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NEW READINGS OF THE MULTILINGUAL PETELIA CURSE TABLET

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NEW READINGS OF THE MULTILINGUAL PETELIA CURSE TABLET

Petelia 2 is a curse text written on a leaf-shaped lead tablet, 0.028m high and 0.184m wide.¹ It was found on the surface at loc. Cassana, north of modern Strongoli, by Luigi Mazza. The inscription was first published by Lazzarini (2004), with a small amount of further discussion in Lazzarini (2009);² it was subsequently re-edited by Crawford (2011: 1475–77) without autopsy. Lazzarini dates the tablet to the fourth or early third century BC (Lazzarini 2004: 674), while Crawford dates it to c.300 BC (Crawford 2011: 1475). The tablet is now in the deposit of the Museo Nazionale Archeologico di Crotona (inventory no. 4016/M), where the members of the ‘Greek in Italy’ project examined it on the 16th September 2014.³ As a result of our autopsy we propose a different reading in column 4 and several possible reinterpretations of this section of the text.

The inscription is written in the Greek alphabet, split into four columns along the width of the tablet (see Figure 1). The columns are divided by a small gap (of around one to two letters’ width) and a vertical line after each column, including after the final column. The tablet was originally rolled up and is now broken into seven pieces. The majority of these breaks appear to correspond to the points at which the tablet was folded. Contrary to the implication of the drawing in Lazzarini (2004, figure 4), reproduced by Crawford (2011: 1475), the fragments of the tablet do not correspond to the columns. Columns 3 and 4 each have a break through the centre, and column 4 has a further line of damage which has not quite caused another break.



Fig. 1. Drawing of Petelia 2. Drawing by K. McDonald

1. Previous and new readings

Transcription, Columns 1–3

- | | | |
|---------|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Col. 1. | 1. | καφνοτο στατιο
πακφιω και(αι)δ(ι)ω
πακολ στατιεσ
μαρα(σ) στατιεσ |
| Col. 2. | 1. | γναυ(σ) στατιεσ
φιβι(σ) στατιεσ
εμαυτο στατιω
μιναδο καιδικω |
| | 5. | τρε(β)ω αυδα(φ)ο
μινασ καιδικισ |

¹ We are using the numeration of Oscan inscriptions of Crawford (2011). Umbrian forms from the Iguvine Tables (IT) are quoted from Rix (2002).

² Murano (2013: 192) gives the text of Lazzarini.

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- Col. 3. 1. αφεσ αυδαισ
νοφιο αλαφιω
μινα(δ)ο σκαφιριω
βαντινω κωσσανω

Columns 1–3 of the curse tablet contain a list of fourteen names, each made up of a praenomen (given name) and a gentilicium (inherited family name). We agree with the reading and interpretation of these columns given in Crawford (2011).⁴ Crawford identifies the pairs of names ending in omicron or omega, such as καφνοτο στατιο (column 1 line 1), as female names consisting of a praenomen and a gentilicium in the nominative singular. This interpretation is much more likely than Lazzarini’s suggestion that they are male names in the genitive singular which use a Doric Greek morphological ending (Lazzarini 2004: 676).⁵ The names are therefore all Oscan-style names written with Oscan morphology, and there is no code-switching in this part of the text. There are a number of apparent mistakes and inconsistencies in the orthography of the names (for these see McDonald 2013: 185–190 and McDonald 2015). It is not clear whether these are deliberate mistakes written to obfuscate the text and make it more magical, or if they are the result of confusion between letters and sounds on the part of the writer.

The interpretations of column 4 differ considerably between editors. Lazzarini (2004) reads:

- Col. 4. 1. Π() Αφελιοσ νομο...νσεν
ηισουσοσαραξ Μ[ι]νας Μινασ
καρισταπισπιτιμ σολλομ ησου
δέκεο, ηερμα χθώνιε
5. ταῦτα και κάθεκε αὐτεῖ

Crawford reads instead:

- Col. 4. 1. π (?) αφελιοσ νο(φισ) μο[5]νσ εν
κησ ουσοσ αραξ μ[ι]νας μινασ
καρισ ταπ(?) πισπιτ ι(νι)μ σολλομ ησου
δεκεο, ηερμα χθωνιε
5. ταυτα και καθεκε αυτει

We read the first three letters of column 4 line 2 as <ηισ>, which is a well-attested sequence of sounds in Oscan, compared to the previous rather difficult readings <ηισ> and <κτισ>. Based on this new reading and the analyses explained below, we propose two possible readings of column 4 of Petelia 2 as follows:

Either:

- Col. 4. 1. παφελιοσ νο(φισ) μο[5]νσ εν/
ηισ ουσοσ αραξ μ[ι]νας μινασ
καρισ ταπ(?) πισπιτ ι(νι)μ σολλομ ηισου(μ)
δεκεο, ηερμα χθωνιε
5. ταυτα και καθεκε αυτει

‘The Paulii (or P. Auelius), No(uius) Mo.....nus son of It(i)us, the Ussii (or Ussus), Arcus, Minatus, Minatus, Carius ...’

