Vacuna and Sabus:
eponymous deities in the peoples of ancient Italy

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ABSTRACT – In this work the significance of two of the most important Sabine deities, Vacuna and Sabus, is investigated. To this aim, the origin of Sabines is investigated and their relationships with other ancient Italic peoples are analysed. In particular, Proto-Hiberians, Proto-Umbrians, Proto-Etruscans, Proto-Gaul-Latins, and Pelasgians are considered together with their migrations to Italy. The peopling of ancient Central Italy is then reconstructed taking the ancient sources and the most recent theories into account. In such a context, the origin, the developing, and the significance of God Sabus and Goddess Vacuna is analysed seeking similarities and identifications with the deities of the other ancient Italic peoples.

KEYWORDS – Sabine deities, Italic Peoples, Italic Eponyms, Migrations.

INTRODUCTION

According to Cato¹, the ancient Italic people of Sabines took their name from God Sabus, son of God Sanctus. The latter was also called Jupiter Fidius or Dius Fidius. In Rome, God Sancus was then worshipped as a god of trust (Lat. fides) and oaths. However, Aelius Stilo² believed that Dius Fidius was an expression corresponding to Lat. Diovis Filius (son of Juppiter-Jovis) and Sabines called Sancus the same deity that Greeks called Heracles. Moreover, Johannes Lydus³ believed that the word sancus in the languages of Sabines means sky. In facts, the rithes of God Sancus were celebrated under open sky and, to this purpose, its temple on the Quirinal Hill in Rome had no roof. According to Hyginus⁴, Sabus was instead an eponymous leader, who drove Sabines from Persia to Italy stopping in Sparta. In Italy he fought against Sicels, chasing them out of Lazio. The Sabine pantheon the Sabus’ daughter was Goddess Vacuna. According to Varro⁵, she was the goddess of victory. However, woods⁶ and lakes⁷ were sacred to Vacuna, being the goddess associated to the nature and, due to the consonance with Lat. vacus and Lat. vacatio, to the freedom and rest. In the Roman age Vacuna was assimilated to other goddesses worshipped by Sabines, particularly to Feronia and Bellona⁸. The former was invoked as a goddess of wildness (associated to Lat. ferus, wild), fertility (associated to Lat. fero, Gr. φέρω⁹, to bring), open space¹⁰,

¹ Dionysius: II, 49, 2.
³ Lydus: IV, 90.
⁴ Servius: in Aen. VIII, 638.
⁷ Dionysius: I, 15, 1.
⁹ Dionysius: III, 32,1.
¹⁰ Plinius: II, 146.
and freedom\textsuperscript{11}. She was considered the feminine counterpart of Soranus (also called Sur and Suri by Etruscans\textsuperscript{12}), a underworld deity identified for some aspects with Apollon\textsuperscript{13}. Bellona was instead invoked as a goddess of war (associated to Lat. bellum, war) and victory. She was considered the feminine counterpart of Mars, god of the war, and identified with goddess Nerio.

Actually, as we will see in the next sections, Sabus and Vacuna were eponyms which Sabines of the Roman age had received from Proto-Scythian peoples that reached Italy in the first half of the second millennium BC, shortly after Proto-Umrians. Moreover, Feronia and Bellona, to whom Vacuna was assimilated, originally were eponymous goddess of Proto-Etruscan tribes that penetrated the Italic peninsula during the last centuries of the second millennium BC.

**PROTO-SCYTHIAN ETHNOYMS**

The names Sabus and Vacuna can be easily derived from the terms *Swag*\textsuperscript{w}au-s and *Swag*\textsuperscript{w}au-na, which have been reconstructed\textsuperscript{14} as names by wich some Proto-Scythian peoples were indicated, that lived in the grasslands between southern Russia and Iran in the IV and III millennium BC. Having domesticated the horse\textsuperscript{15}, these peoples were able to drive large herds of cows through the prairies, searching for suitable pastures. Therefore, they should be known as the “cow breeder people”.

The names of these peoples have been reconstructed by componing the Proto-Indo-European roots *sw- (self, own) and *g\textsuperscript{w}au- (cow) into the word *swag\textsuperscript{w}au-s, to which the meaning of “own cow”, “bred cow”, or “herd of cows” can be attributed. The -na derivation (*swag\textsuperscript{w}au-na) is very common in the Indo-European languages and even in Etruscan\textsuperscript{16}. Other common derivations are -ta and -la. From *Swag\textsuperscript{w}au-na, *Swag\textsuperscript{w}au-ta, and *Swag\textsuperscript{w}au-la, we can easily obtain the following historical Scythian names: Hebr. Askenaz\textsuperscript{17} (from the ablative *Swag\textsuperscript{w}aun-at, “from the country of cow breeders”), Gr. Σκύθαι\textsuperscript{18} and -σαγέται (as in Μασ-σαγέται\textsuperscript{19}), Ass. Ashkuzai\textsuperscript{20}, Gr. Σκολότοι\textsuperscript{21} (from the derivation of the derivation *Swag\textsuperscript{w}au-la-ta).

As we can see, in the derived historical Scythian names, the vowel in the first syllable of *swag\textsuperscript{w}au-s is often missing or slid before the consonant. According to Szemerényi\textsuperscript{22}, these changes are only due to the transcription in the Semitic alphabets, which did not indicate the vowels. However, both derivations with the vowel before and after the consonant are attested in Italy in names (eg. Lat. Siculi and Lat. Asculum) which can not have been distorted by Semitic alphabets. Therefore, we could assume that the first syllable of *swag\textsuperscript{w}aus was originally not vocalised and replaced by a voiced labiosibilant sound: *s\textsuperscript{w}g\textsuperscript{w}aus. Such a sound, in the derivated names, resulted in a sibilant preceded or followed by a vowel (mainly a and i), as in Sakas/Askas (whence Saci and Osci), Sakanas/Askas-nas (whence Sicani and Ascani), and Saka-las/Askas-las (whence Shekelesh and Ashqelon). Mythology is used to often employ sequences of fathers and sons to indicate the chronological order or the derivation. The sequence Sancus father of Sabus, father of Vacuna, can then be read as: originally the eponym Sancus was used, afterward Sabus and Vacuna, and Vacu-na was a derivation of Sabu-s. Probably, the nasoveler sound nc was introduced in the name of Sancus as a recall of the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{servius} Servius: in Aen. VIII, 564.
\bibitem{colonna} Colonna 2009.
\bibitem{vergilius} Vergilius: XI, 785; Di Fazio 2013.
\bibitem{fabbri} Fabbri 2017b.
\bibitem{toynbee} Toynbee 1977: 104; Diamond 1998: 122.
\bibitem{pallottino} Pallottino 2016: 466.
\bibitem{genesis} Genesis, 10, 3; Jeremiah, 51, 27.
\bibitem{herodotus} Herodotus, IV, 6.
\bibitem{herodotus} Herodotus, I, 201-216.
\bibitem{szemerenyi} Szemerényi 1980, 7.
\bibitem{herodotus} Herodotus, IV, 6.
\bibitem{szemerenyi} Szemerényi 1980, 7.
\end{thebibliography}
labiovelar one, which was no more common in the historical age in Italic peoples. Similarly, the labiosibilant was changed to sibilant (cf. Sans. *swa with Lat. *se, beside Lat. *suus). Therefore, we can read again the sequence as: first the eponym *Svwagwus, then Sabus and *Vacus, from which Vacu-na.

We can observe that the original labiovelar gw results both in labial and velar in the historical eponyms Sabus and Vacu-na, handed down in the same people. We could then assume that in the people of Sabines different proto-scythian tribes had miggled, that reached Italy having resulted the labiovelar in different manner and thus worshipping different eponymous deified ancestors (Sabus and *Vacus). However, these tribes should have been aware that their ancestors were the same even remembered under different names, since Sabines considered Vacu-na as a daughter of Sabus, letting therefore *Vacus be equal to Sabus. Such an awareness was probably difficult to be kept by peoples enough distant for enough time to result the labiovelar in different manner. Otherwise, we could assume that the ancestors of Sabines reached Italy still having labiovelar sounds in their language and afterward they resulted them differently by influence of other peoples.

THE PEOPLING OF CENTRAL ITALY IN ANCIENT SOURCES

To understand how the names of two of the most important and peculiar Sabinian deities present different linguistic characteristics, we have to consider the peopling of Central Italy, where Sabines lived.

