfqúlum méi/t{t}strúí nemúneí praistaít</i> [ˈσσ ˈσσσ ˈσσσ ˈσσ]	a monument (?) [of (your) deeds (?)] stands out for [-? -]
v. 4	<i>panivú meitims saf/inas tútas</i> [ˈσσσ ˈσσ ˈσσσ ˈσσ]	[-? -] the gift (?) of the Sabine community
v. 5	<i>trebegies titúí pra[i]staklasa posmúí</i> [ˈσσσ (?) ˈσσ σˈσσσ ˈσσσ (?)]	for Titus (son) of Trebecius, for whom the (?) stele (is)

As indicated in note 3, it seems probable that *pidaitúpas* is the univerbation of the indefinite pronoun *pid* ‘anyone, anything’ ACC SG N plus the verb *aitúpas* ‘to resolve, to decree, to enact (?)’ 2SG PRF ACT SBJV. The *pid* joined orthographically to *aitúpas* was probably neither unstressed nor proclitic, but a weakly stressed phonological word, and the two lexemes, together, probably counted as a rhythmic structure [σ'σσσ], which is exactly that of *praistaklasa* in light of Umbrian (Martzloff 2018: 229-231).²⁹

2.3. Syllable structure

A quite large variety of syllable shapes is attested (Table 4).

Table 4. Attested syllable structures in South Picene

(C ₁)	(C ₂)	V ₁	(V ₂)	(C ₃)	(C ₄)	EXAMPLE	MEANING
		V ₁				<i>esum</i>	/ɛ.sum/ ‘I am’ (TE.4)
		V ₁		C ₃		<i>estas</i>	/ɛs.ta:s/ ‘this’ (GEN F) (AP.3)
		V ₁		C ₃	C ₄	<i>úflfú[h]</i>	/o:ϕl.ϕo:(h)/ ‘?’ (CH.2)
C ₁		V ₁				<i>manus</i>	/ma.nus/ ‘with the hands’ (AP.2)
C ₁		V ₁		C ₃		<i>nír</i>	/ne:r/ ‘man’ (MC.1)
C ₁		V ₁		C ₃	C ₄	<i>nerf</i>	/nerϕ/ ‘men’ (ACC) (TE.6)
		V ₁	V ₂			<i>aú/daqum^a</i>	/au.da.kom/ ‘bold (?)’ (ACC SG M) (AP.1)
C ₁		V ₁	V ₂			<i>meitims</i>	/mei.tims/ ‘gift, present (?)’ (TE.5)
C ₁		V ₁	V ₂	C ₃		<i>d[i]kdeintem</i>	/dik.dɛin.tɛm/ ‘?’ ^b (AP.3)
C ₁	C ₂	V ₁				<i>kuprí</i>	/kup.re:/ ‘well’ (AQ.2)
C ₁	C ₂	V ₁		C ₃		<i>múfqlúm</i>	/mo:f.klom/ ‘monument (?)’ (NOM or ACC) (TE.5)
C ₁	C ₂	V ₁	V ₂	C ₃		<i>praistaít</i>	/prais.ta.et/ ‘it stands out’ (AQ.1, TE.5)

NOTES: ^a *-um* is a probable error for *-úm* (i.e. [-om] ‘ACCUSATIVE SINGULAR’) with the central bar of *ú* being omitted. ^b See Zamponi (*forthcoming*: 3.5.2).

Six syllable-structure conditions were observed.

- 1 V₁: V₁ must be included in all syllable structures.
- 2 C₁: C₁ may be any consonant.

