

Competing Standards

Orthographic and Epigraphic Standardisation in Italy 500-100 BC

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Questions for today

- Can we talk about “**standard languages**” and “orthographic standardisation” in the ancient world?
- How do we need to approach standardisation in **fragmentary** languages?
- Is “**local standardisation**” more common than “regional” or “language-wide standardisation”?

What is standardisation?



Selection
Codification
Elaboration of Function
Acceptance

(Haugen 1966)

Were there ancient “standard languages”?

- “Up until the 16th or 17th century, in contrast, nobody learned to speak or write a standard language because **there were no standard languages yet.**” Vogl (2012: 8)
- “Standardization comes about when a particularly variety or dialect of a language is associated with a certain powerful social, regional, or economic group according to factors which govern the structure of a given society... **Thus it was with the classical standard of Latin.**” Baldi (1999: 227)
- “Classical Latin... has sometimes been seen to fit neatly into the model created for modern standard language. **Something akin to standardization of Latin** took place between 200 BCE and 100 CE.” Clackson (2015: 37)

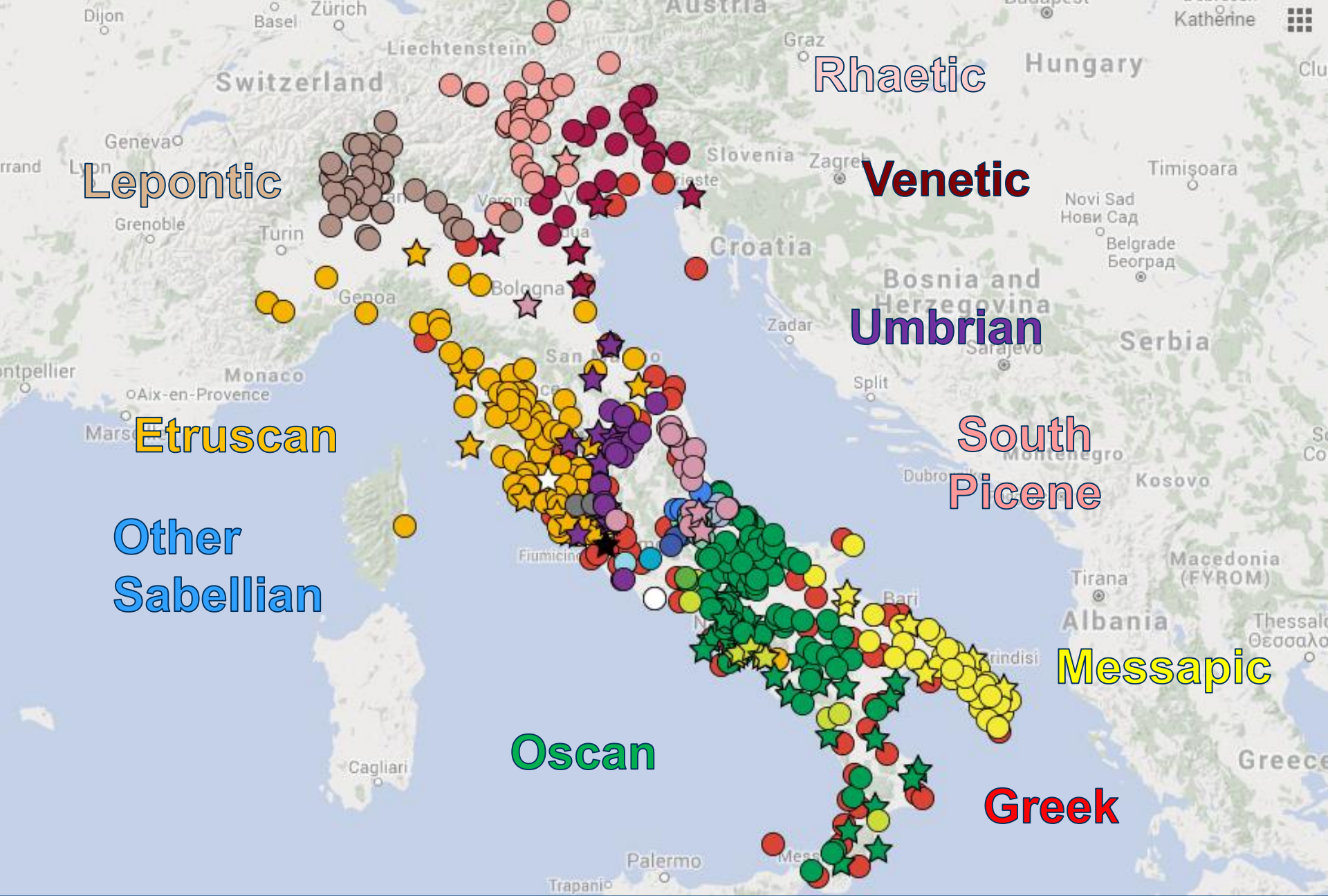
Looking critically at standard languages