Siculi and Sicani

According to Dionynius23, Siculi (Gr. Σικελοί) were the first people remembered as inhabiting the region were Roma rose. Afterwards, through a long war, this land was conquered by Aborigines, who previously lived in little villages without walls. They then united to Pelasgians miggled with some Greeks, chasing Siculi completely out24 and fighting against Umbrians25. Such a confederation occupied all the lands between Tevere and Lari rivers, providing walls for many cities and maintaining the name Aborigines until the time of Trojan war. Afterwards, this population assumed the name Latin after Latinus king. Varro too believed that Siculi once inhabited Latium, since he found many similarities between their language and Latin26.

Plinius cites Aborigines as the first inhabitants of Lazio, followed by Pelasgians, Arcadians, Siculi, Aurunci, and Rutuli. However, this chronological order seems to be influenced by the fact that the Lazio region was extended in the course of time to include peoples further South. Plinius also cites Siculi together with Liburni as the first inhabitants of some cities on the Medio-Adriatic coast such as Palma, Prætutia, and Adria, which later were taken by Umbrians and then by Etruscans. According to Plinius, also Numana and Ancona were founded by Siculi29. Moreover, Plinius cites Sicani as a people in Albani Mounts. The presence of Sicani in Lazio is confirmed by Vergilius31, who cites them as allied of Rutuli. Aulus Gellius32 and Macrobius33 cite Sicani together with Aurunci and Pelasgians.

23 Dionysius: I, 9, 1.
24 Dionysius: I, 2, 2.
25 Dionysius: I, 19, 1.
26 Varro: V, 20, 2.
30 Plinius: III, 63.
31 Vergilius: VII, 795; VIII, 328; XI, 317.
32 Gellius: I, 10, 1.
33 Macrobius: I, 5, 1.
Aborigines and Oenotrians

Dionysius refers\textsuperscript{34} different opinions about Aborigines (Gr. Αβοριγίνες). Somebody believed that they where an autochthonous people, that lived in the same place “\textit{ab origine}”. Others, correcting the name into Aberrigines (Gr. Αβερριγίνες; cf. Lat. aberro, to wander away), believed that they were nomads coming from different places, joined together, and living on hunting and breeding. Others more considered Aborigines a Ligurian tribe bordering on Umbrians. Moreover, some Roman historians, such as Portius Cato and Caius Sempronius, thought that Aborigines came from Greece. Dionysius believes\textsuperscript{35} that, in this case, they should have come from Arcadia leaded by Oenotrius, son of Lycaon, son of Pelasgus, and in Italy they should have taken name Aborigines since they lived on the mounts (Gr. ὅροι). Moreover, Dionysius considers Oenotrians (Gr. Οἴνωτροι\textsuperscript{36}) as the first Greeks who colonised Italy, before Cretians and Pelasgians themselves. Lastly, citing Antiochus Xenophanes, Dionysius relates\textsuperscript{37} that Oenotrians once occupied Italy and later were reigned by the kings Italus and Morges, becoming Itali and Morgetes.

Umbrians

According to Plinius\textsuperscript{38}, Umbrians (Lat. Umbri) were the oldest peoples of Italy and had taken their name from having survived to the deluge (cf. Gr. δῆμφρος, storm of rain, inundation). They lose 300 cities, conquered by Etruscans. Solinus\textsuperscript{39}, citing Marcus Antonius, confirms Plinius’ etymology of the name of Umbrians and, citing Cornelius Bocchus, reports the belief that Umbrians were an offspring of Gauls. However, such a belief should probably have been originated as a consequence of the late settlement of Senones Gauls in the lands of Umbrians. Plinius also attests the presence of Umbrians to the North up to the territory of Ravenna, where they founded the village of Budrio (Lat. Butrium)\textsuperscript{40}. According to Strabo\textsuperscript{41}, Umbrians (Gr. Ομβρικοί) lived between Sabines and Tyrrhenians and their territory extended over the Apennine mountains as far as Ariminum and Ravenna.

Etruscans

Etruscans are called Tyrrenians (Gr. Τυρρηνοί\textsuperscript{42}) by Dionysius, who cites different opinions about their origin. Some historians\textsuperscript{43} believed that Tyrrenians came from Lydia, once called Meonia, leaded by Tyrrenhus, son of Atys, brother of Asies. Others\textsuperscript{44} (in accordance with Strabo\textsuperscript{45}) considered Tyrrenhus as a son of Heracles and Omphalè and believed that he came in Itay from Lydia and chased Pelagians out of their cities North-West of Tevere. Others more\textsuperscript{46} said Tyrrenhus son of Telephus and come to Italy after the fall of Troy. Xanthus of Lydia\textsuperscript{47} said that Atis procreated Lydus and Torebus, whence the peoples of Lydians and Torebians, respectively, that spoke similar

\textsuperscript{34} Dionysius: I, 10, 1-3; I, 11, 1-2.
\textsuperscript{35} Dionysius: I, 11, 1; I, 13, 3.
\textsuperscript{36} Dionysius: I, 13, 1.
\textsuperscript{37} Dionysius: I, 12, 3.
\textsuperscript{38} Plinius: III, 112-113.
\textsuperscript{39} Solinus: II, 11.
\textsuperscript{40} Plinius: III, 15.
\textsuperscript{41} Strabo: V, 2, 1.
\textsuperscript{42} Dionysius: I, 25, 2.
\textsuperscript{43} Dionysius: I, 27, 1.
\textsuperscript{44} Dionysius: I, 28, 1.
\textsuperscript{45} Strabo: V, 2, 2.
\textsuperscript{46} Dionysius: I, 28, 1.
\textsuperscript{47} Dionysius: I, 28, 2.
languages. According Hellanicus of Lesbos, Tyrrhenians were Pelasgians that changed name when arrived in Italy, ruling Nana, son of Teutamides, four generation after Pelasgus. They landed at the mouth of Po river (Gr. Σπινῆτι < Etr. Spina < *Sabina < *Swag*wana), invaded the city of Croton (the Roman Corthona or Cotornia), and then founded the city of Tyrrenia. However, Dionysius believes that Thyrrhenians were not Pelasgians nor Lydians, but auctochothonous and took their name from their leader or their robust houses (Gr. τύρσεις). Actually, Etruscans are called Tyrsenians (Gr. Τυρσηνοί) by Herodotus, who instead says they migrated to Italy from Lydia following Tyrsenus (Gr. Τυρσηνός).

According to Plinius, Etruria was originally occupied by Umbrians, who were later chased out by Pelasgians, who were in turn expelled by Lydians, who afterward were called Tyrrenians after their king and Tusci in Greek. Dionysius specifies that Tyrrenians were called Tusci (Gr. Θυσκόοι) due to their ability in sacrificing (cf. Gr. θύειν, to sacrifice). Livius relates that Etruscans, above all other peoples, were dedicated to religion rituals and excelled in this art.

**Pelasgians**

According to Dionysius, Pelasgians (Gr. Πελασγοί) originally lived in the city of Argos in the Achaean region of Peloponnesus and took their name from King Pelasgus, son of Zeus. Hence, led by the Poiseidon’s son Pelasgus, living five generation after the homonymous one, they moved to Thessaly. Hence, after five generations again, they were chased out by Curetes and Leleges, towards Crete, the Cyclades islands, Estiotidis, Beotia, Focidis, Eubea, the coasts around Ellespontis, and to the Islands in front of them. Most of Pelasgians headed to the region around Dodona, whence they passed to Italy, landing at the mouth of Po river. Hence, they penetrated the land of Umbrians conquiring some of their cities. Later, chased out by Umbrians and meeting Aborigines near Cutilia, they allied and integrated with the latter. Dionysius cites other migrations of peoples (led by Evander and Heracles) from Peloponnesus to Lazio after that of Pelasgians. These peoples integrated with those migrated from the Trojans (led by Aeneas) and with Latini and founded many cities, among which, sixteen generation after the Tojan war, Rome.

Herodotus refers to Pelasgians as some tribes that at his time lived by the northern coast of the Aegean sea in the Thessaliotis and Hellespont regions and spoke an ancient language very different from Old-Greek. The historian also relates that at the time of Darius Lemnos and Imbros...
where still inhabited by Pelasgians\(^{69}\). Moreover, the inhabitants of Athens once were Pelasgians and later changed their language still remaining in the same place\(^{70}\).