- 3 C₁C₂: biconsonantal onsets include: /pd/ (?) (*pdufem* /pdu.ɸem/ (?) ‘territory’ (?) (ACC) (CH.1)), /pr/ (*praistat̪* /prais.ta.e:t/ ‘it stands out’ (TE.5)), /br/ (*br̪imeql̪ú* /bre:.mek.lo:i/ ‘for Brimeclum’ (TE.7)), /tr/ (*trebegies* /tr̪e.be.ki.es/ ‘of Trebecius’ (TE.5)), /kl/ (*kduú* /klu.e.o:/ ‘I am called’ (CH.1)), /gr/ (*aḱren* /a.gren/ ‘in the land, in the territory’ (CH.2)), /st/ (*adstaúh* /ad.sta.e.o:h/ ‘they have set up’ (AP.2)), /sw/ (*suai* /swai/ ‘if’ (TE.1)).³⁰
- 4 V₁V₂: syllable nuclei include /ei/ (*meitims* /mei.tims/ ‘gift, present (?)’ (TE.5)), /ai/ (*praistat̪* /prais.ta.e:t/ ‘it stands out’ (TE.5)), /au/ (*áu/daqum* /au.da.kom/ ‘bold (?)’ (ACC SG M) (AP.1); see note 28), /ɔu/ (*toúta* /tɔu.ta/ ‘people, community’ (TE.7)), /oi/ (*br̪imeql̪ú* /bre:.mek.lo:i/ ‘for Brimeclum’ (TE.7)).
- 5 C₃: may be any of the consonants except the glides /w/ and /j/.
- 6 C₃C₄: biconsonantal codas include: /ɸk/ (*estufk* /es.tuɸk/ ‘here’ (AP.2)), /ɸl/ (*úfflú[h]* /o:ɸl.ɸo:(h)/ ‘?’ (CH.2)), /ms/ (*adstaεoms* /ad.sta.e.ε.ms/ ‘we set up’ (PRF) (CH.1)), /ns/ (*efidans* /e.ɸi.dans/ ‘from Offida (?)’ (AP.5)), /nt/ (*persukant* /per.su.kant/ ‘they declare (?)’ (TE.6)), /rɸ/ (*nerf* /nerɸ/ ‘men’ (ACC PL) (TE.6)).

CV and CVC are the predominant syllable configurations in the language. Syllables consisting of VC are not rarely found in word-initial position. In word-final position, CVC syllables are common.

2.4. Phonological processes

Word-final /t/ assimilates to a following word-initial /k/ and becomes /k/. We have evidence of this phonological process in TE.7, where the third person singular marker /-t/ of the verb ‘he made’ (*opsút* in AQ.2) is written with the same letter *q* with which the subsequent word begins: ... *o]ps-ú-q qor-as* ... (make-PRF:IND-3SG:ACT commemorative_stone-ACC:PL) ‘... he made the commemorative stones ...’.

For a possible morphophonemic process /n/ + /s/ > /ɸ/ operating across morpheme boundaries, see Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.10.

Appendix

The vocalic values of the letter u

The assumption made by Martzloff (2005: 117-118, 2011a: 191-194) and recently restated and broadly treated by Adiego Lajara (2018) that the letter *u* (Λ) is the notation of the short close front rounded vowel [y] and its long counterpart [y:] (rather than of the close back rounded vowels [u] and [u:]), as indicated in 1.3) deserves particular attention. According to Adiego Lajara, there are three pieces of evidence in support of this hypothesis.

- (i) Proto-Italic **kl* occurs in South Picene as a consonantal sequence

written *kd* before **u* as well as before **e*: *kduú* ‘I am called’ (CH.1) (< **kluēō*), *qdufeniú* ‘for Clufennius’ (TE.7) (< **klufenīōi*), *d[i]kdeintem* (AP.3). Before **ō* and **a*, **kl* remains unchanged: *múfqlúm* (TE.5), *praistaklasa* (TE.5). The change of **kl* to *kd* could therefore be due to the presence of a following front vowel (like [y] or [e]) and might have a parallel in the reflex *pd* of **pl* before **u* apparently attested by *pdufem* (CH.1).

(ii) If *puh*, in AP.2, is from **pū(i)-ēd* ‘piously’, as proposed in Adiego Lajara (1992: 90-94) (see also Martzloff 2005: 106-111), we must conclude that the phonetic development **-ū̄- > -ū̄-* (Thurneysen’s law), considered to be pan-Italic (cf. L *pius* and O *πεθεδ*), does not affect South Picene. By supposing a slightly different phonetic development **-ū̄- > *-ȳ-*, we can sensibly state that **ȳ* became [i:] in all descendants of Proto-Italic except South Picene, where a widespread presence of the front vowel [y] prevented the realization of the process.