“One problem that has dogged discussion of standard, variation (regional and social dialect), and *koine* is that the disciplines these terms pertain to (classics and linguistics) **developed in an unusual sociolinguistic context**, namely Western Europe and North America; and the language model that is in some sense built into them reflects their origin (nation states with peculiar colonial histories and standardized national languages).” Colvin (2009: 36)

Looking critically at the evidence

For most of the languages of the ancient world (other than Latin and Greek?) we do not have enough evidence to identify or date language standardisation.





Venetic Alphabets

a : Δ_1 Δ_2 Δ_3
 b : \diamond_1 \odot_1
 k : \times
 d : \times_1 $\#_2$ T_3 X_4 γ_5 \odot_6 (latin)
 e : \exists
 f : $\# \uparrow_1$ (vh) $\uparrow \#_2$ (hv) $\uparrow \cdot \uparrow_3$ (vh) $\#_4$ (f)
 g : γ_2 \vee_2
 h : $\#_1$ \uparrow_2 \cdot_3 \parallel_4 $\#_5$
 i : $|$
 y : l_1 (i) \parallel_2 (ii) $>l_3$ (ij) \gg_4 (jj) $>_5$ (j)
 l : \uparrow_1 \downarrow_2

m : \sphericalangle_1 \sphericalangle_2
 n : ∇
 o : \diamond_1 \odot_2 \diamond_3
 p : \uparrow_1 \uparrow_2
 r : \triangle_1 \odot_2
 s : \sphericalangle
 ś : M_1 $\#_2$ (?) γ_3
 t : X_1 \diamond_2 \odot_3 T_4 (latin)
 *θ [lettre morte, à Este] : \boxtimes_1 X_2
 u : \wedge
 v : \uparrow_1 \downarrow_2
 punctuation : \blacksquare_1 $\cdot \blacksquare_2$ \blacksquare_3

Venetic Alphabets

	Notation of /t/	Notation of /d/
Este	<X> (t 1)	<Z> (d 1)
Vicenza	<X> (t 1)	<T> (d 3)
Padua	<θ> (t 2/3)	<X> (d 4)
Lagole and Monte Pore	<X> (t 1)	<Z> (d 2)
Valle di Cadore	<X> (t 1)	<Y> (d 5)
Carinthia	<X> (t 1)	<D> (d 6?)
Friuli	<T> (t 4?)	?
Carso	<X> (t 1)	?

t : X₁ ϖ₂ θ₃ T₄(latin)

d : X₁ #₂ T₃ X₄ Y₅ D₆(latin)