According to Thucydides\(^{71}\), Athens and Lemnos were once populated by Tyrrhenians, from which Pelasgians generated. Thucydides also cites bilingual tribes of Pelasgians in the Chalkidike peninsula at the time of Brasidas. Herodotus distinguishes Pelasgians from Tyrsenians, placing some of the former living in Creston above the latter\(^{72}\) (Gr. ὑπὲρ Τυρσηνῶν; that probably means “North of Tyrsenians”, but could be also interpreted as “on the remains of Tyrsenians”, i. e. “from Tyrsenians”, as in Thucydides). The relationship between Pelasgians and Tyrrhenians has been discussed by several ancient historians\(^{73}\).

Sabines

Dionysius cites different opinions about the origin of Sabines (Gr. Σαβῖνοι\(^{74}\)). According to Cato\(^{75}\), Sabines originally lived in a village named Testruna (Gr. Τεστροῦνα) near the city of Amiernum. They took their name from Sabinus son of Sancus, a local god, by some called Zeus (Gr. Ζεύς, Δίος = Δίος Φίδιος). From their original land, they expanded towards Ager Reatinus, where lived Aborigines and Pelasgians, and took their most important city, Cutilia. From Ager Reatum they founded several colonies, among which Cures, where they lived without walls. According to Zenodotus of Troezen\(^{76}\), Sabines were originally Umbrians living in Ager Reatinus. Chased out by Pelasgians, migrated to the land where they lived at the time of Dionysius, changing name from Umbrians to Sabines\(^{77}\).

The local tradition\(^{78}\) recalls that when Licurges ruled in Sparta, some Lacedaemonians moved to Italy and settled by Sabines, in a coast region that they called Foronia remembering their transfer (Gr. φόρησις) through the sea and edifying a sanctuary to the local goddess who later was known as Feronia. These Lacedaemonians brought Spartan customs to Sabines. Plutarchus\(^{79}\) relates that Sabines declared themselves to be colonists of Lacedaemones. However, Dionysius says\(^{80}\) that Sabines fighting against Romans and integrating with them at the time of Roma birth were no less frivolous (Gr. ἁβροδίαιτοι) than Etruscans.

Dionysius also reports that Sabines coming by night from Amiernum took Lista, the mother-city of Aborigines, who refused in Reate\(^{81}\), and that the city of Cures (Gr. Κύρεις) took name from God Quirinus (Gr. Κυρίνος) and was founded by Modius Fabidius (Gr. Μόδιος Φαβίδιος), son of a woman of Ager Reatinus who had been impregnated by that god\(^{82}\). However, Varro believes that the city took name from the spear, called cureis (κύρεις) in Sabinian\(^{83}\). According to Plinius\(^{84}\) Sabines were called Sebini due to their piousness (cf. Gr. σέβομαι, Gr. σέβιζω, to worship).

\(^{69}\) Herodotus: V, 26, 1.

\(^{70}\) Herodotus: I, 57, 3.

\(^{71}\) Thucydides: IV, 109, 4.

\(^{72}\) Herodotus: I, 57, 1.

\(^{73}\) Ulf 2017.

\(^{74}\) Dionysius: II, 36, 3.

\(^{75}\) Dionysius: II, 49, 2-3.

\(^{76}\) Dionysius: II, 49, 1.

\(^{77}\) However, Letta (2008) believes that Dionysios intended that peoples from Reate changed name from Sabines to Umbrians.

\(^{78}\) Dionysius: II, 49, 4.

\(^{79}\) Plutarchus, Life of Numa Pompilius: 1, 3.

\(^{80}\) Dionysius: II, 38, 3.

\(^{81}\) Dionysius: I, 14, 6.

\(^{82}\) Dionysius: II, 48, 1-3.

\(^{83}\) Dionysius: II, 48, 4.

\(^{84}\) Plinius: III, 108.
Piceni and Samnites

According to Strabo\(^{85}\), Sabines were a very ancient race and were indigenous inhabitants, while Piceni, that the historian calls Picentini (Gr. Πικεντίνοι), and Samnites (Gr. Σαυνῖται) were colonists of Sabines, as well as Leucani (Gr. Λευκανοί) of Samnites, and Brettii (Gr. Βρέττιοι) of Leucani. In particular, Strabo relates\(^{86}\) that Piceni took their name from a woodpecker (Lat. picus), sacred to Mars, that drove them from the Sabine country to their territory, stretching from the mountains to the plains and the sea, south of the Umbrian cities placed between Ariminum and Ancona, and north of Vestini (Gr. Βεστῖνοι), Marsi (Gr. Μαρσοί), Peligni (Gr. Πελίγνοι), Marrucini (Gr. Μαρρουκῖνοι), and the Samnitic tribe of Frentani (Gr. Φρεντανοί). Plinius specifies\(^{87}\) that Piceni, as he calls them (Lat. Piceni), were descendants of Sabines, who had made a vow to celebrate a holy spring. Such a kind of colonisation is also described by Dionysius\(^{88}\) for Aborigines. Moreover, Strabo relates\(^{89}\) that Samnites migrated to the country of Opici (Gr. Ὦπικοί) as a consequence of a vow to Mars, that they made in the course of a long war against Umbrians. They were driven by a bull, which they later sacrificed to Mars. Strabo finds reasonable that their alternative name Sabelli (Gr. Σαβέλλοι) was a diminutive derivation of Sabines. Lastly, Hirpini (Gr. Ἱρπῖνοι) migrated southwards from Samnites to their territory close to that of Leucani led by a wolf, that is called hirpus (ἱρπος in Strabo\(^{90}\)) in the language of Samnites\(^{91}\).

Migrations to Italy

The local traditions and the myths reported by ancient historians often transpose the events from a time to another, or condense several events in one, or even multiplicate the same event attributing it to different times. The opinions cited may be influenced by the will to attribute a particular characteristic to a people or to inspire some sentiments. These are for example the case of Roman historians who wanted to attribute a Greek origin to Rome\(^{92}\) and that of Anatolian Greek historians who wanted to inspire solidarity against Persians\(^{93}\). Aiming to make order in the ancient testimonies, it is possible to find help in the archaeological finds. However, for the prehistoric age, finds can give information on the morphology of the people and, nowadays, on the genes, but not on the language they spoke. A method to obtain information about the languages spoken in an area in the prehistoric age is that of analyse the current and the past geographical names. People migrations and diffusion processes have been studied as an inverse problem by analysing the time and space distributions of geographical names, together with those of ethnonyms and with historical testimonies\(^{94}\). We now try to employ this technique and its previous results, to distinguish the ancient migrations to Italy.

Proto-Hiberians

Proto-Hiberians were present in Europe already in the IV-III millennium BC. They had some common ancestors with Proto-Scythians. Both these peoples, in fact, descended from

\(^{85}\) Strabo: V, 3, 1.
\(^{86}\) Strabo: V, 4, 2.
\(^{87}\) Plinius: III, 110.
\(^{88}\) Dionysius: I, 16, 1-3.
\(^{89}\) Strabo: V, 4, 12.
\(^{90}\) Strabo: V, 4, 12.
\(^{92}\) Hill 1961.
\(^{93}\) Ulf 2017.
\(^{94}\) Fabbri 2017b; 2018a.
*Suparsthas*, a caucasoid morphology population that concentrated on the mountains of Armenia probably as a consequence of a flood on Mesopotamia after the melting of glaciers of the last glaciation. The name *Suparsthas* has been reconstructed by considering the ethnonyms of the peoples who lived or passed near the mountains of Armenia and Caucasus. From this name, in fact, we can derive those of the historical peoples of Subaras, Hurrians, Parthians, Kurds, Hattians, Persians, Arsi, Ari, Asi through common phonetic changes.

While the ancestors of *Proto-Scythians* (*Parsthas*) moved eastward through the Iranian highlands and northward into the grasslands of southern Russia, those of *Proto-Hiberians* (*Suparas / *Subaras / *Hubaras*) expanded northward through Caucasus, and hence westward to Eastern Europe. In the last half of the III millennium BC *Proto-Scythians* started to move westward from current Kazakhstan, forcing *Proto-Hiberians* to penetrate Europe or flow back through Caucasus. While *Proto-Scythians* were nomad cow breeders, *Proto-Hiberians* were more sedentary, breeding small animals and living on agriculture.

Italic *Proto-Hiberians* (*Subaras / *Tubaras / *Lubaras / *Hubaras) reached the peninsula mainly through the Alps and Adriatic Sea during the III millennium BC. They merged with a palaeoanthropic substrate and contributed to the Terremarne Culture. In the historical age, their descendants were known as Iberi, Liguri, and Liburni, and were mainly located at the west side of Italy and, due to more recent migrations from Illyria, in some places by the Adriatic coast.