Or:

- Col. 4. 1. παφελιοσ νομο[νσ ομο]ν(σ) σεν
ηισου(μ) σοσ αραξ μ[ι]νας μινασ
καρισ ταπ(?) πισπιτ ι(νι)μ σολλομ ηισου(μ)

⁴ Except for και(αι)δ(ι)ω in column 1 line 2, where we follow Poccetti’s (2014: 97) reading over Crawford’s και(δ)ι(κ)ω.

⁵ Although Lazzarini’s interpretation has been accepted by Poccetti (2010: 674, 2014: 91–3) and Murano (2013: 195), the switches into and out of the genitive cannot be plausibly explained.

δεκεο, ηερμα χθωνιε
5. ταυτα και καθεκε αυτει

‘The Paullii, the Numonii; the men of these (families) are: Sos(s)us, Arcus, Minatus, Minatus, Carius ...’

The final two lines of column 4 are in Doric Greek.⁶ Crawford has further identified part of the previous line as a relative clause in Oscan, so that we have a curse formula which code-switches from Oscan into Greek: πισπιτ ι(νι)μ σολλομ ηισου(μ) / δεκεο, ηερμα χθωνιε / ταυτα και καθεκε αυτει (where the underlined portion is in Oscan). Based on our autopsy, we now read Crawford and Lazzarini’s ησου (line 3) as ηισου(μ), since there is a clear iota after the eta. However, this causes no changes to the derivation of the meaning of the word as proposed by Crawford.⁷

Apart from the unexplained sequence ταπ,⁸ the meaning of these lines is more or less clear, based on similar examples from other extant curse tablets. Crawford translates the formula as ‘whoever also (is) of (= associated with) all of them, receive (them), Hermes of the Underworld, these things also keep here’ (Crawford 2011: 1476). We could take the Oscan part of the formula as a translation of common Greek formulae cursing those acting on behalf of those named in the tablet (McDonald 2013: 188–190). It is also possible that ταυτα refers to the names written on the tablet and is the object of both verbs. We would therefore translate this formula: ‘and whoever (is acting on behalf) of all of them, Hermes of the Underworld, receive these (names) and keep them here.’

The main differences of interpretation concern lines 1 to 3. Lazzarini considers lines 1 to 3 to be written in Oscan. She interprets the first line as representing an abbreviated praenomen Π, followed by a gentilicium Αφελιοσ, the equivalent of Latin *Aelius*. She leaves line 2 unexplained, except that it ends with the name Μινασ written twice. Crawford translates lines 1 and 2 as ‘P. Avelius, No. ???, and (?) Ces, Usus, Arax, Minatus, Minatus, Carius, ???.’ He assumes that in line 1 vo, like π, is an abbreviation of a praenomen, in this case νοφισ (cf. *nūvis*, Teruentum 43); he treats μο[5]νσ, which is not translated, as a separate word. In the apparatus to line 1 he observes that ‘[s]ince after a series of double names [i.e. in columns 1–3] there follows a series of single names, some or all perhaps slave names, we wonder whether ετ is not Latin *et*’. In line 2 he reads κησ in place of Lazzarini’s ηισ, noting, however, in the apparatus that the tablet has κυσ, which he compares to the praenomen *keis* (cf. Capua 48). The following οσσοσ ‘is presumably Latin’ in his opinion. The translation makes it clear that he interprets ησου as a genitive plural ending in *-m, which is attested with a following particle in *eisunk* (Cumae 8.43).