Este/Padua differences – funerary epigraphy

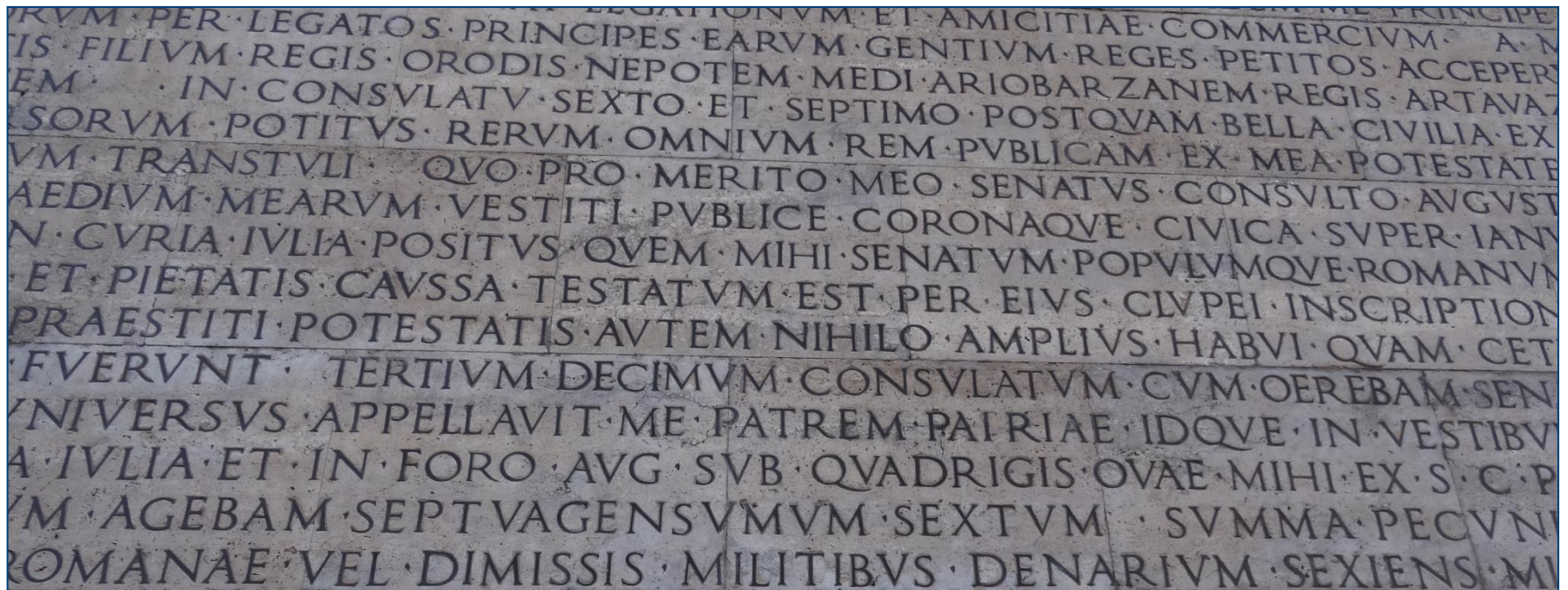
- Alphabet
- Shape of the monuments
- Iconography on stone monuments
- Number of women commemorated (Este has 31m, 19f, 1m+f; Padua has 19m, 3f, 1m+f)



BUT there are overlaps – particularly in the use of ceramic funerary urns, and in how the monuments mark groups of graves.

Looking critically at the methodology

Text type, length of text and total number of words needs to be taken into account.



Umbrian vs Oscan



Umbrian: Iguvine Tables, c. 2660 words (next is 19 words!)

Longest Oscan text (Latin): Tabula Bantina, c. 550 words

Longest Oscan text (“Native”): Cippus Abellanus, c. 185 words

Longest Oscan text (Greek): Roccagloriosa law, 82 words

Longest texts in the languages of Italy

Umbrian: c. 2660 words

Oscan (Latin): c. 550 words

Latin before 100 BC: c. 350 words (?)