**Proto-Umbrians and Proto-Calabrians**

At the beginning of II millennium BC the *Proto-Hiberian settlements were separated from the Proto-Scythian lands by a border line stretching from Anatolia to current Poland, approximatively. In the border area some hybrid populations generated from the two peoples. They should have been known as *Gwaulubras* (< *Gwaulas *Hubras < *Swagwaulas *Hubaras) and *Gwaumbras* (< *Gwaunas *Hubras < *Swagwunas *Hubaras). The name *Gwaulubras* diffused mainly to the south. We can derive from it the historical names of Anatolian Chalybes (Gr. Χάλυβες), Balcanian Galabrii (Gr. Γαλάβριοι), andItalic Calabri (Gr. Καλαβροί). The name *Gwaumbras* diffused inside the Únětice culture, in an area of commercial and cultural exchanges, where the main ancient communication routes between Asia and Europe (along Boristhenes, Danube, Vistula, Elbe, and Rhine rivers) crossed.

When *Proto-Scythians* moved their border up to the Rhine valley in the course of the great migration of the beginning of the II millennium BC, *Gwaumbras* were forced to move to the North Sea and Baltic Sea and to descend on Italy (fig. 1). The name of the peoples that lived in the historical age in the territories where they migrated can be derived from the name *Gwaumbras*: Cambri, Cumbrì, Humber, Cimbrì, Ambrones, Umbrians.

Living in territories where products of different countries were exchanged, *Gwaulubras* and *Gwaumbras*, learnt the more advanced manufacturing techniques. In particular, they excelled in the metal manufacturing. In Anatolia Chalybes were considered the inventors of metallurgy and by the Adriatic coast of Italy a millenary tradition in metal processing was originated by Umbrians.
In Italy the Proto-Umbrian people of *Gʷaumbras penetrated from North-Eastern Alpes, while the Proto-Calabrian people of *Gʷalubras through the South-Eastern coasts, mainly near the Otranto Strait. They pressed Proto-Hiberians towards the Tyrrenhic coast and partially overlapped them. In the historical age, the descendants of *Gʷaumbras, the Ambrones and Umbrians, were located in
Liguria\textsuperscript{104} and around Umbria\textsuperscript{105}, respectively. However, some geographical names attest the past presence of relatives of these peoples also between these two regions. For example, we can derive from *Gʷaumbras the name of Sambro torrent and Ombrone river, which flow south of Bologna and further south, respectively [an other Sambro torrent flows in Umbria, an other Ombrone river flows south of Florence]. The descendants of *Gʷalubras, the Calabri, were instead located in the South-Eastern part of Italy\textsuperscript{106} (current Puglia).

By analysing the names of the historical descendants of Proto-Calabri and Proto-Umbrians (Calabri, Cambri, Cumbric, Chalybes, Humber, ‘Ambrones, ‘Umbrians), we can observe in this peoples a tendency to transform the labiovelar gʷ into unvoiced velar also aspired and muted.

We will see similar results in many Italics toponyms and ethnonyms.

**Proto-Scythians**

Having chased Proto-Hiberians towards the Atlantic Ocean and Proto-Umbrians northwards and southwards, Proto-Scythians occupied Central Europe at the beginning of the II millennium BC. Hence, they started penetrating the italic peninsula through North-Eastern Alps, driving their herds of cows to the pastures of Padanian Valley and pressing Proto-Umbrians on the Apennini mountain chain from Liguria to Marche. In the same period, other Proto-Scythian tribes occupied the Balkan area. Hence they were progressively forced to penetrate Italy through the Otranto strait and the Adriatic costs nearby, heading for the planes of South-Eastern Italy and pressing Proto-Calabrians on the mountains.

From the names of *Swagʷau-tas / *Swagʷau-nas / *Swagʷau-las we can derive the historical names of Sabates, Sabines, Sabelli, Sicani, Siculi, and Apuli. These peoples were mainly located in Central and Southern Italy in the historical age. However, many hydronims (Savena, Aposa, Seveso, Savio) and toponyms (Savona, Sabatia, Spezia, Spina) demonstrate the past presence of Proto-Scythian tribes even in Northern Italy\textsuperscript{107}. In the Italic names derived from *Swagʷaus we can observe that the labiovelar gʷ results both in labial and velar.

**Proto-Gaul-Latins**

The great migration of the last centuries of II millennium BC brought to Central Europe a new wave of peoples descending from Proto-Scythians. These peoples had previously occupied the territories between the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea, and had been pressed westwards by populations coming from the Orient. Among these migrating peoples, Proto-Gaul-Latins partially settled in Central Europe and partially descended on Italy. For these tribes the names *Gʷaulas / *Gʷaula-tas / *Gʷaula-ta-nas have been reconstructed\textsuperscript{108}, from which the historical names Galli, Galati, Collati, Collatini, Latini, Lithuans, and Lettons can be derived. Proto-Gaul-Latins, closely preceded by Itali and Vetuloni (< *Sgʷytas / *Sgʷetas) and followed by Proto-Etruscans, descended on Italy mainly from North-East. They forced a passage through the Proto-Scythian tribes occupying the Padanian Valley, crossed the Apennini chain and diffused along the Tyrrenian coast up to Central Italy. Their close relatives, the Venetics (Lat. Veneti\textsuperscript{109} < *Vainai-tas < *Gʷauna-tas), settled by the northern Adriatic coast, whence subsequently they penetrated North-Western Italy.

In toponyms derived from Proto-Gaul-Latins (such as Collatia, Palatium, Falerii) we can observe that the original labiovelar results both in labial and velar. Therefore, we could assume that these tribes still had labiovelars in their language when they arrived in Italy and later they resulted these

\textsuperscript{104} Plutarchus, Life of Marius, 19, 4.
\textsuperscript{105} Plinius: III, 109; III, 112.
\textsuperscript{106} Plinius, III, 99.
\textsuperscript{107} Fabbri 2018b.
\textsuperscript{108} Fabbri 2018a.
\textsuperscript{109} Plinius: III, 38.
sounds influenced by neighbour peoples, mainly the Etruscans. However, they penetrated the peninsula closely preceded and followed by peoples who resulted the labiovelar in labial. In the historical age, the descendants of Proto-Gaul-Latins in Italy were located in Lazio (Latin, Collatins\textsuperscript{110}) and, due to more recent migrations, in Gallia Cisaplinna (Gauls\textsuperscript{111}).

Proto-Etruscans

Etruscans can be considered as an authoctonous people, since their characteristic culture developed on the Italic soil\textsuperscript{112}. However, the Etruscan tribes or communities can be connected to three distinct lineages descending from Western *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas (e. g. Tarchna), Eastern *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas (e. g. Phersna and Rasna), and *G\textsuperscript{w}aulg\textsuperscript{w}aunas (e. g. Velsna)\textsuperscript{113}. *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas or *Thyras G\textsuperscript{w}aunas were originally a population living on the border (cf. Gr. θίπα, door) between mongoloid morphology peoples and Proto-Scythians and resulted from the crossing of these populations. As a border people, they where subjected to commercial and cultural exchanges, thus developing the attitude to the commerce and acquiring the knowledge of advanced technologies. In the III millennium BC Proto-Scythians broke into the territory around Volga river, separating *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas into two branches, the Eastern one of which forced towards Mongolia and China, the Western one towards Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and Eastern Europe. In the course of time, *Swag\textsuperscript{w}aunas bordering on *Thyras G\textsuperscript{w}aunas assumed the name *G\textsuperscript{w}auls G\textsuperscript{w}aunas or *G\textsuperscript{w}aulg\textsuperscript{w}aunas. to emphasise that they were pure Proto-Scythians having maintained the original costumes and language. In fact, they still lived mainly on cow breeding, while *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas also lived on trade and had simplified and adapted their language in order to better communicate with the bordering peoples. Moreover, by the contraposition of *G\textsuperscript{w}aulg\textsuperscript{w}aunas and *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas the term g\textsuperscript{w}auna lost the original meaning of "bovine", "related to cows", "fodder for cows", “fence for cows”, "cow breeder", "group of cows", assuming that of “shelter”, “refuge”, “fortified place”, "village", "group of breeders", "community" (as Etr. zena translated into Lat. sena / sina, and Celt. bona, and Celt. din / dun latinised in dinum / dunum). Similarly, the terms derived from -g\textsuperscript{w}aus assumed the meaning of country or region (as Ger. -gau in Breisgau and Thurgau, Dutch gouw, Frisian goa).