Crawford’s interpretation is superior to Lazzarini’s, since it makes clear the likely word divisions in line 3 and provides a plausible expansion of ιμ to ι(νι)μ ‘and’, here translated ‘also’,⁹ which is a well-attested Oscan word (e.g. *inim* Abella 1).¹⁰ One of the most striking things about Crawford’s interpretation, howev-

⁶ Doric Greek features are noticeable in the absence of contraction in δέκεο, the vocative ηερμα ‘Hermes’, and the West Greek αυτει ‘just here’. The spelling δέκεο for Attic-Ionic δέχεο also conforms with the Doric form of the verb, although, in the light of κάθεκε in the following line, the writer is apparently unfamiliar with the standard spelling of Greek words containing aspirates. Cf. Lazzarini (2004: 679).

⁷ Lazzarini identified ⟨ησου⟩ as an original ablative of the demonstrative pronoun whose genitive is *eiseis* (Abella 1 A.20) ‘of this’, with the meaning ‘here’. Crawford’s interpretation of ⟨ησου⟩ as a genitive plural from **eysōm* rather than a dative singular in **eysōd* is much more convincing, since word-final *-m is quite often lost in Oscan inscriptions (Mancini 2014: 51–53), whereas final *-d is very stable. The new reading as ηισου(μ) does not make a difference to our views on this derivation, but this word should be removed from the list of examples of monophthongisation of the diphthong provided by Mancini (2014: 41–2).

⁸ Poccetti (2014: 98) reads instead καρισταπ, which he takes to be a 3rd singular present subjunctive of a cursing verb, with expected -δ assimilated to the π- of the following word.

⁹ The use of *inim* to mean ‘also’ rather than ‘and’ is not well attested, but it is also possible to translate this word as ‘and’ in this inscription. It is not clear whether ινιμ has been deliberately abbreviated to ιμ (which would be unparalleled, since the usual abbreviation is *in.*) or if this is a mistake based on a haplogly. In this case, the restoration is probably better represented as (ινι)μ.

¹⁰ The elucidation of this line is attributed to Moreed Arbabzadah.

er, is the sudden appearance of the Latin word *et* in column 4 line 1, along with the Latin word *ūsus* ‘use’, used as a (slave) name. If this is correct, then this inscription is a unique trilingual Oscan/Latin/Greek curse tablet, as well as providing some of the earliest written evidence of Latin in ancient Bruttium. However, we are doubtful about the existence of Latin in the tablet. This use of a third language for one or two words only would be very unusual, and even though curse tablets can use vocabulary and morphology from multiple languages as a form of obfuscation (Pocchetti 2002: 45–6; Adams 2003: 128, 139), a code-switch involving a single conjunction does not have clear parallels elsewhere. One-word code-switches are possible, but they are most normally found as ‘tag-switches’ at the end of an inscription and not for a conjunction in the middle of a list. It is also unexpected that there is a conjunction used here at all, since the rest of the names on the tablet are listed without conjunctions. The implications of reading Latin *et* here are not discussed in Crawford’s commentary. We will show below that neither $\epsilon\tau$ nor $\omicron\sigma\sigma$ necessarily exist at all; even if the reading of $\omicron\sigma\sigma$ is correct, it need not be a Latin name rather than an Oscan one.

2. New readings and proposed interpretations

Our new reading of column 4, based on our recent autopsy of the inscription, differs from that of Lazzarini and Crawford in only a few particulars. Nonetheless, our corrections make a significant difference to some of the most problematic words in this curse. Our reading therefore opens up a considerably different spectrum of possibilities for understanding this historically important text. The most important result of our autopsy is that the first three letters of line 2 are clearly legible as $\langle\eta\iota\sigma\rangle$ rather than Lazzarini’s $\langle\eta\iota\sigma\rangle$ and Crawford’s $\langle\kappa\eta\sigma\rangle$ (restored from $\langle\kappa\iota\sigma\rangle$). Going by her mention of ‘mezza acca’, Lazzarini seems to have seen this sequence as $\langle\text{H}\Sigma\rangle$ (Lazzarini 2004: 674), but her drawing of the inscription looks much more like $\langle\text{KII}\Sigma\rangle$, which is presumably the reason for this reading by Crawford. On the lead itself, however, we see $\langle\text{HI}\Sigma\rangle$, with a clear second vertical on the first letter. Although there is a very faint second horizontal line at the bottom of the two verticals of the H (lower than is suggested by Lazzarini’s drawing), we are convinced that this is not an intentional stroke. Consequently, we read the first letters as $\eta\iota\sigma$. The sequence $\eta\iota\sigma$ cannot exist by itself as an Oscan word; we therefore suggest two possible interpretations.

