

VARIETATE DELECTAMUR





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Varietate delectamur:
Multifarious Approaches to
Synchronic and Diachronic
Variation in Latin

*Selected Papers from the 14th International
Colloquium on Late and Vulgar Latin (Ghent, 2022)*

Edited by

GIOVANBATTISTA GALDI

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Preface

Varietate delectamur brings together a selection of papers presented at the 14th International Colloquium on Late and Vulgar Latin (*Latin vulgaire – latin tardif* XIV or LVL14), which was organised in Ghent by the Latin section and the DiaLing research group of the Department of Linguistics at Ghent University's Faculty of Arts and Philosophy (5-9 September 2022); the conference was graciously funded by the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO Vlaanderen), the City of Ghent (Stad Gent), Brepols, the Henri Pirenne Institute for Medieval Studies at Ghent University and the research group 'Late Antiquity and Byzantine Studies' at the National Research School in Classical Studies in the Netherlands (OIKOS).

The LVL14 colloquium was the fourteenth gathering in a series of colloquia dedicated to all linguistic aspects of Late and Vulgar Latin (including the transition from Latin to Romance). Since the first edition, convened by the late József Herman in Pécs, Hungary in 1985 as *Colloque international sur le Latin vulgaire et latin tardif*, the LVL colloquia have been held regularly for more than three decades. After Bologna (1988), Innsbruck (1991), Caen (1994), Heidelberg (1997), Helsinki (2000), Sevilla (2003), Oxford (2006), Lyon (2009), Bergamo (2012), Oviedo (2014), Uppsala (2016) and Budapest (2018), the LVL14 colloquium was organised in Ghent in 2022, when the worst of the covid-19 pandemic had subsided. Over the course of these fourteen editions, the conference grew from only 19 papers to over a hundred.

During the week of 5-9 September 2022, 94 papers were presented in parallel sessions and specialized workshops by 112 speakers from 24 different countries. Seven additional papers were presented in plenary sessions on a variety of topics. All together, linguistic topics within the field of Late and Vulgar Latin included Morphology, Phonology, Lexicography, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics, Christian Latin, Grammarians, Epigraphy, (Historical) Sociolinguistics, Stilistics, Notarial and juridical Latin, and Digital approaches. These papers were presented in thematically coherent parallel sessions as well as two specific workshops, one of which was dedicated to the study of inscriptions and curse tablets, while papers in the other engaged with the work of Emeritus Professor and Honorary President of the *Comité d'honneur pour l'étude du latin vulgaire et tardif*, Gualtiero Calboli (Bologna).

The current volume is the first collection of papers from the LVL colloquia that is published by Brepols (LVL 1). Out of the 101 papers presented at the 14th edition, LVL 1 publishes 58 revised and double peer-reviewed studies that represent the various research areas the colloquia on Late and Vulgar Latin aim to address. The title chosen by volume and series editors (*Varietate delectamur*: multifarious

approaches to synchronic and diachronic variation in Latin) reflects the diversity in research topics and scientific approaches, the results of which have been grouped together in a number of sections according to a centrally shared interest among them.

For the second time, a competition was held among young scholars for the József Herman Award, which aims to inspire and reward academic excellence and innovation within the research scope of the conference series. In 2018, the prize was first established by the *Comité international pour l'étude du latin vulgaire et tardif* and József Herman's (1924-2005) widow, Marianne Bakró-Nagy. There were 9 candidates at the Ghent colloquium, out of whom Salvatore Cammisuli (Catania) was awarded the Herman Award 2022 for his paper 'Nomi di mestieri nel glossario latino-greco degli *Hermeneumata Celtis*', which is included in this volume.