(iii) The close front rounded vowel [y] probably occurs in three Italic varieties with which South Picene seems to have a historical link: Sabine (keep in mind the inscription RI.1 from the Sabine ethno-linguistic area and the occurrence of a root *safin-* in three other South Picene inscriptions; note 9), Marrucian, and Paelignian, these latter two forms of Oscan with a probable South Picene substrate influence, as indicated in 1.7. The presence of [y] in Sabine is suggested by the Varronian gloss *ciprum* ‘good’ (*De lingua latina* V.159: “... *ciprum* Sabine bonum”) mentioned in note 12. The root of this word occurs in the South Picene adverb *kuprī ~ quprīh* ‘well’ (AQ.2, AP.2) written with a *u*. The Latin transcription suggests for this root an ‘intermediate’ pronunciation [kypr-]. Marrucian [y] is probably behind the *i* of the verb form *cibat* ‘X lies’ (which corresponds to South Picene *qumat* (MC.1) and can be compared with Paelignian *incubat*). Paelignian [y] could correspond to the letter *i* of the forms *clisu*, in *clisuist* (compared with Latin *clūsa*), and *firata* (from **fūrata*, a participle of a verb cognate with Latin *fūrōr*).

In my view, none of these three pieces of evidence are compelling.

(i) The possibility of connecting *d[i]kdeintem* and *pdufem* to Proto-Italic forms with **kl* or **pl* (first piece of evidence) is far from being sure (see Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.1, 3.5.2). In addition, it has to be noted that the *ql* of *múfqlúm* and the *kl* of *praistaklasa* appear to be from Proto-Italic **tl*, not **kl* (see Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.10).

(ii) The interpretation proposed for *puh* (second piece of evidence) is highly problematic. As Dupraz (2012: 39) notes, if *puh* is an adverb, then the preceding verb *qolofítúr* lacks any subject, as there is no nominative constituent in the first clause of AP.2 (see example (78) in Zamponi *forthcoming*: 4.4.1.1). Adiego Lajara (1992: 94) and Vine (2006) suggest that this passive *ē*-stem may be an impersonal form that

requires no co-occurring noun phrase in the nominative. It can however be objected that an impersonal passive *ē*-stem in an Italic language is improbable. The same Vine acknowledges that an impersonal passive *ē*-stem is a strange phenomenon, although he compares *qolofítúr* with the Latin verb forms *valētur*, *miserētur*, *libitum est*, and *licitum est*. As Dupraz (2012: 40) also notes, “the semantic type of these Latin verbs is very specific: they all qualify psychological or biological states of human beings, and hence have no semantic feature in common with a verb meaning ‘to stand [for a memorial]’”. Therefore, while accepting Vine’s overall analysis of *qolofítúr*, Dupraz regards this verb as an ordinary deponent verb meaning ‘stands’, and he believes that *puīh*, a nominative singular masculine relative pronoun (cf. also Watkins 1995: 133), must be its subject (see Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.2, 4.4.1.1).

(iii) There is no linguistic proof that the Sabines spoke the same language attested by the South Picene documents. Hence, not necessarily the root ‘good’ had the same phonetic shape in Sabine and South Picene (third piece of evidence). The possible presence of the close front vowel [y] in Marrucinian and Paelignian might well be an areal feature that the two varieties of Oscan shared with the geographically close Sabine (see Burman 2018: 60-61) quite alien to South Picene.

Two further clues for [y] and [y:] in South Picene previously presented by Martzloff (2011a: 192) are also scarcely convincing in my opinion: (i) the possible monophthongization of **oi* to long [y:] attested by the verb *persukant* ‘they declare (?)’ (TE.6) (< **per-soikā-nt*) and (ii) the enclitic variant =*sim*, attested in CH.1, of the verbal form *esum* ‘I am’, attested in TE.4.