2.1 Interpretation 1: genitive singular

The first interpretation would be to take $\eta\iota\sigma$ to be the Oscan genitive singular ending of the *o-*, *i-* and consonant-stems. Since the context is a list of names, we might assume that $-\eta\iota\sigma$ is the ending of a name. The most straightforward assumption is that the name is a patronymic praenomen. This would fit the common Oscan onomastic formula praenomen + gentilicium + father’s praenomen in the genitive (Lejeune 1976: 39–50; La Regina 2002). In this case, $-\eta\iota\sigma$ would have to continue a name begun in the previous line. As Michael Crawford (p.c.) has suggested to us, this would plausibly be $\epsilon\tau/\eta\iota\sigma$, which allows comparison with the Roman gentilicia *Iteius* (CIL 10.3778, 4185, 4186, Capua) and *Itius* (CIL 6.35502, 11.5757), or *Etius* (CIL 6.17288). Alternatively, it would also be possible to read $\sigma\epsilon\tau/\eta\iota\sigma$ ‘of Sett(i)us’, which might be equivalent to the Latin gentilicia *Settius* (attested as *Settia* CIL 6.10805), *Setius* (CIL 4.1580, 9.629, 14.4104), or *Sittius* (CIL 8.2567), *Sitius* (Ihm 1899: 99 no. 371).¹¹ The form $(\sigma)\epsilon\tau/\eta\iota\sigma$ looks most likely to be the genitive of an Oscan praenomen ‘Itus’ or ‘Etus’, or ‘Set(t)us’ or ‘Sit(t)us’,¹² which is not attested in Latin (or elsewhere in Oscan), though it is implied by the derived Latin forms in *-ius*.¹³ Although Latin *Settius* and *Sittius* show

¹¹ The reading with initial σ - would not prevent reading the previous word as ending $-\nu(\sigma)$, since this would show the same avoidance of writing double σ across a word boundary otherwise seen in this inscription at column 1 line 4 $\mu\alpha\rho\alpha(\sigma)\sigma\alpha\tau\iota\epsilon\sigma$, column 2 line 1 $\gamma\nu\alpha\nu(\sigma)\sigma\alpha\tau\iota\epsilon\sigma$ and column 2 line 2 $\epsilon\iota\beta\iota(\sigma)\sigma\alpha\tau\iota\epsilon\sigma$.

¹² In fact, it could also be the genitive of ‘Itius’, ‘Etius’ etc. Although we would expect this to be spelt $(\sigma)\epsilon\tau\eta\iota\sigma$, there are frequent examples of ι being omitted after consonants in Oscan written in the Greek alphabet, such as $\kappa\alpha\iota\{\alpha\iota\}\delta\iota\omega$ for expected $\kappa\alpha\iota\delta\iota\omega$ in this inscription, column 1 line 2, $\mu\epsilon\delta\delta\iota\kappa\epsilon\nu$ for $\mu\epsilon\delta\delta\iota\kappa\iota\epsilon\nu$ in Numistro 1, $\omicron\kappa\eta\iota\sigma$ for $\omicron\kappa\iota\eta\iota\sigma$ in Potentia 17. See Zair (forthcoming, Chapter 3).

¹³ Unlike in Latin, where the number of praenomina was quickly reduced to a fairly small number, Oscan maintained a much greater pool of possible praenomina throughout its history. Although gentilicia were normally inherited, the derivational relationship between praenomina and gentilicia remained more productive in Oscan than in Latin. There are two main types of

the spelling <tt>, double consonants are often written single in Oscan inscriptions in the Greek alphabet, even in inscriptions where double letters are written in other words. For example, in this inscription we have μνᾶσ for μνᾶσσ beside σολλομ.¹⁴ We prefer the connection with *Iteius*, since it is attested in Republican times in Campania, an Oscan-speaking area, but we cannot be sure (*Setius* is also found in Campania in the Imperial period, as is *Sitius*, albeit not until the third century AD).

If our interpretation were correct, then the Latin word *et* would be removed from the reading, making this inscription bilingual and not trilingual. This is historically more plausible, since there is little or no other evidence of Latin in Bruttium as early as 300 BC.¹⁵ It is also linguistically more likely, since a code-switch into Latin for the conjunction ‘and’ is, as noted above, unparalleled.