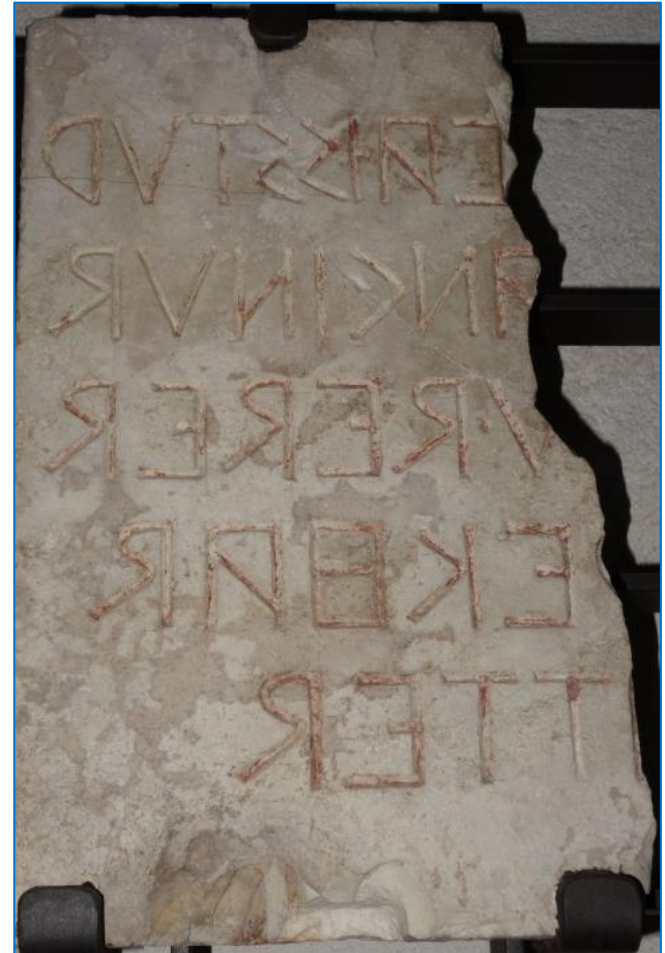
Oscan (“Native”): c. 185 words

Oscan (Greek): 82 words

Vestinian: 30 words

South Picene: 29 words

Venetic: 10 words



Looking critically at the methodology

There are no clear criteria for what counts as “standardised”.



What does standardisation show?

- If we see signs of “standardisation”, this may suggest:
 - (rarely?) strongly centralised scribal training
 - alphabet well-adapted to the language
 - few sound changes in the language since alphabet adopted
 - shorter texts/lack of evidence
- Look **locally** to get the most out of the evidence

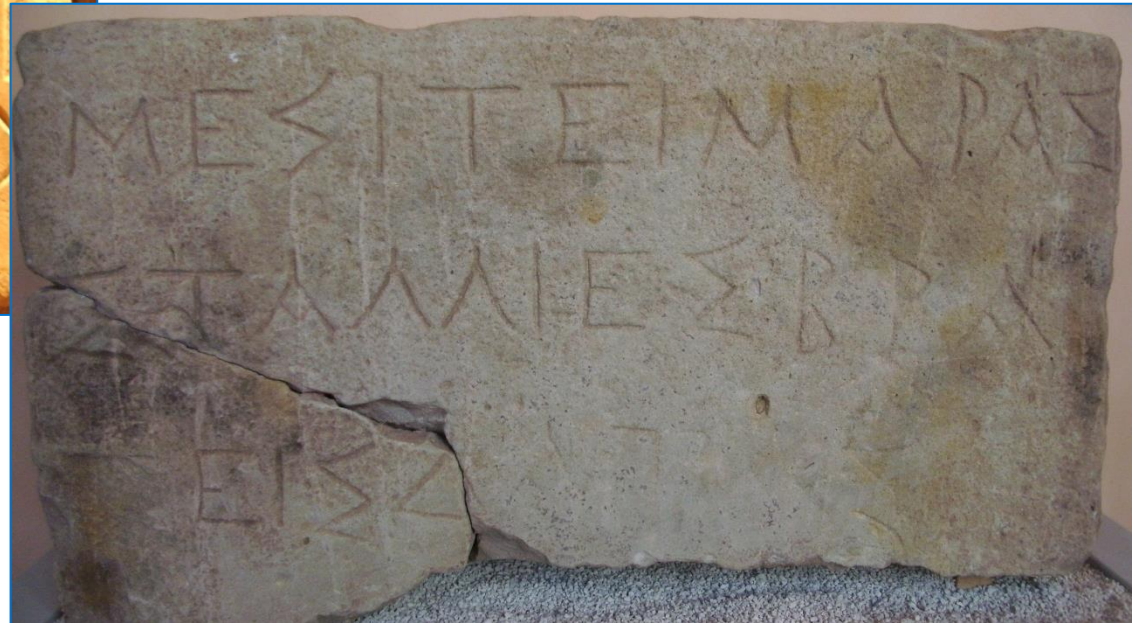
Looking locally - Alphabets used to write Oscan