As regards the first clue, we must consider that nothing would have prevented in South Picene the same monophthongization of **oi* to [u:] we may observe in Latin *Pūnicus* (< **poinikos*; cf. *Poenus*), *pūnīre* (< **poinī-*, cf. *poena*), *mūtāre* (< **moi-*), etc. (Adiego Lajara 2018: 282). As far as the possibility of a graphic alternation *i* ~ *u* for [y] with the copula ‘to be’ is concerned, we have to keep in mind that the interpretation of *sim* as a verb form is particularly uncertain (see Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.2) and that the hapax *esum*, as the same Martzloff admits, could also be an error for *esúm* [‘esom] (< PI **ezom*).

We should also recall from 1.3 that the use of *u* to represent the voiced labio-velar glide [w] (*uepetín* (MC.2) ~ *vepetí[n]* (MC.1) ‘in the tomb’) accords ill with the possibility that this letter was also used to note a front vowel. On the other hand, that the letter *u* notes a sound (whether short or long) articulatorily and acoustically similar to [w] is also suggested by its use to represent [w] in combination with *v* (the most common notation of the labio-velar glide) in the form *uv[e]peti[n]* occurring in AP.1.

Abbreviations

1, 2, 3 = first, second, third person; ABL = ablative; ACC = accusative; ACT = active; AOR = aorist; C = consonant; CL = Classical Latin; DAT = dative; F = feminine; GEN = genitive; IMP = imperative; IND = indicative; L = Latin; LOC = locative; M = masculine; N = neuter; NOM = nominative; O = Oscan; OL = Old Latin; PASS = passive; PI = Proto-Italic; PIE = Proto-Indo-European; PL = plural; PRF = perfect; PRS = present; PS = Proto-Sabellic; SBJV = subjunctive; SG = singular; U = Umbrian; V = vowel; v. = verse.

Sigma (σ) is the symbol for syllables.

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Notes

¹ The text of the helmet from Bologna (Bologna, Museo Civico) was recently read by Marinetti (2015: 388) as follows: *erimāqú spolítíú*. The first word recalls the Celtic onomastics. Its initial sequence *eri-* may be compared with the personal names *eridubnos* of Gaulish and *eri-poxios* of Lepontic; *-maqú* (that may stand for [ˈmako:] or [ˈmago:]) resembles both the personal name *Maccō(n)* attested in Latin inscriptions from Gaul, Germania, Noricum, and Britannia and the Celtic root **mogu-* ‘servant’ (see Matasović 2009: 274). The second word of the inscription appears connected with the toponym attested in Latin as *Spōlētium* (the present-day town of Spoleto in Umbria). The ending *-ú* [-o:] of the two words lends itself to multiple interpretations in both Celtic and Italic contexts (see Marinetti 2015: 389) and does not permit any sure linguistic attribution. The context of discovering the helmet, the burial of a warrior of the Gallic tribe of the Boii, makes it more probable that the inscription is Celtic rather than South Picene. The text of the helmet from Canosa di Puglia (Florence, Museo Archeologico) consists of a single word that Crawford (2011: 257) reads as *úlúgerna*. Presumably, it is a personal name, but its linguistic attribution is unclear (Colonna 1978: 404; Piana Agostinetti 2004: 341). This means that the alphabet used in the two inscriptions could be the only South Picene characterizing element they contain; cf. the use of a modified South Picene alphabet in a possible short inscription of the Gallic Senones (late fourth or early third century) from Fiordimonte in the Marches (Benelli 2002, 2004).

² An example of non-coincidence between material culture and language is north-eastern Italy. In this context, the terms ‘Paleovenetian’ (‘paleoveneto’ in Italian) and ‘Venetic’ (‘venetico’) distinguish respectively the spheres ‘material culture’

and ‘language’ (see Fogolari 1975: 74-75). Note that Marinetti (1985: 43) poses the problem whether South Picene represents in Samnium a written koiné that emanates from Picenum or (as the presence of a few specific dialectal features in the inscriptions from this region suggests; see section 1.6) a natively spoken language. Also note that, from the archaeological point of view, there are no elements that distinguish the pre-Roman site of Novilara for the coeval sites south of the Esino River (Lollini 1976: 180).