If σετ/ηισ or ετ/ηισ is the correct reading, what is the implication for the rest of the sentence in which it is found? If we follow Crawford’s analysis of the first line of column 4, it is a series of names, π (?) αφελιος νο(φισ) μο[5]νσ ‘P. Avelius, No. ???’. Since the first three words consist of an abbreviated praenomen, a gentilicium and an abbreviated praenomen, it is reasonable to assume that μο[5]νσ is also a gentilicium. This would give us a full Oscan name formula consisting of praenomen, gentilicium, and father’s name in the genitive: ‘No(uius) Mo.....nus, son of It(i)us’. It must be observed, however, that the separation, by both Lazzarini and Crawford, of the sequence παφελιος into π αφελιος is not the only possible interpretation. Rather than comparing αφελιος to the Latin gentilicium *Avelius*, one could equally read παφελιος and compare it with the Latin gentilicium *Pauillius* (e.g. CIL 10.2829–2833). The possibility of reading παφελιος rather than π αφελιος results in a much greater range of plausible interpretations of column 4 than has been identified by previous editors. One analysis would be to take παφελιος as a praenomen (inflected as a Greek nominative singular),¹⁶ and treat the entirety of the following sequence νομο[5]νσ as a gentilicium. For gentilicia ending in *-ns* cf. **aadirans** ‘Adiranus’ (Pompeii 24), while νομο- brings to mind the series of Oscan names derived from a ‘root’ *num-*. We might compare for example the praenomen **niumsis** (e.g. Cumae 8), the praenomen ντυμσδιηισ (Messana 4, Messana 5), the gentilicium **niumediis** (Bouianum 116), the divine name νυμψδοι (Potentia 20). The vowel in the ‘root’ could be spelt with ⟨ο⟩, as shown by νομψισ (Thurii Copia 1) beside νυμψμ (Teuranus Ager 1). This would then give a single name formula ‘Pauilius Num.....nus, son of It(i)us’.

Yet another possibility arises from the reading of παφελιος rather than π αφελιος. Since, in the latter π must represent a praenomen, which is used to identify an individual, the accompanying gentilicium αφελιος can only be in the nominative singular. And since *-ος* is not an Oscan nominative singular ending, this would have to be a Greek ending (‘nominativo, declinato alla greca’, Lazzarini 2004: 679). Thus, after three columns of names in the nominative singular with Oscan morphology, column 4 would see a switch into Greek morphology. However, if we read παφελιος, then the ending *-ος* could represent the Oscan *o*-stem nominative or accusative plural (from **-ōs* > and **-oss* respectively).¹⁷ There are several examples

derivational relationship, the first exemplified by praenomen **heirens** (Campania or Samnium 6) beside gentilicium **heirennis** (Nola 3), the second exemplified by the praenomen **statis** (Bouianum 98) beside gentilicium **statiis** (Campania or Samnium 2). The Latin equivalents of the gentilicia do not distinguish between the **-is** and the **-iis** types. Consequently, the Latin gentilicium *Settius* could correspond to an unattested Oscan gentilicium **settis* or **settiis*, to which the equivalent praenomina would be **settis* and **settiis* respectively.

¹⁴ Cf. μεδεικα[τεν] ‘in the magistracy’ beside μεδδес ‘magistrate(s)’ in Buxentum 1 and σπελληισ beside αφαματεδ for αφαματτεδ in Potentia 9.

¹⁵ Though it is possible that small numbers of Latin speakers were present in Bruttium from an early period, Latin inscriptions are found in Bruttium mainly from the second century BC onwards. There are no surviving curse tablets written wholly or partly in Latin from anywhere in Italy dated to before the second century, and most are first century BC or later: see McDonald (2013: 162–64).

¹⁶ When writing names in Greek, as in Latin, no distinction was made between the **-is** names and the **-iis** name. Consequently, παφελιος could be the Greek spelling of the Oscan praenomen ‘Pauillis’ corresponding to the gentilicium ‘Pauilliis’, the Latin equivalent of which was *Pauillius* (the praenomen, if it existed in Latin, would also have been spelt *Pauillius*).