Western *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas reached Anatolia in the second half of the III millennium BC. Hence, they moved along the course of Danube river to Central Europe, where they partecipated to the Únětice culture. They were forced to Italy together with *G\textsuperscript{w}aumbras, to whom they had handed their tendency to aspirate the velars. They also reached the Italic peninsula by sea from Anatolia through stopovers on the Syrian and African coast and the Italian islands. The Etruscan city of Tarquinia (Etr. Tarchuna or Tarchna\textsuperscript{114}), the people of Tyrrenhians (Gr. Τυρρηνοί\textsuperscript{115}), the Anatolian god of the sky and storm Tarhun (or Tarḫunna\textsuperscript{116}) take their name from Western *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas.\textsuperscript{117} In these derived names the original labiovelar g\textsuperscript{w} results in unvoiced velar also aspirated or muted, and the vowel in the first syllable also change to a.

At the beginning of the II millennium BC Eastern *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas stopped migrating eastwards and slowly flowed back into the territories occupied by Proto-Scythians. The latter were then forced to expand further west, starting the first great migration of the millennium. In the course of time Eastern *Thyrg\textsuperscript{w}aunas and *G\textsuperscript{w}aulg\textsuperscript{w}aunas fought each other, interacted and joined into a multilingual confederation of peoples, that in the Aegean area was known as *Mykg\textsuperscript{w}aunas, the

\textsuperscript{110} Plinius: III, 68-69.
\textsuperscript{111} Plinius: III, 123.
\textsuperscript{112} Pallottino 2016: 106.
\textsuperscript{113} Fabbri: 2018a; 2018b.
\textsuperscript{114} Bonfante & Bonfante 2002: 16.
\textsuperscript{115} Strabo, V, 1, 7.
\textsuperscript{116} Taracha 2009: 93.
\textsuperscript{117} Fabbri 2017b.
**Mixed People**\(^{118}\). In the second half of the II millennium BC the expansion of Mongol and Chinese peoples caused a new back-flow of Thyrγʷaunian tribes, starting the second great migration. *Eastern *Thyrγʷaunas forced *Gʷaulgʷaunas around Volga river to crash into Proto-Gaul-Latins, who in turn pressed toward Central Europe other Proto-Scythian tribes located north of Black Sea (Late-Proto-Scythians).

*Eastern Thyrγʷau-nas or *Thyrγʷau-as left their name, for example, to the peoples of *Shardana (or Sherden [letters of Amarna (EA 61, 122, 123; 1350 BC approximately), the stele of Tani (1250 BC approximately) and the inscription at Karnak (rows 13 and 15; 1200 BC approximately)]), Tursenians (Gr. Τυρησνοί\(^{119}\)), Arzawa, Thracis (Gr. Θράκες\(^{120}\) and Gr. Θρικες\(^{121}\)), and Phryges (Gr. Φρύγες\(^{122}\)), to the Ferghana Valley, and to the Etruscan city of Perugia (Etr. Phersna)\(^{123}\). In some of these derived names we can observe an anomalous result of the original labiovelar *gʷ into dental (d) subsequently aspirated (*dh = z) and unvoiced (s), again the change to *a of the first vowel, and the fall of the initial aspirated dental (th) or the change to unaspirated dental (t), sibilant (*s), and even aspirated labial (*ph = f), which is also characteristic of Italic dialects (cf. Gr. θόρα with Lat. foris, door). *Gʷaulgʷau-nas and *Gʷaulgʷau-as left instead their name, for example, to the Volga river, the Etruscan city of Bol'ogna (Etr. Velzna\(^{124}\), Lat. Felsina\(^{125}\)), and to the peoples of Volcae\(^{126}\), Belgae\(^{127}\), Caledones (Gr. Καληδόνες\(^{128}\)), Halizones (Gr. Ἀλιζόνες\(^{129}\), Gr. Ἀλιζόνοι\(^{130}\), and Gr. Αλιζόνες\(^{131}\);\(^{132}\). We can observe that in these derived names the initial labiovelar mainly results in labial, while the internal one has different results by influence of the peoples, in particular of *Thyrγʷaunas.

Applying the phonetic changes observed in the names of the descendants of *Eastern *Thyrγʷaunas and *Gʷaulgʷaunas to the terms *Mykgʷaus and *Mykgʷaunas, we can obtain the names of Mysians / Moesians (Gr. Μυσόι / Μοϊσοί\(^{133}\)), Meonia (Gr. Μηνοία\(^{134}\) < *Mechponia), Mygdonians (Gr. Μυγδόνες\(^{135}\)) and Mycenaens (Gr. Μυκήναι\(^{136}\) < *Mycényai). Moreover, we can derive from *Thyrγʷaus and *Thyrγʷaunas the mythological name of Atys (< *Saʾdys < *Sardus < *Thyrγʷaus), Telephus and Torebus (both from *Tarbus < *Thyrγʷaus), and Teutamis (descendant of *Teutamos < *Teuʾtana < *Thyrdana < *Thyrγʷauna).

The Proto-Etruscan descendants of *Eastern Thyrγʷaunas and *Gʷaulgʷaunas arrived in Italy from North-East at the end of the II millennium BC, following and pressing Proto-Gaul-Latins. The descendants of *Gʷaulgʷaunas arrived as first and stopped in the lands most suitable for cow breeding, while those of *Eastern *Thyrγʷaunas headed for the commercial ports and the marshes, the “maremme”, which they knew how to transform into fertile lands, having learned and developed drainage techniques in the Orient\(^{137}\). On the Tyrrhenic coast, the latter met peoples descending from

\(^{118}\) Fabbri 2017a; 2017b

\(^{119}\) Herodotus, I, 94.

\(^{120}\) Xenophon: VI, 3, 4.

\(^{121}\) Herodotus: VI, 45, 1.

\(^{122}\) Herodotus: VII, 73.

\(^{123}\) Fabbri 2017b

\(^{124}\) Pittau 2018, 488.

\(^{125}\) Plinius: III, 115.

\(^{126}\) Caeser: VI, 24.

\(^{127}\) Caeser: II, 4.

\(^{128}\) Ptolemaeus: II, 2.

\(^{129}\) Homer, Ilias: II, 856; Stephanus of Byzantium, Ethnika: I, 74, 1.

\(^{130}\) Strabo: XII, 3, 4.

\(^{131}\) Herodotus: IV, 17, 1.

\(^{132}\) Fabbri 2018b.

\(^{133}\) Strabo: VII, 3, 2; Herodotus: VII, 20.

\(^{134}\) Dionysius: I, 27, 1.

\(^{135}\) Strabo: VII, 3, 2.

\(^{136}\) Strabo: VIII, 6, 19.

\(^{137}\) Keller 1971, 59.
Western *Thyrγ’aunas, arrived by sea\textsuperscript{138}. Moreover, they learnt the script, probably by Greeks\textsuperscript{139}, and developed an alphabet adapted to their own language. The Italic descendants of *Gʷaulgʷaunas probably acquired the script already elaborated by those of *Thyrγ’aunas and use it in an ideographical way. This is the reason for which we have no direct attestation of the endonyms of the descendants of *Gʷaulgʷaunas, and we have to reconstruct them by analysing the geographical names in the territories they inhabited.

We can assume that the Italic descendants of *Gʷaulgʷaunas called themselves by names such as *Volvoni or *Volvona (< *Gʷaulgʷaunas; whence the name of Bologna city), and were also called *Calvona, *Calvana, or *Galbana (whence the names Calvana mount chain between Bologna and Florence and Calbano mount near Sarsina) by influence of Proto-Umbrians and Proto-Oscans, and Velzena, Velsna, Campeua and *Campana (whence the Lat. names Felsina and Campania) by *Thyrγ’aunas. The descendants of Eastern *Thyrγ’aunas called instead themselves by names such as *Sarsna (whence the names of Sarsina city and Sarsinates\textsuperscript{140} tribe), Rasna or Rasenna\textsuperscript{141}, and Phersna (Etr. name of Perugia).

In the historical age the descendants of *Thyrγ’aunas were generally known in Italy as Tusci\textsuperscript{142} or Etrusci\textsuperscript{143}. These ethnonyms derived from the alternations of the names of their tribes, that resulted in velar (from Western *Thyrγ’aunas) or in sibilant (from Eastern *Thyrγ’aunas) the labiovelar: *Thyrγ’aus > *Turkσ / *Turσ > Umbr. Tursko\textsuperscript{144} > Lat. Tu’sci / Lat. E-trusci. Similarly, the name Volsci [Plinius, III, 56] derived from the alternation of the names by which the tribes descending from Western and Eastern *Thyrγ’aunas called the descendants of *Gʷaulgʷaunas: *Gʷaulgʷaus > *Volkas / *Velsas > Etr. Velch\textsuperscript{145} / Etr. Velz\textsuperscript{146} > Lat. Volsci. Etruscans were settled mainly by the Thyrrhenic coast\textsuperscript{147} from Liguria to Campania, on the border between Tuscany, Lazio, and Umbria and also in the Padanian Valley\textsuperscript{148} and by the Adriatic coast\textsuperscript{149} from Veneto to the Marches.