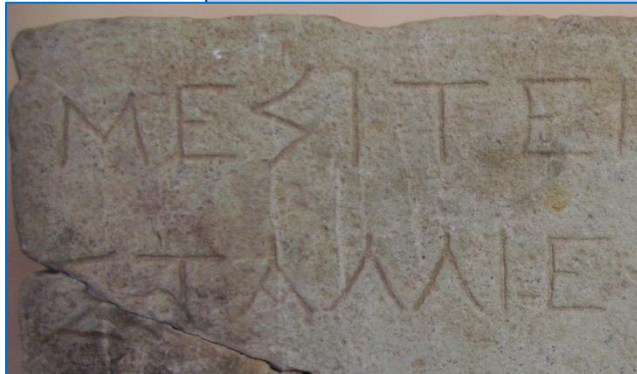
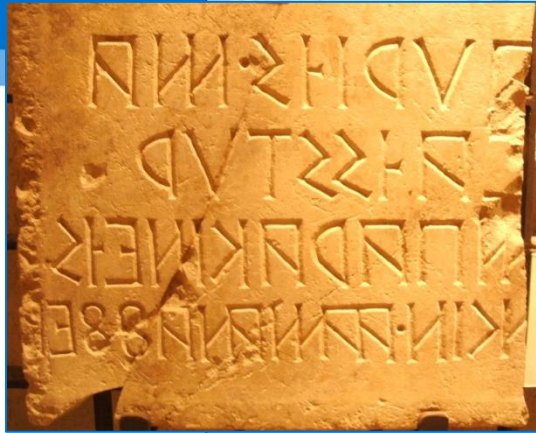


**“Native” alphabet
(based on Etruscan
alphabet)**



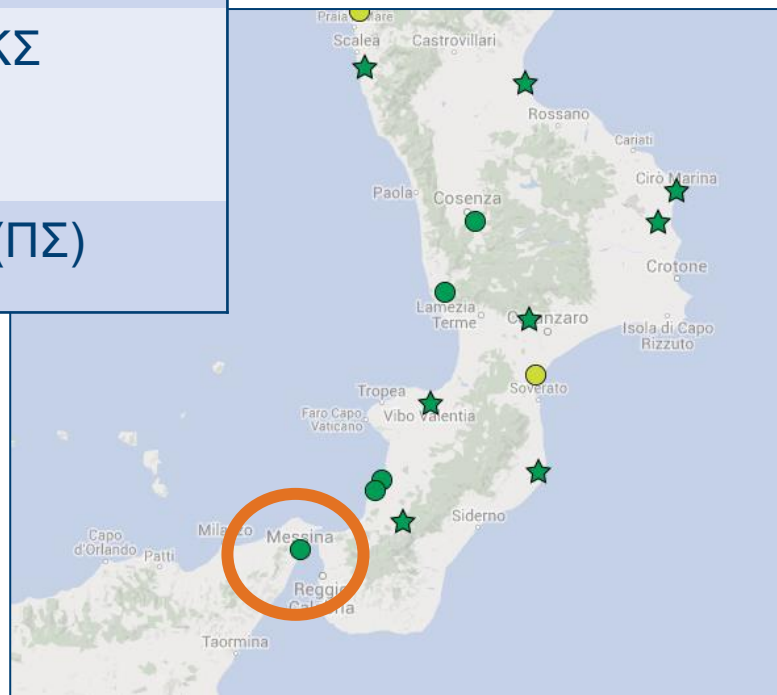
**Greek alphabet
(with some
adaptations)**





Messana

Phonemes	Messana	Lucania and Bruttium
/ks/ in names	ΚΣ	Ξ
/ks/ in other words	Ξ	ΚΣ
/ps/	ΠΣ	Ψ (ΠΣ)



Some ways forward

- So what can we say about standardisation in ancient Italy?
 - Come up with some numbers
 - Change our perspective: “local standardisation”
 - Relate “local standardisation” to material culture

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