¹⁷ In the Greek alphabet the letter ⟨ο⟩ is one way of writing the results of both **-ō-* > /u/ and **-o-* /o/ in Oscan. Cf. ορτοριεσ = Latin *Hortōrius* in Laos 3. Note that in Petelia 2 /u/ is written with both ⟨ου⟩ and ⟨ο⟩ in column 4 line 3 in the consecutive words σολλομ ηισου, both genitive plurals in **-ōm*. Cf. also the same variation in Potentia 40, which has both πλαμετοδ <

in our Oscan inscriptions of members of the same family being referred to by means of a plural gentilicium without praenomina, such as **kluvatiium** (Capua 4) ‘(*iovila*) of the Clouatii’, **viriiium** (Capua 10–13) ‘(*iovila*) of the Virii’, **diuivilam.tirentium / magiiium.sulum. muinikam** (Capua 15) ‘common *iovila* of all the Terentii Magii’, **beriiiumen. anei** (Teanum Sidicinum 27) ‘in the workshop of the Berii’. So if we read $\pi\alpha\phi\epsilon\lambda\iota\sigma$, we could understand this as an example of a whole family being cursed: ‘the Pauillii (are to be cursed)’. However, the following $\nu\omicron\mu\omicron[5]\nu\sigma$ could not also be a gentilicium in the nominative or accusative plural, since we would expect nominative plural **-nōs* and accusative plural **-noss*, not *-vσ*.¹⁸ Thus, we would probably need to follow Crawford in reading $\nu\omicron\mu\omicron[5]\nu\sigma$ to give a translation ‘the Pauillii, No(uis) Mo.....nus, son of It(i)us’.¹⁹

The rest of line 2 contains the form $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\sigma$, which Crawford considers to be the Latin word *ūsus* ‘use’, used as a slave name. As far as we are aware, there is no evidence that this word was ever used as a name in Latin. However, there is a gentilicium attested as both *Usius* (e.g. CIL 10.6283) and *Ussius* (e.g. CIL 5.4344), and we would prefer to connect $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\sigma$ with this. It could either be the Oscan praenomen corresponding to the gentilicium found in Latin, with a Greek nominative in *-oσ*, or the Oscan version of the gentilicium in the Oscan nominative or accusative plural, just as for $\pi\alpha\phi\epsilon\lambda\iota\sigma$, with ⟨ι⟩ omitted, as often (see fn.12).

There remains one last, bolder, possibility for understanding this part of the text. This rests on the suggestion of James Clackson (p.c.), that $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\sigma$ in line 2 is the Oscan equivalent of a demonstrative pronoun found in Umbrian, e.g. **ures** ‘of that’ found in IT IV.33 (Untermann 2000: 804; Dupraz 2012: 169),²⁰ in the nominative (or accusative) plural. If this were correct, the sequence $\epsilon\tau/\eta\iota\sigma\ \omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\sigma\ \alpha\rho\alpha\zeta\ \mu[\iota]\nu\alpha\sigma\ \mu\iota\nu\alpha\sigma / \kappa\alpha\rho\iota\sigma$ would be translated ‘those (sons/relatives/slaves) of Et(i)us: Arcus, Minatus, Minatus, Carius’.²¹ However, this comes at the serious cost of positing a pronoun otherwise unattested in Oscan, and, while it cannot be completely ruled out, it is not our favoured interpretation.

Altogether, the supposition that $\epsilon\tau/\eta\iota\sigma$ is to be understood as the genitive of a praenomen provides a variety of possible ways of translating the first two lines of column 4, most of which result in the presence of a standard, and completely unexceptional, Oscan name formula: either ‘P. Auelius, No(uius) Mo.....nus, son of It(i)us’, or ‘Pauillius Numo.....nus, son of It(i)s’, or ‘the Pauillii, No(uius) Mo.....nus, son of Et(i)us’. However, there are also disadvantages to this analysis. First, all the other names in the tablet seem to consist either of a praenomen and gentilicium (those in columns 1–3), or of simply a praenomen ($\alpha\rho\alpha\zeta\ \mu[\iota]\nu\alpha\sigma\ \mu\iota\nu\alpha\sigma / \kappa\alpha\rho\iota\sigma$ in column 4); it is not clear why the father’s praenomen should be used only for a single person. Second, and more important, is the question of the spacing of the letters. As can be seen in Figure 1, the writer had plenty of space after ⟨(σ)ετ⟩ to write ⟨ηις⟩ on the same line, and lines 2 and 3 of column 4

*-tōd and $\phi\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\iota < *flōsoy$. On the large amount of variation in spelling of vowels in Oscan inscriptions in the Greek alphabet in general, see Zair (forthcoming, Chapter 2).

¹⁸ There are no examples of consonant-stem gentilicia (Lejeune 1976: 119–21).