Pelagians

When Eastern *Thyrγ’aunas (Shardana, Tyrsenoi, Proto-Thessaloi, Proto-Thrace, and Proto-Phryges) arrived in the Aegean area in the course of the II millennium BC, they partially forced the Proto-Scythian tribes previously immigrated (*Sw-gʷaulas and *Sw-gʷaunas) to move by sea westwards to Italy (Siculi and Sicani) or eastward to Anatolia and Syria (Ashqalonians and Ascani). The Proto-Scythian tribe that remained and settled (*sthα) by the northern coast of the Aegean sea were indicated as *Gʷaula-sthas and *Gʷauna-sthas and were considered as a subordinate class subsumed to Eastern *Thyrγ’aunas. These tribes had merged with the Pre-Indo-European population that inhabited the Aegean area before the arrival of Proto-Scythians\textsuperscript{150}. When new Indo-European peoples arrived at the end of the second millennium BC, the descendants of Eastern *Thyrγ’aunas integrated with those of *Gʷaulgʷaunas in the Mixed People were partially forced to move westwards to Italy and Central Europe and eastwards to Syria and Egypt, and partially subduced and included in the subordinated class. The newcomers were indicated by the

\textsuperscript{138} Cf. Müller 1828.
\textsuperscript{139} Pallottino 2016: 452.
\textsuperscript{140} Pallottino 2016: 128.
\textsuperscript{141} Dionysius, I, 30.3.
\textsuperscript{142} Plinius: III, 38.
\textsuperscript{143} Plinius: III, 52.
\textsuperscript{144} Pallottino 2016: 6.
\textsuperscript{145} Pittau 2018: 477.
\textsuperscript{146} Pittau 2018: 489.
\textsuperscript{147} Plinius: III, 50.
\textsuperscript{148} Plinius: III, 115.
\textsuperscript{149} Plinius: III, 112.
\textsuperscript{150} Fabbri 2018a.
names of the territories where they settled, so that we know them for example as *Thrances and Phryges (who spoke Indo-European languages in the historical age). Moreover, the subordinate classes should have assumed the names *Bailastas and *Bainastas, by influence of the newcomers or the descendants of *Gaulg*aunas (Mycenaean), and the names *Dailastas and *Dainastas by influence of the descendants of Eastern *Thyrg*aunas. From these names we can easily derived the historical forms Pelasgians (Gr. Πελασγοί151 < *Belasdai < *Bailastas) and Penastae (Gr. Πενάσται152 < *Benestai < *Bainastas), as well as Ass. Palastu (Tiglatpileser III Inscriptions), Hebr. Pelishtîm153, and Egy. Peleset (p-r-s-t; Medinet Habu Inscriptions).

In particular, by the name Pelasgians the tribes of the Mixed People were remembered, that reached Italy through the Adriatic coast. In the same age, the mixed communities were also indicated by names derived from *Gaulg*aulas *Thyuras and *Gaulg*aunas *Thyuras154, whence for example the names of the Italian cities of Velletri (Etr. Velathri), Volterra (Etr. Velathri), and Feltre, and those of Oenotrians (Gr. Οινωτριαί155 < *Vainathras), of the Italian cities of Bonefro and Venafro (Lat. Venafrum < *Venaphras < *Vainathras), and of inhabitants of the latter the Pentrians (Lat. Pentří < *Benthras < *Vainathras), respectively.

ETHNOGENESIS OF ITALIC PEOPLES

After having considered the peopling of Central Italy in the ancient sources and the early migrations of peoples to Italy, we can now try to reconstruct the ethnogenesis of the ancient Italic populations. We saw that in the names of peoples descending from Proto-Scythians the results of *Gaulg*auna, and similarly *Gaulg*au-la, and *Gaulg*au-ta, lose the meaning of “herd of cows” and “cow breeder” and assumed that of “people”, “community”, and “city”. We can in fact recognise these derivations with such a meaning in many Italic ethnonyms and toponyms, as we will see. Moreover, we saw that Thyrrenians, Proto-Umbrians, and Proto-Calabrians changed the labiovelar gʷ into unvoiced velar (k), also aspirated (ch) and muted (h). The descendants of Eastern *Thyrg*aunas changed instead the labiovelar gʷ into dental (d), also aspirated (dh = z) and unvoiced (s), while those of *Gaulg*aunas into voiced aspirated labial (v) also subsequently unaspirated (b). Lastly, we saw that the labiovelar had changed in labial in the names of Pelasgians and Oenotrians. By looking at these results in geographical names and ethnonyms, we can then distinguish the presence and the influence of some of these peoples in a particular area of Italy.

In doing that, we must remember that we received many of these names through the translation and the transcription respectively in languages and alphabets of peoples different from those to which the names were referred. For example many names have been transcribed in the Etruscan alphabet, in which the voiced occlusives were missing and substituted by the respective unvoiced ones, the Lat. sounds o and u were both written as u156, and one of the Etruscan results of Proto-Scythian diptong au, a sound intermediate betweenLat. e and i corresponding to η Greek letter (cf. Gr. Τυρσηνοὶ157), was some time written as e and some other as i. Therefore, the name of the Italian city of Moderna, for example, was received by Romans through the Etruscans as Mutina. Moreover, Etruscans frequently used in writing to omit internal unstressed vowels158. Therefore, the name of Tarquinia was written both as Tarquîna (< *Târchona < *Thyrsg*auna) and Tarchna, that of Perugia as Phersna (< *Phersna < *Thyrsg*auna), and those of Bologna and Bolsena/Orvieto as Velzna (< *Vêlznna < *Gaulg*auna). Beside, Romans used to transform the original names in a

151 Herodotus: I, 57, 1.
152 Aristoteles: II, 9, 3.
153 Bibble: Genesis, 10, 14.
154 Fabbri 2017°.
155 Dionysius: I, 12, 1.
156 Pallottino 2016: 240.
157 Herodotus: I, 94.
158 Banti 1969: 129.
form closer to Latin words and possibly having a meaning. This was often obtained by introducing the metatheses \( tn > (e)nt \) and \( zn > (e)nti \), sometimes doubling the dentals: \( tn > t(е)nt \)\(^{159}\). Therefore, the probable local name of the territory where Trento rose, \*Tritna (< *Tirynna < *Thryg*auna), was changed to Tridentum (cf. Lat. tridens, trident), and that of the area of Firenze (Florence), \*Phirzna (< *Phirynna < *Phyr*γ*auna), was changed to Florentia (cf. Lat. florens, flourishing), but the original names survived in the local tradition, so that the current ones are more similar to them than to the Roman names.

In the tradition reported by Dionysius three different aspects are condensed in the figure of Aborigines: a people founding Rome and living there “ab origine”, a peoplenomad (Aberrigines), a people called Aborigines. These three aspects can refer to one only people or to two or three different peoples. To understand how many peoples are condensed in the figure of Aborigines, we have to start by considering the population living in Lazio at the time of Roma birth and earlier when Aborigines are firstly mentioned.

We saw that Proto-Hiberians migrated to Italy before the peoples descending from Proto-Scythians. After Proto-Hiberians, at the beginning of II millennium BC, arrived in Italy Proto-Umbrians and Proto-Calabrians. These mixed peoples were not warriors fighting to expand their territory, but peoples escaping from their home. Moreover, they were relatives of Proto-Hiberians, and probably they mainly lived on the breeding of small animals and small herds of cows during and after their escape. Differently from Proto-Scythians, they did not break into the countries with large herds of cows, but they slowly penetrated the land of Proto-Hiberians integrating with them in the border regions.

We can then imagine that when Proto-Scythians arrived in Lazio, they found there little villages of peoples resulting from the merging of Proto-Hiberians (*Hubaras / *Tubaras) and Proto-Umbrians (*G*aumbras < *G*aunas *Hubaras) on a Palaeoanthropic substrate. They probably called this people, breeding small animals and cows, *Hubaras *G*aunas or *Hubarag*aunas, whence the forms *Ubaraginas and *Ibaragenes could be derived, later handed down as Aborigines to better match “ab origine” and Aberrigines. Moreover, Proto-Scythians still used labiovelars in their language and called themselves *Swg*aunas and *Swg*aulas, but Proto-Umbrians, who had the tendency to enhance the velar, called them, in the course of time, *Sicaunas and *Sicaulas, whence the historical name Sicani and Siculi.