³ Most of the inscriptions present word-punctuation in the form of triple points (;). The exceptions are AP.4, with vertical division bars, and TE.4 and AQ.2, in *scriptio continua*. The orthographic words separated by punctuation coincide with phonological words, except for a few cases in which a single orthographic word represents two phonological words and two lexemes (e.g. *pidaitúpas*, in TE.5, which appears to join the indefinite pronoun *pid* ‘anyone, anything’ ACC SG N and the verb *aitúpas* ‘to resolve, to decree, to enact (?)’ 2SG PRF ACT SBJV).

⁴ The South Picene alphabet shows important correspondences both with the alphabet of some short and fragmentary inscriptions from Sabina and the later Capenate inscriptions. From the moment that the oldest Sabine inscriptions (Poggio Sommavilla, Colli) are placed in a previous phase to that which concerns the South Picene texts, we may suppose that the South Picene alphabet represents an offshoot of an alphabetic prototype developed in the Sabine area and then spread also towards the south, as the ‘Palaeovolscian’ inscription from Satricum seems to indicate (Marinetti 2000: 136).

⁵ Most of the inscriptions engraved on stone blocks or steles run up and around the stones, with no fixed direction. The letters inevitably occur at varying orientations in these documents.

⁶ Considering the positions in which the six-point star * appears, La Regina (2010: 247) proposed for this sign an aspirated value and the transliteration *h*.

⁷ Only in TE.7, CH.1, CH.2, and AQ.3.

⁸ Unlike in Oscan and Umbrian, the merger of Proto-Italic **i* with **ē* and that of **u* with **ō* has not taken place in South Picene. As Clackson (2015) indicates, the reflex of inherited long **ō* was usually written with a separate letter (*ú*) to that employed for the reflex of short **o* (*o*), and sometimes the outcome of long **ē* was represented with a separate letter (*í*) to that used for the reflex of short **e* (*e*). These writings, in contrast with the use of *i*, *a*, and probably *u* to represent [i], [a], [u], and their long counterparts, suggest that the South Picene inherited short mid vowels and the long mid ones had different qualities. A general tendency common to all Sabellic languages is that short vowels tend to be articulated openly, whereas long vowels have a closed pronunciation (see Meiser 2017: 749). Consequently, if the South Picene reflexes of short **e* and **o* were qualitatively different from those of **ē* and **ō*, a plausible supposition about the phonetic quality of these sounds is that the former were open-mid vowels and the latter close-mid vowels: [ɛ] and [ɔ] vs [e:] and [o:].

⁹ It should be kept in mind that it is not clear what the root *safin-* designates in the three South Picene inscriptions in which it occurs (TE.5, TE.6, and TE.7, all from Penna Sant’Andrea). The root could refer to (i) the Sabines mentioned in the Roman sources, (ii) the speakers of South Picene, or even (iii) a nationality that would encompass all Sabellic-speaking groups (cf. Oscan *safinim* ‘Samnium’) (Marinetti 1981: 118-120; Adiego Lajara 1992: 23; Silvestri 2009: 268-270; Zair 2017: 131).

¹⁰ It was suggested that this word designates an individual with a specific public office (like Umbrian *uhtur* NOM SG; see Ancillotti & Cerri 2015: 57) or is a nomen equivalent to Paelignian *ofturies* NOM SG. More probable, this word denotes a kind of stele or monument (see example (53) in Zamponi *forthcoming*). In this case, *oftorim* could be from a root **op-* that might be that of the verb ‘to see’, ‘to desire’, or ‘to be powerful’ (Untermann 2000: 787).

¹¹ Cf. the presence in the national Oscan alphabet of the letter ʎ for [g] and of the letter for ʎ[k].