¹⁹ The use of the accusative to name curse victims is found in another Oscan curse tablet in the Greek alphabet (Laos 3). There are switches between nominative and accusative in some other Oscan curse tablets from Bruttium (Thurii Copia 1, Crimisa 3, Teuranus Ager 1). In these texts, the case of the name shows a strict alternation between nominative and accusative, suggesting a NOM (VERB) ACC structure where both curser and cursed are named but the verb is elided (McDonald 2013: 169–71; McDonald 2015). Petelia 2 shows no such alternation, and it is not plausible that the long list of names in the nominative in Petelia 2 could all be cursing the relatively small number of individuals in the accusative whom they precede and follow on the tablet. This suggests that the NOM (VERB) ACC structure is not the best explanation in the case of Petelia 2, and instead the writer would have to have briefly slipped into the accusative. This switch into the accusative for two names (or three, depending on how many letters the damaged part of the tablet contained) would be unmotivated. However, unmotivated switches between nominative and accusative are quite common in curse tablets cross-linguistically, since when writing a long list the writer may forget which case (s)he was using, sometimes using the nominative as a ‘default’ case and sometimes imagining a syntax such as ‘I curse X (accusative)’ (Adams 2003: 682). A short lapse into the accusative before switching back to the nominative for the following $\alpha\rho\alpha\zeta\ \mu[\iota]\nu\alpha\sigma\ \mu\iota\nu\alpha\sigma$ and $\kappa\alpha\rho\iota\sigma$ would therefore not be surprising in this inscription, considering the list of names is comparatively long; although there is no reason why these names should not be in the nominative.

²⁰ If this is correct, Dupraz’s derivation of the Umbrian pronoun from **oys-* cannot be correct, since Oscan $\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\sigma$ could come from **ōs-*, **ows-* or **us-*, but not **oys-*.

²¹ The name $\alpha\rho\alpha\zeta$ is the praenomen corresponding to the Latin gentilicium *Arcius* (CIL 8.9683, albeit in Africa, but cf. the related name *Arcaeus* at Pompeii, CIL 10.793).

extend much further to the right. The writer also does not split words over two lines anywhere else in the inscription. The top surface of the tablet is now damaged so that we do not have the original top edge; it is possible that there was some existing damage or flaw at the top of the tablet that would have motivated the writer to move to the next line, but this is speculative.

2.2 Interpretation 2: demonstrative pronoun

The second interpretation we suggest would obviate these difficulties, respecting the integrity of the line-ends, and avoiding the problem of the single instance of a father's praenomen. We would propose to read lines 1–3 as *παφελιοσ νομο[5]ν(σ) σετ / ηισου(μ) σοσ αραξ μ[]νασ μινασ / καρισ*, taking *σετ* as the 3rd plural of the verb ‘to be’, well attested as *sent* (e.g. Teanum Sidicinum 26) and, with the common Oscan loss of the nasal before *-t-*, *set* (e.g. Capua 25), and *ηισου(μ)* as the genitive plural of the demonstrative pronoun already attested in this column at the end of line 3. The word *σοσ* would be the expected Oscan form of the praenomen corresponding to the Latin gentilicium *Sossius* (e.g. CIL 9.2303) or *Sosius* (e.g. 9.422), since **sos(s)os* would give **soss* by syncope of the vowel in the final syllable. The translation of these lines would then be ‘The Pauillii, ... of these are Sos(s)us, Arcus, Minatus, Minatus, Carius’. Such an analysis would have the same advantage as the first interpretation, removing the implausible Latin forms *et* and *ūsus*. It would also explain why the praenomina in line 3 are not followed by gentilicia, as in columns 1–3, because the gentilicium has already been given; and also the double occurrence of *μινασ*, which may now refer to two different people with the same name in one or two different families.