The organising committee of the LVL14 colloquium was led by Giovanbattista Galdi, Professor of Latin Linguistics at Ghent University and lead editor of the current volume. The daily organisation during the colloquium was supervised by Simon Aerts, while Alessandro Papini and Kim Groothuis' efforts in the years during the global pandemic and leading up to the 2022 edition were of crucial importance to the success of the LVL14 colloquium. As conference organisers, we wish to express our gratitude also to the team of students and PhD students who took care of the various aspects of the organisation we are all too familiar with in academia; in addition, our special thanks go to the members of the *comité* for their continuous experience and support and for the time they took to evaluate the papers and presentations of the competitors for the Herman Award, as well as the many colleagues who graciously volunteered to chair any of the many sessions throughout the week. We are also immensely grateful to the City of Ghent, for allowing us the use of the beautiful Pacification Room at the City Hall, and to the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy and our Dean, for providing a venue for our closing reception. In particular, we thank also our hosts at St Bavo's House for their daily support during and in between the many academic sessions we held at their conference center. Personal thanks go to Evita Willaert, Ghent councillor for Education, Youth and Outreach, Mieke Van Herreweghe, Vice Rector of Ghent University, Gita Deneckere, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy, and Claudia Crocco, Head of the Department of Linguistics, for opening the colloquium at Ghent's City Hall and to Gualtiero Calboli, Gerd Haverling and Piera Molinelli for their contribution to a collective *In memoriam* for Maria Iliescu (1927-2020), Harm Pinkster (1942-2021) and James Noel Adams (1943-2021), all of whom dedicated a substantial part of their career to the study of Late and Vulgar Latin and had left us since the previous colloquium in 2018. A special mention goes to Marieke Van Acker, for creating the LVL14 poster and hosting an exhibition at the colloquium, combining her academic and artistic interests into her collage artwork.

As editors of the current volume, we wish to thank especially the many reviewers who contributed to the scientific rigour of the selected papers, and without whom the diversity in topics and research methodologies would never have been so well represented. Our thanks also go to the publishing team and to Tim Denecker in particular, for their continuous support and for the open communication that this first joint venture between the LVL community and Brepols required. Most of all,

we thank our colleagues, our conference participants and authors, for submitting their valued research to this volume and for their continued efforts and patience in shaping their scientific communication as part of the collection of selected papers they allowed us to publish as *Varietate delectamur*.

Giovanbattista Galdi
Simon Aerts
Alessandro Papini



Orality and Diastratic Variation



Shaping shapes. *Sicilicus* and other diacritics in Latin epigraphy

1. *Sicilicus*, *geminatio* and abbreviations: framing the problem*

1.1. *Grammarians' testimonies and epigraphic evidence*

This work focuses on the potential use of the *sicilicus* in abbreviating plural forms and on the possible relation between this diacritic, the *apex* and the *titulus*.

Among ancient grammarians, the term *sicilicus* is used by Marius Victorinus (4th c.) and Isidore (6th-7th c.).¹ Both authors refer to it as a *signum* or *nota* placed above the line (*supra* [...] *imponēbant, superponebant*) that indicates a long consonant, which is not graphically doubled.

Marius Victorinus informs us that this diacritic could still be found during his time among *libri ueteres*. Furthermore, an allusion to a diacritic with a similar function is found in Nisus (1st c.), who refers to a supralinear mark used *loco geminationis*.²

Grammarians' testimonies agree in identifying a causal relation between the absence of the *geminatio consonantium* among the *antiqui/ueteres* and the

* The present paper was prepared within the framework of the PRIN Projects 'Ancient languages and writing systems in contact: a touchstone for language change' (2017JBF9H), 'Metalinguistic texts as a privileged data source for the knowledge of ancient languages' (2020F37EXS), and the HORIZON-ERC-2022-ADG project no. 101098102 'Digital Latin Dialectology (DiLaDi): Tracing Linguistic Variation in the Light of Ancient and Early Medieval Sources' (see <http://lldb.elte.hu/>). The paper was jointly conceived by the authors; for academic reasons only, the attribution of the paragraphs is as follows: Serena Barchi wrote §§ 1 and 4; Lucia Tamponi wrote §§ 2 and 3. Section 5 is to be attributed to both authors. We are deeply grateful to Luca Lorenzetti, Giovanna Marotta and Francesco Rovai for their support and useful suggestions during previous phases of our research. Any possible shortcomings remain, of course, our own responsibility.

1 Cf. respectively K 6, 8 and orig. 1, 27, 29.

2 Cf. K 7, 80.

Lucia Tamponi • Pisa – Budapest
Serena Barchi • Viterbo



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Figure 1. <SABELLIO> (detail of CIL I² 2212, 50–25 BCE, Aquileia).
<https://www.ubieratlupa.org/imagelink/?Nr=18681.jpg>

use of this sign. Given that epigraphic evidence shows that the *geminatio consonantium*, which was sporadically attested between the third and second century BCE, is systematically used to signal long consonants starting from the first century BCE,³ it would be reasonable to place the use of the *sicilicus* in the (Middle-)Republican period; this hypothesis could be further supported by the fact that Nisus refers to *antiqui* already in the first century.⁴