¹² As regards the root *kupr-*, cf. Umbrian *cubrar* GEN SG F (used as an attribute to ‘mother’ and often identified with Sabine *ciprus* ‘bonus’ in Varro; see appendix) and Latin *cupere* (PIE **kup-(e)i-* PRS ‘to desire, to tremble’).

¹³ This noun can probably be connected to Proto-Indo-European **d^heh₁-ti-* ‘the putting, the making’ and, within Italic, to Latin *fēti-āl-is* (Eichner 1988-1990b: 200).

¹⁴ Paelignian and Marrucinian (see 1.7) have, respectively, *incubat* and *encubat*.

¹⁵ As Clackson (2015: 13) notes, the only other text with comparable sequences of /k/ followed by a front vowel (CH.1, with *iokipedu*, *iorkes*, and *upeke*) does not show phonetic processes affecting the velar (cf. also *trebegies* ‘of Trebecius’ in TE.5, probably with a non-palatalized voiceless velar stop as well).

¹⁶ See, however, Adiego Lajara (1992: 84-86), for whom *ú* represents here the off-glide of a diphthong ending in /o/, the reflex of **w* after resyllabification.

¹⁷ For Morandi, the language of RI.1 is an archaic form of Sabine: a language considered closely related to South Picene, but not a form of South Picene (see Morandi 2017: 114). It has to be noted that the territory of the historical Sabines has an alphabetic tradition that, as indicated in note 4, has much in common with the South Picene one, but is not South Picene (see Morandi 2017: 106-109). The alphabet of RI.1, on the other hand, is properly South Picene, as we may observe in Marinetti (1985: 60).

¹⁸ Marinetti (2010: 138) also gives an alternative reading *lepet-*.

¹⁹ In the scanty documentation of Vestinian, the reflex *s* of **ps* (in the verb form *osens* ‘to make’ 3PL PRF ACT IND (San Benedetto in Perillis) from **opsens*) seems to subtract the language from a complete conformity with Oscan (cf. Oscan **uupsens**, **upsens**; Durante 1978: 808-809). This type of simplification of **ps* is also attested in Umbrian, or rather, in the variety of the Iguvine Tablets (**osatu** 3SG ACT FUT IMP; cf., however, *opset[a est]* 3SG PRF PASS IND F in an inscription from Foligno).

²⁰ The word pairs presented in this section for consonant and vowel contrasts mostly include forms whose etymology and/or Italic cognates are shown in other parts of this article.

²¹ Martzloff (2009: 364) suggests that this orthographic word is a sequence of two lexemes: *po(v) aisis* ‘so that you (SG) carry out, so that you (SG) perform’ (cf. L *quō āxis*).

²² A *Pagus Boedinus* was localized in the vicinity of Castelvecchio Subequo, at a very short distance from the discovery site of the inscription AQ.3, that is Castel di Ieri (see Morandi 1983: 226). The stem of *boúedi-in* has been etymologized by Heidermanns (1996: 55) as **bou-ed-i-o-* ‘place where cattle are fed’.

²³ If *brímeidinais* (TE.7) is a probable mistake for *brímekdinais*, as indicated by Clackson (2016: 8), the clear derivational path linking *brímekdinais* and the name *brímeqlúú* DAT SG (/bre:meklinais/ and /bre:meklo:i/; see 3.10) would lead us to suppose that the allophone of /l/ in question occurred between /k/ and close vowels in general.

²⁴ It is impossible to judge from the evidence of South Picene whether an inherited long vowel was preserved as such before word-final **m*. By supposing that it was shortened, [-ɔm] genitive plural (*o*-stems), from Proto-Italic **-ōm*, and [-om] accusative singular (*o*-stems), from Proto-Italic **-om*, would constitute a minimal pair that would oblige us to add the short close-mid back vowel segment /o/ to the vowel inventory of Table 3.

²⁵ Perhaps two distinct lexemes (*ioki pedu*), as indicated by Rix (2002: 69) and Crawford (2011: 1262).