To this people called *Hubarag*aunas and later Aborigines, we could also attribute the aspect of being nomad, since Proto-Umbrians had recently migrated when Proto-Scythians arrived and since breeders are used to move with their livestock at least during some part of the years. Moreover, to this mix of Proto-Hiberians and Proto-Umbrians we could attribute also the aspect of being the people that mainly contributed to the foundation of Rome, living in the region “ab origine”. However, other elements in the tradition lead us to include also other peoples inside the primitive people of Aborigines.

Dionysius reports the names of the cities that Aborigines had in the territory of Reate according to Varro\(^{160}\): Palatium (Gr. Παλάτιον), Trebula (Gr. Τριφόλια), Suesbula (Gr. Συσβόλα), Suna (Gr. Σώνα), Mejula (Gr. Μήψυλα), Orvinium (Gr. Ορούνιον), Carsula (Gr. Κόρσυλα), Issa (Gr. Ίσσα), Marrwium (Gr. Μαρωνίων), Vatia (Gr. Βάτια), Tiora (Gr. Τιώρα) also called Matiene (Gr. Ματιένη), Lista (Gr. Λίστα) the capital, Cutilia (Gr. Κουτίλια). He specifies\(^{161}\) that Aborigines took this territory from Umbrians, and later they invaded the lands of Siculi and founded the colonies of Antemnae, Tellenae, Ficulnea, and Tibur. We can observe that some of these names end in -bula, -fula, -sula (all from -gʷauna), -suna (from -gʷauna), and -bata (from -bata < -gʷaula), terms which denote a Proto-Scythian origin. Moreover, the original labiovelar presents a result typical of the descendants of Gʷaulgʷaunas in -bula and of Eastern *Thyrgrʷaunas in -sula, while in -fula we recognise the Latin translation of the Etruscan results (cf. Lat. Felsina < Etr. Velzna). We could

\(^{159}\) Fabbri 2017°.

\(^{160}\) Dionysius: I, 14, 1-15, 2.

\(^{161}\) Dionysius: I, 16, 1.
The only thing to be chased out of Lazio was the name of breeding their herds in pastures among those of the newcomers, and slowly integrated with them. It must be noticed that the human density was very low at that time. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that Siculi were completely chased out as handed down. Most of them probably continued breeding their herds in pastures among those of the newcomers, and slowly integrated with them. The only thing to be chased out of Lazio was the name of Siculi. We saw in fact that the...
descendants of \(*G*auls\text{a}nus\), arrived in Italy both by land or sea, had changed the labiovelar in labial in their language, that in general should be close to the original one of \textit{Proto-Scythians}. Therefore, these newcomers called \textit{Proto-Schytians} \textit{*Swavaunas}, \textit{*Swavaulas} and \textit{*Swavautas}, whence the historical names Lat. \textit{Sabini}167, Gr. \textit{Σαβίνοι}, Gr. \textit{Σαβίνεις}, Osc. \textit{Safinim} (Pietrabonnante inscription), Lat. \textit{Sabellii}, Gr. \textit{Σαβείλλοι}, and Gr. \textit{Σαβέας}. In the Roman age the Proto-Umbrian form, as well as the names of the people of Western and Eastern \*Thyr\text{g}aunas, who continued calling them by names having velar results. The name of the city of \textit{Asculum} (< \textit{Asculi} < \textit{Askolas} < \textit{Awsg\text{a}ulas} < \textit{Swg\text{a}ulas}) maintained in the Roman age the \textit{Proto-Umbrian} form, as well as the names of the people of \textit{Aequi} (Gr. \textit{Ákoi}) or \textit{Aequiculi} (< \textit{Aequi} and \*\textit{Aeculi} < \*\textit{Aek\text{w}as} and \*\textit{Aek\text{w}alas} < \*\textit{Awsg\text{a}ulas} and \*\textit{Awsg\text{a}ulas}). Similarly, on the Tyrrhenian coast \textit{Proto-Schytians} were initially called \textit{Oser} (< \*\textit{O\text{sk}as} < \*\textit{Awsg\text{a}aus} < \*\textit{Swg\text{a}aus}) and \textit{Ascanaxes} (Gr. \textit{Ἀςκανάξης}) by influence of the \textit{Tyrrhenians}, and \textit{Ausones} (< \*\textit{Ask\text{n}as} < \*\textit{Awsg\text{a}unas} < \*\textit{Swg\text{a}unas}) by influence of the \textit{Eastern} \*Thyr\text{g}aunas.

Other historical names of the Medio-Adriatic region present deformations characteristic of \textit{Proto-Etruscans}. In particular, the latter translated the sound \textit{sw} into \textit{v}, that later was transcribed as \textit{p}. (after deaspiration into \textit{b}). Therefore, \*\textit{Swg\text{a}unas} were called \*\textit{Pik\text{m}a}, whence Lat. \textit{Piceni}, but the aspirated voiced sound \textit{v} (as in \textit{Vacuna}) remained in the oral tradition, so that the colony of \textit{Picentia} (near Salerno) is currently called \textit{Vicenza}. The name \textit{Picentes} (Gr. \textit{Πίκεντες}) can be

\textbf{References}

168 Dionysius: I, 14, 6.
169 De Iulio 2019.
171 Strabo: V, 4, 12.
172 Strabo: V, 2, 9.
173 Silio Italics: VIII, 490.
174 Columella: VIII, 16, 3.
175 Livius: VI, 5, 8.
176 Fabbri 2017a.
178 Livius: XXXI, 2, 6.
179 Strabo: V, 3, 2.
182 Josephus: I, 6, 1.
184 Plinius: III, 100.
obtained from Piceni through the -ta derivation (*Pikηna-ta > *Pikη'ta > Pikentes\textsuperscript{186}). However, when the labial result of the labiovelar diffused in Osco-Umbrian languages, Piceni probably called themselves *Vibona (< *Viwaunas < *Swg'auñas), later deformed in *Bobona and transcripted as Pupun\textsuperscript{187}.

We can find the Proto-Umbrian / Tyrrenian form -\kappa\etaνα also in other historical names of Medio-Adriatic peoples, such as Marrucini\textsuperscript{188} (< *Mar'-\rku\etaνα < *Mar-Trukainas < *Mar-Thyrg'au纳斯; beside the labial result in Marruvium river and city), and Caraceni\textsuperscript{ans} or Caracini\textsuperscript{190} (Gr. Καρακηνοί\textsuperscript{190}, Lat. Caracini\textsuperscript{190}, and Caricini\textsuperscript{191} < *Carakηνα; beside the dental result in Caretini\textsuperscript{192} < *Caradηνα). By influence of Proto-Umbrians and Thyrrhenians, Proto-Scythians were probably also called *Avchauna (< *Awg'au纳斯 < *Swg'au纳斯), whence the names of the city of Ancona and Anxanum (whose x letter was originally a Gr. χ), while by influence of the descendants of Eastern *Thyrg'au纳斯, they were also called *Vesδηνα (from the alternation of *Vεδηνα and *Vεσηνα < *Swg'au纳斯, or from < *Wasg'au纳斯 < *Swg'au纳斯), whence the name of the people of Vestini\textsuperscript{193}.

Further south by the Adriatic coast *Asculi became *Aspuli and later A'puli\textsuperscript{194}, by influence of Pelasgians and Oenotrians, who mainly migrated thorough the Otranto strait and the Gargano promontory. Analogously, by the Tyrrhenic coast, Osci became *Ospi and later O'pi-ci (Gr. Οηπηκοι\textsuperscript{195}), by influence of Volsci and Campani (both descendants of *G"aulg'au纳斯), while Romans rhotacised the name *Ausuna (< *Awg'au纳斯 < *Swg'au纳斯; whence also Lat. Ausones) into Aurun-ci\textsuperscript{196}.