The tradition of epigraphic studies has sought to relate the *sicilicus* mentioned by grammarians with a diacritic in the shape of a sickle that can be found in a handful of inscriptions dating from the first century BCE to the first century CE. This is based on two pieces of evidence: on the one hand, the fact that the name *sicilicus* seems to come from its supposed sickle shape;⁵ on the other hand, that the diacritic found in inscriptions is attested on phonologically long consonants. As an example, we show in Figure 1 the oldest epigraphic instance of a sickle-shaped sign. The anthroponym *Sabellius*, usually spelled with <LL>, exhibits a single <L>, upon which the highlighted diacritic is placed.⁶

Before the introduction of the *geminatio consonantium*, the Latin orthographic system would have employed a supralinear diacritic for signaling phonologically long consonants. The absence of epigraphic evidence for this diacritic prior to the use of *geminatae* may suggest that grammarians were referring to librarian writing, and this would be consistent with Marius Victorinus' reference to *libri ueteres*.⁷ This fact could also be suggested by the shape of the sign.

1.2. Sicilicus, id est signum geminandi

However, this seemingly linear plot might not be so straightforward. On the one hand, the diacritic found in inscriptions does not always present a sickle-shape but rather an oblique stroke similar to an acute accent;⁸ on the other hand, the diacritic traditionally known as *apex* – which would have had the function of signaling long

3 Cf. Mancini (2019a), Tamponi (2022), Tamponi (this volume).

4 In support of the antiquity of the *sicilicus*, Fontaine (2006) posits that the verbal form *sicilicissitat* found in the prologue of the *Manacchi* (v. 12) serves as a pun that may allude to the presence of a twin pair on stage.

5 The derivation of the word has been debated and some scholars have proposed alternative theories, but most agree that it is derived from *sicilis* 'sickle'. For further discussion, cf. Oliver (1966, 147).

6 The type *Sabell-*, excluding abbreviated or integrated forms, is attested 35 times in epigraphic documentation (source: EDCS, data retrieved on 12/20/2022) and is always spelled with <LL>.

7 Cf. Fontaine (2006).

8 This is particularly noticeable when the diacritic is placed on <V> in spellings such as <SERV'S>, <SALV'M> (cf. Oliver 1966, 148).

vowels – appears, in its earliest testimonies (1st c. BCE), in the shape of a sickle, as can be seen in Figure 2.⁹

Based on these clues, Oliver¹⁰ proposed the existence of a unique diacritic (*signum* or *nota geminandi*), whose function was to indicate that the grapheme on which it was placed, whether consonant or vowel, counted as double. With the introduction of the *geminatio consonantium*, this sign would have been used only above vowel graphemes. As for the variability of forms, it is possible that stone carving favoured the stylization of the stroke (∩ > /). If we were to accept this reconstruction, it would be safer to speak of a diacritical mark with a suprasegmental function to signal a heavy syllable, regardless of how the rhyme ends.

Limiting ourselves to the factual data, we can affirm that inscriptions dating between the first century BCE and the third century CE display a diacritic in the shape of an acute accent, seldom attested in the form of a sickle, which seems to indicate the length of vowels and, more rarely, of consonants.¹¹



Figure 2. <IVLIO> (detail of CIL I² 797, 44-42 BCE, Rome).
<https://edh.ub.uniheidelberg.de/edh/foto/F013599>

1.3. Research questions

Oliver also suggests that a diagonal sign, similar to the *apex*, would characterise the abbreviation of plural forms, which otherwise would be signaled via *geminatio* (e.g. <M̃> = <MM> for *menses/mensibus*).¹² This mark would represent the continuation of the *sicilicus* / *nota geminandi*. This datum may, on the one hand, restore further epigraphic evidence of the *sicilicus* and on the other hand, further support the framework outlined in § 1.2.

Our research starts out from here and is challenged by the following issues:

- 1) Before asserting that this diagonal sign marks abbreviations, assessing its relation with brachygraphy will be necessary. In fact, the very high incidence of abbreviated forms poses the risk of overestimating this relation.
- 2) If the diagonal sign found on abbreviations represents an evolution of the *sicilicus* and its use originates from the correspondence *nota geminandi*: *geminatio consonantium*, why is this diacritic also employed to abbreviate singular forms and indeclinable words (e.g. <M̃> for *M(arcus)* in CIL X 3527)?
- 3) What is the relation, if any, between the diagonal diacritic found on abbreviations and the *titulus*, a horizontal line for signaling abbreviated forms and numerals

9 It is not possible to address the issues regarding the *apex* here. Suffices it to note that also in this case there are doubts about the identification of the diacritic the grammarians refer to (the *apex*, indeed) with the diacritic having in most cases the form of acute found in inscriptions between the first century BCE and the third century CE, particularly on long vowels. On this issue, cf. Scappaticcio (2012).