However, there is also a difficulty in this analysis, which is the interpretation of *νομο[5]ν(σ)*. As discussed in the previous section, if a gentilicium, it could only be the nominative singular of a gentilicium in **-ānos* or **-īnos*, which would not fit into the necessary understanding of *ηισου(μ)* as referring to something in the plural in the previous line.²² The only possibility, if the word is in the plural, is that it is a consonant stem. In context, a speculative suggestion might be the word for ‘humans, men’, attested as *humuns* in Capua 34;²³ there might just be space for a reading of lines 1–2 as *παφελιοσ νομο[νοσ ομο]ν(σ) σετ / ηισου(μ)* ‘the Pauillii, the Numonii, the men of these (families) are: ...’.²⁴ The use of this pronoun to refer anaphorically to something in a previous clause is attested in line 3 of our tablet, and also paralleled in Cumae 8.43–4, which, after a long list of names, reads *inim eisunk uhftis / sullum [s]ullas* ‘and all wishes (?) of all of them’. The pronoun **ey-/eys-* normally goes at the beginning of the clause, but Dupraz (2012: 236) suggests that this is a stylistic feature of solemn or official texts rather than a syntactic rule; one of the few attested exceptions is in Capua 34, another curse tablet from about the same time as Petelia 2. In general, Oscan is a subject-object-verb language, but there are clearly cases where the subject or predicate is moved to after the verb, presumably with pragmatic effect (cf. *puf.faamat / m(a)r(as).aadiriis. v(ibeis)*, Pompei 2, ‘where commands Mr. Adirrius, son of V.’; *κωσ(τ)ιτ ν(ομοσ) Η(Η)ΗΔΠ*, Potentia 1, ‘they cost 350 *nummi*’). Consequently, the order *σετ / ηισου(μ)* rather than *ηισου(μ) σετ* is not problematic.

3. Conclusions

Our new readings and interpretations reveal a number of things about the inscription and its writer. Firstly, the Latin word *et* ‘and’ does not necessarily appear in this text. This means that we do not have to struggle to explain why the writer would make such an unusual one-word code-switch into a language that had not yet been used in the inscription for a single conjunction. Both our possible readings of *ετ/ηισ* or *σετ / ηισου(μ)* provide a much better explanation than the unmotivated use of Latin *et*. We also see no reason to

²² An ethnic adjective would fit well into the formula at this point: ‘The Pauillii from Numo ...’, but ethnic adjectives end in **-ānos* or **-īnos* (cf. *bantins* ‘Bantine, Bantia’ 1.19) and would consequently also have a nominative plural in **-nōs*.

²³ We are grateful to James Clackson (p.c.) for this suggestion.

²⁴ Crawford identifies the gap in line 1 as being of five letters. On the basis that Oscan gentilicia almost invariably end in *-ans*, *-ins*, *-is* or *-iis*, the shortest possible continuation of *νομο[]*, if it is a gentilicium, is three more letters. We compare the Latin gentilicium *Numōnius*, whose nominative plural could be spelt in Oscan as *νομονοσ*, with absence of ⟨ι⟩ after a consonant as discussed above. For missing ⟨h⟩ in *ομο]ν(σ)* cf. *ελ[ε]ομ* (Thurii Copia 1) ‘Heluus’, *ορτορεσ* (Laos 3) ‘Hortorius’, ⟨h⟩*οριου* (Crimisa 3) ‘Horium’ etc.

see ουσος as a Latin personal name ‘Usus’ rather than an Oscan name ‘Uss(i)us’. We have therefore made a trilingual curse into a bilingual one, and solved the problem of finding isolated Latin words in an inscription from ancient Bruttium at such an early date.

Secondly, our new interpretation of the first line of column 4 changes the way we see the use of code-switching in this text. If, as we have argued, it is more likely that words ending in -ος are Oscan nominative or accusative plurals rather than Greek nominative singulars and we accept Crawford’s interpretation that the words ending in -ο and -ω in columns 1–3 are Oscan feminine nominative singulars and not Doric Greek genitive singulars, then this means that there is no code-switching between Oscan and Greek until the final curse formula. If the majority of the curse is entirely in Oscan, and the writer has not been switching between languages throughout the curse as an obfuscation device, then we need to explain why (s)he felt the desire to code-switch in the final formula.

The confusion of aspirates and non-aspirates in the Greek portion of the text suggests that the writer may not have been a first-language speaker of Greek (Pocetti 2010: 675). Nevertheless, the curse formula is based on Greek models, as even the Oscan clause appears to be a translation from Greek produced by the writer or by the author of the handbook (s)he was following (cf. SGD 106, SGD 110 or SEG 49:1358 for Greek examples with comparable wording from Sicily and Calabria). The switch could therefore be motivated by reducing effort: reproducing a familiar Greek formula might have been easier than continuing to produce a translation, even for a second-language speaker of Greek. However, the switch from Oscan into Greek may also be motivated by the fact that this clause directly addresses Hermes, a Greek god – not the most usual choice in Greek curse tablets in Italy and Sicily, but not unknown elsewhere (see e.g. DTA 52, DTA 97, DTA 109). If the desire to address a Greek-speaking deity, and not general obfuscation, is the primary motivation for the code-switch in the formula, this gives us a significant insight into how Oscan-speakers in Bruttium adapted Greek models of writing curse tablets.

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