

Romanization in Pompeii

The Change from Oscan to Latin in the C1st BC

1. The background: Oscan

- Osco-Umbrian language, of Italic group (also comprises Latino-Faliscan)
- most attested Italic language other than Latin (c. 650 inscriptions)
- Central/Southern Italy (Samnium in North to Sicily in South)
- C6th BC - C1st AD; but mostly 300 - 89 BC
- Usually written right →left
- Often written in own “native” alphabet



2. The background: history

- 91-89 BC: Social War
- 89 BC: Sulla besieges Pompeii
- 80 BC: Pompeii becomes colony, under Sulla’s nephew

3. Use of languages

- Before the Social War - little Romanization
- During/just after the Social War - propaganda; *Italia / viteliú*
- First century AD - graffiti only



4. What do we call this?

- Romanization – but might imply sudden change of culture.
- Latinization – but might focus too much on language.

5. Conclusions

6. Further reading

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Salmon, E.T. (1982) *The Making of Roman Italy*, Ithaca NY

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