10 Oliver (1966).

11 For further discussion see Barchi (2024, 119-129).

12 Oliver (1966, 145-146).

since the 1st c. CE?¹³ This issue becomes all the more interesting when considering that the *apex* is often described by grammarians not as a sign in the form of an acute accent but as a horizontal mark (cf. ISID. orig. 1, 4, 18: [*apex*] *linea iacens super litteram aequaliter ductam*).¹⁴

In trying to cope with these issues, we decided to operate from a *tabula rasa*. Having selected a representative corpus, the data on abbreviated / unabbreviated forms and the diacritics employed, classified not aprioristically but according to their shape, were cross referenced.

2. The corpus

As a preliminary step, we built a corpus of inscriptions from *Latium* (including Rome) and *Campania* dating from the first century BCE to the eighth century CE. This time frame covers almost entirely the period of use of the diacritics since there is no evidence for the use of the alleged *sicilicus* until the second century BCE (§ 1.1), and the *titulus* is more systematically used from the first century onwards.¹⁵ Undated inscriptions were excluded from the analysis since occurrences from undated texts could obscure diachronic variation. We also chose to restrict the analysis to a specific area, i.e. *Latium* and *Campania*, for two main reasons. On the one hand, this procedure allowed us to build a more coherent corpus, reducing possible diatopic variation. On the other hand, this area is sufficiently representative for the quantitative and qualitative analysis proposed here. Even excluding the inscriptions without an available photographic reproduction, for which the shape of the diacritic cannot be examined, the total number of texts amounts to 31881.

Given the hypothesis put forward by Oliver,¹⁶ whereby the diagonal mark found on abbreviations is related to the *sicilicus* and consonant gemination (§ 1.3), we examined the distribution and shape of the diacritics for plural abbreviations ending in a consonant: the total number of examined forms thus amounts to 3389.

In order to perform a fine-grained analysis of the texts, the corpus was annotated in relation to several variables. Firstly, the shape of each diacritic mark was classified via careful analysis of the photographs of the inscriptions. In this phase, we did not adopt the traditional terms *sicilicus*, *apex*, and *titulus*: rather we classified the marks according to their shape, i.e. 'diagonal', 'horizontal', 'wavy' and 'semicircular'. This procedure was chosen because, even though in many cases the shape of the diacritic was either horizontal or diagonal (see the token instances examined in § 3), the marks occasionally displayed a different shape (§ 4). Therefore, it was possible to annotate any

13 Cf. Schiaparelli (1915), Gordon (1977 [1948]), De Robertis (1993), Giovè Marchioli (1993), Poccetti (2016).

14 See Scappaticcio (2012).

15 See Giovè Marchioli (1993).

16 Oliver (1966).



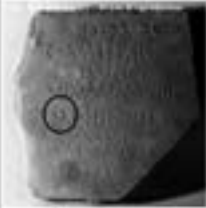
FORM	LEMMA	INSCRIPTION	TEXT	PHOTO	DATING	PLACE	TEXT TYPE	SHAPE	NUMBER	LINGUISTIC FEATURES	PAL. FEATURES
<i>m(ensibus)</i>	<i>mensis</i>	CIL X 3053	D(ici) Martius(um) Clau(s) Valeriu(s) Rufu(s) m(ens) ann(u) VIII m(ens) m(ens) m(ens) m(ens) m(ens) VVVV Clau(s) Valeriu(s) Rufu(s) patru(m)		151-250 CE	Ravenna	Funerary	diagonal	plural	-	-
<i>m(ensibus)</i>	<i>mensis</i>	CIL X 8126	D(ici) Martius(um) (sacerdoti) Hericius Silicianus u(ide) ann(u) VIII m(ens) m(ens) m(ens) m(ens) m(ens) m(ens) Clau(s) Valeriu(s) Rusticus m(ens) Hericius Valentinus filius interpositus		151-250 CE	Capua	Funerary	horizontal	plural	-	-

Figure 3. Annotation scheme.

variability in the shape of the diacritics, thus avoiding the limits of a strict dichotomic classification.¹⁷ Secondly, we annotated the inscription dating to trace any possible diachronic evolution in the use of the diacritics. In this phase, we relied mainly on the dating proposed by the editors of the texts and by the Epigraphic Database Roma (EDR, <http://www.edr-edr.it>). However, the datings based on linguistic criteria were excluded, in order to avoid the danger of circular argumentation. Finally, the place of provenance of the texts, their text type and relevant linguistic phenomena and/or paleographic features were annotated. A sample annotation scheme of the tokens *m(ensibus)* (CIL X 3053, 4166) is reported in Figure 3.