²⁶ The evidence for South Picene’s retention of medial vowels, supposed by Meiser (1986: 131) based on *matereth* ‘mother’ DAT SG and *patereth* ‘father’ DAT SG in AP.2, is

unconvincing. The two nouns, as Adiego Lajara (1993: 15-16) highlights, are inserted within a text in which two (further) clear cases of anaptyxis appear: *qupírth* ‘well’ (but cf. *kuprí* in AQ.2), from Proto-Italic **kupr-ēd* and *artih* ‘art’ ABL SG, from Proto-Italic **art-id*).

²⁷ The alternating concatenative alliteration of *p- v- v- / t- t- a- / e- v- v-* and the homoioteleuton of *-tín -am -tas / -t<e>s -kam -es / -men -ses -ten* clearly mark the text of TE.2 as poetic. “Note more precisely the chiasitic pattern of the alliteration: the non-alliterating word precedes the alliterating pair in v. 1, and this order is reversed in the v. 2, and it is reversed again in v. 3. The pattern of homoioteleuton is also noteworthy: the medial words of v. 1 and v. 2 rhyme, the first and third words of v. 2 rhyme with the second word of v. 3, and the opening word of v. 1 rhymes with the initial and final words of v. 3; looking also at the onsets of rhyming syllables, the final syllables of the first and third words of v. 1 alliterate and rhyme (loosely) with the first word of v. 2 and the last of v. 3 chiasitically” (Mercado 2012: 294).

²⁸ If *alies* was pronounced [ˈaljes], its trisyllabicity could be easily obtained by vocalizing the glide, a device not unusual in poetry (see, for example, Pincera 1999: 22-30).

²⁹ Similarly, *povaisis* [oˈvɔs] (v. 2) according to Martzloff (2018: 228-229) is the univerbation of a weakly stressed grammatical functor (*po(v)*) plus a verb (*aisis*) (see note 21). The relative pronoun *posmú* (v. 5) is analyzed as a trisyllabic structure [ˈoʃoʃ] based on the fact that it reflects a morphemic sequence composed by the dative singular marker **-oi* and a particle **=i* or **=ī* (see Zamponi *forthcoming*: 3.2). The final vowel sequence of this word (to compare with the dative singular ending *-ú* [-o:i] from **-ōi* attested in various nouns: *títú* (v. 5), *meít{t}istr-ú*, *qdufeniú*, *brímeqlú*), according to Martzloff (2018: 227), is a hiatus (presumably, I suppose, with the second vowel bearing a secondary stress: [pɔsmo:i]), not a diphthong (like the dative singular ending [-o:i]). The trisyllabicity of *fitiasom* (v. 2) and *trebegies* (v. 5) supposed by Martzloff (2018: 227-228) implies that *tia* and *gie* note tautosyllabic sequences of the type CjV (see note 30).

³⁰ The exact phonetic/phonemic interpretation of non-initial CiV orthographic sequences is impossible. Such sequences could represent a monoconsonantal onset followed by an *iV* hiatus as well as a Cj onset followed by a vowel. The latter hypothesis allows amplifying the list of the biconsonantal onsets with these tautosyllabic sequences: /pj/ (*pepiei* /pe.pjei/ ‘he has paid up (?)’ (TE.1)), /tj/ (*alintiom* /a.le:n.tjɔ:m/ (?) ‘of the Alintii’ (TE.7)), /kj/ (*trebegies* /trɛ.be.kjes/ ‘of Trebecius’ (TE.5)), /ɸj/ (*mefiún* /mɛ.ɸje:n/ (?) ‘placed in the middle’ LOC SG M (or N) (MC.1)), /nj/ (*qdufeniú* /klu.ɸɛ.njɔ:i/ (?) ‘for Clufennius’ (TE.7)), /lj/ (*alies* /a.ljes/ (?) ‘of Allius’ (TE.2)). Whether *taluis* ‘Taluius’ (AP.4) should be interpreted as /ta.luis/ or /ta.lwis/ is also unclear.

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