Actually, Piceni were once the same people as Sabines, previously called Sicani. The tradition recalls this identity by telling Piceni colonist of Sabines and inventing the woodpecker leader to explain the change of name. The name of Samnites (Lat. Samnites\textsuperscript{197}, Gr. Σαμνίται\textsuperscript{198} = Savni-tai < *Savηνα-ta < *Swg'au-na-tas) can be derived from that of Sabines in the same way as Picentes from Piceni. The capital of Samnites, Bovianum, named after a bull leader according to the tradition, probably took its name from the cows herds driven into the underlying valley by the descendants of *Swg'au纳斯 and *G"aulg'au纳斯. Similarly, Hirpinians (Lat. Hirpini\textsuperscript{199}) did not take name from a wolf, but probably from Proto-Etruscans (*Thyrg'au纳斯 > *Phyrbhνα > *Firpini > Hirpini; cf. Sab. \textit{fircus} and Lat. \textit{hircus}\textsuperscript{200}, he-goat) who previously inhabited their lands and merged with Proto-Scythians and other peoples into the Sabellic peoples.

The genesis of Sabellic peoples from the merging of different populations is confirmed by the historical testimonies on Sabines. For example, the original city of Sabines, Testruna (< *Trustena < *Thursynα / *Thurdηνα < *Thyrγ'au纳斯) had a Proto-Etruscan name. The Sabine king, who came from Cures to fight against Romulus and later ruled with him, was called Titus Tatus (= Titus son or descendant of \textit{Tatus} < *\textit{Ti}'das / *\textit{Ta}'das / *\textit{Tirdas} / *\textit{Tarda}s < *\textit{Thyrγ}'aus; cf. \textit{Tyrrhνoi} / \textit{Tarchuna}) and probably descended from *Thyrg'au纳斯. The Sabine wife of Romulus, Hersilia (< Sab. *Fersilia < Etr. \textit{Phersu} < *\textit{Thyrγ}'aus; cf. Sab. \textit{jasena} and Lat. \textit{harena}\textsuperscript{201}, sand) had an

\textsuperscript{186} Cf. Szemerényi 1971.
\textsuperscript{187} Cf. La Regina 1981.
\textsuperscript{188} Plinius: III, 38.
\textsuperscript{189} Plutarch: III, 1, 57.
\textsuperscript{189} Tacitus: IV, 5, 1.
\textsuperscript{190} Livius: XV, 7.
\textsuperscript{191} Plinius: III, 106.
\textsuperscript{192} Plinius: III, 38.
\textsuperscript{193} Plinius, III, 38.
\textsuperscript{194} Strabo: V, 4, 3.
\textsuperscript{195} Plinius: III, 56.
\textsuperscript{196} Plinius: III, 71.
\textsuperscript{197} Strabo: V, 4, 12.
\textsuperscript{198} Plinius: III, 99.
\textsuperscript{200} Varro: V, 19, 3.
\textsuperscript{201} Velius Longus: VII, 69, 8.
Etruscan name. The founder of the Gens Claudia, who came from Regillum or Inregillum (probably near Cures) bringing his people and riches to Rome, was called Attius (also Attus and Titus) Claussus and later Appius Claudius and probably was the eponymous leader of a mixed tribe of *Thyrγuous < G*aug*aus (Titus / Atta / Attius / Appius < Ti’dus / Ardus / Arps < Tirdaus / Tarbaus < Thyrg*aus; Claudius / Claudius < Claudia / Gaulaus < Gauldaus < G*aug*aus; cf. the methatesis in Lat. Clusium, Etr. Clevsina < Ceulsna < Gaul; cf. Old Eng. *Theudones *Theudaus < Thyrg*aus; cf. Old Eng. Theod < *Theudones < Thyrg*aus; cf. Teutamis and Teutani) in Sabines had a Proto-Etruscan origin. Proto-Etruscans also brought in Central Italy their eponymous gods. Phersuνa / Tarchona brought *Phyrrchona, later worshipped as Fer’onia. Velsuṇa / *Volvona introduced *Velvona, later celebrated as Bellona (also called Duellona; cf. Old Lat. duenos, Lat. bonus < g*auna). To Feronia, the properties of a people living on craft and trade were attributed. This people freely traveled in peace bringing their merchandise through territories ruled by different peoples often fighting each other. Their eponymous goddess was then associated to the freedom and travellers. Its sanctuaries mainly rose on the border between different peoples and along important communication routes. Moreover, its worship was radicated in cities having a Proto-Etruscan origin, such as Forcona (< *Phyrchona < Thyrg*aus; in current Civita di Bagno), Trebula (< Tervola < Thyrg*aula), and Taraccina (< Tarknu < Thyrg*auna). To Bellona, the character of an invader people breaking into the lands with its herds of cows was instead attributed. The goddess was associated to the war.

The descendants of Proto-Scythians living in the Medio-Apennine mounts integrated with Proto-Umbrians and Proto-Hiberians, continued worshipping their eponymous goddess, that in the territory was invoked as Vacuna. Moreover, they maintained more primitive costumes, while their relatives living in the planes between the mounts and Tevere river were more influenced by Proto-Etruscans. Sabines of the mounts seemed therefore austere to writers such as Cato and Plutarchus, while Sabines of Cures and the plane seemed frivolous to Dionysius. The territory where Vacuna was origininally worshipped, especially the Reate basin, was rich in woods and water. The characteristics of this land were then associated to the goddess. Her worshippers were aware of having the same origin of their relatives in the planes. Therefore, they considered Vacuna as the daughter of the common eponymous god, that in the planes was called Sabus. In the course of time the inhabitants of the whole Sabine integrated together, identifying the
deities of each tribe with those of the others. Due to the consonance of the name *Feronia* with Lat. *ferus* (wild) the goddess was also associated to the freedom of wilderness and to the wild country natural elements, particularly to the water. The boucolic character was also enhanced in *Bellona*, eponymous of a people freely driving their herds through the country. In this way, the Proto-Etruscan goddess *Feronia* and *Bellona* were associated to *Vacuna*.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In this study, the name of two of the most important Sabine deities, *Sabus* and *Vacuna*, have been derived from the Proto-Scythian eponyms *Swag"aus* and *Swag"au-na*. It has been observed that in the names of the two gods the original labiovelar results in different ways. To understand this difference, we investigated the peopling of ancient Central Italy by considering the ancient sources and the results of a diffusion model based on the time and space distributions of ancient and current geographical names and ethnonyms. This analysis led us to the following conclusions.

The tribes of *Proto-Scythians* migrated in Italy in the first half of the II millennium BC still used the labiovelars in their language and maintained these sounds at least until the last centuries of the millennium, when the last tribes of *Proto-Etruscans* arrived and diffused. Therefore, they called themselves by names similar to *Swag"au-na*, *Swag"au-la*, and *Swag"au-ta*, derived from *Swag"aus* or *S"g"aus*.

In Italy, *Proto-Umbrians*, some tribes of *Proto-Etruscans* (*Tyrrhenians*), and *Proto-Calabrians*, who tended to result in velars the labiovelars, initially called *Proto-Scythians* by names from which the historical forms *Sicani*, *Siculi*, *Ascanaxes*, *Asculum*, and *Osci* derive. Afterwards, the tribes of *Proto-Etruscans* and *Pelasgians*, that had resulted the labiovelar in labial in their languages and diffused such a result in Italic peoples, called instead them by terms from which the historical names *Sabini*, *Sabelli*, *Sabates*, *Apuli*, and *Opici* come. *Proto-Etruscans* also transformed the name of *Proto-Scythians* into *Pici* and *Vestini* and contributed to the genesis of Sabellic peoples, leaving their names to historical toponyms, hydronyms, and ethnonyms such as *Testruna*, *Trebula*, *Teate*, *Reate*, *Truentus*, *Aternus*, *Tifernus*, *Frentrum*, *Caraceni*, *Hernici*, *Hirpini*.

*Proto-Scythians* who lived in the Medio-Apennine and Medio-Adriatic areas mainly integrated with peoples that had resulted the labiovelars into velars and initially introduced such a phonetic change in their language. Their eponymous goddess then assumed the name *Vacuna*. Moreover, their customs remained more primitive and austere. *Proto-Scythians* who lived in the planes near Tevere river, integrating instead with the newcomers, changed the labiovelars into labials. Their eponymous god was then indicated by the name *Sabus*. Since they lived in a central exchange area between Medio-Tyrrhenic and Medio-Adriatic peoples, their customs were more influenced by cultural exchanges.

Both the one on the mountains and the other in the planes were aware of the common origin, and when they integrated together and the labial result diffused, while maintaining the previous deity names, they recognised *Vacuna* as *Sabus*’ daughter. Moreover, *Feronia* and *Bellona* originally were eponymous goddesses of some tribes of *Proto-Etruscans*. When these integrated with *Proto-Scythians* the two goddesses were assimilated to *Vacuna*.
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