3. Quantitative analysis

3.1. Diacritic marks in abbreviated and unabbreviated forms

The detail-rich annotation described above allowed us to examine the distribution of the diacritics in the corpus. In this section, we will focus on the two more frequently observed shapes, i.e. the diagonal and the horizontal ones (see § 4 for examples of other shapes recorded).



17 In this analysis, we did not examine the *interpunctum*, given its double function as a word separator and abbreviation marker (Giovè Marchioli 1993). However, we intend to tackle this issue in the near future.

The first remarkable datum concerns the distribution of the two diacritics in abbreviated and unabbreviated forms. Indeed, both marks can be also used in unabbreviated words, as is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Shape of diacritics

	Diagonal		Horizontal	
	N.	%	N.	%
Abbreviated forms	219	11.3%	1455	99.8%
Unabbreviated forms	1712	88.7%	3	0.2%
Total	1931	100%	1458	100%

The frequency of the diagonal and horizontal marks in the two classes shows an opposite distribution: the diagonal diacritic is more used in unabbreviated forms (88.7% of the instances, i.e. 1712 tokens), whereas the horizontal one is almost always used to signal abbreviations (1455 cases, i.e. 99.8%). This distribution is statistically significant, as is shown by the results of a chi-square test (with Yates' continuity correction) applied to our data ($\chi^2(1) = 2596.7, p\text{-value} < 2.2\text{e}16$).¹⁸

This result is partially in line with the general assumptions made in the literature about *apex* and *titulus*: horizontal lines are generally found in abbreviations, whereas diagonal ones are not (§ 1.3). However, a non-insignificant amount of variation is observed: more than 200 diagonal marks are found in abbreviations. Given the higher variability of the graphic representation of plural abbreviations, it is worth focusing on this class.

3.2. The graphic representation of plural abbreviations

In our corpus, several strategies for representing plural abbreviations can be identified: (i) the use of a diacritic mark of diagonal or horizontal shape, (ii) consonant doubling, and (iii) zero marking. Before focusing on the various strategies adopted, a remark is needed on the incidence of the use of diacritics or grapheme doubling to signal plural abbreviations. From a purely quantitative perspective, the marking of plural abbreviations might seem quite a marginal phenomenon in our corpus: as is shown in Table 2, 99% of abbreviated forms are not marked.

18 The χ^2 test is a statistical test used to determine whether the distribution observed in our sample is significantly different from the distribution we would expect under the null hypothesis (in our case, that there is no significant difference in the distribution of the diacritics in the two classes). In this case, Yates' correction of continuity was applied given the small sample size. We used R software to perform the test.

Table 2. Graphic representation of plural abbreviations

	N.	%
Marked	1695	1%
Not marked	155112	99%
Total	156807	100%

However, our data still spark interest, since almost 1700 abbreviations are marked, and a different incidence is recorded for the various strategies, as is reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Diacritics and consonant doubling in plural abbreviations

	N.	%
Horizontal mark	1455	86%
Diagonal mark	219	13%
Consonant doubling	21	1%
Total	1695	100%

Our data show a clear preference towards the use of a horizontal sign in abbreviation marking (1455 occurrences), whereas the diagonal diacritic is instead less often used (219 tokens). On the contrary, consonant doubling is attested but not widespread in our corpus (only 21 tokens are recorded). For this reason, a strong correlation between consonant doubling and plural abbreviation marking is not observed in our corpus.

However, it is important to highlight that our epigraphic corpus covers a broad time span, extending from the first century BCE to the eighth century CE. In order to assess whether any diachronic evolution in the use of the two diacritics can be spotted, we examined the dated inscriptions included in our corpus.¹⁹ The results of our analysis are reported in Table 4 (for the diagonal diacritic) and Table 5 (for the horizontal diacritic).

Table 4. Diachronic evolution of the diagonal diacritic (plural abbreviations)

DIAGONAL		
	N.	%
Before 1st c.	33	2%
1st-2nd c.	1835	96%
3rd c.	35	2%
After 3rd c.	10	0%
Total	1903	100%

¹⁹ The inscriptions with a broad dating (i.e. extending over more than two centuries) were excluded from this analysis.

Table 5. Diachronic evolution of the horizontal diacritic (plural abbreviations)

HORIZONTAL		
	N.	%
Before 1st c.	2	0%
1st-2nd c.	520	36%
3rd c.	193	13%
After 3rd c.	735	51%
Total	1450	100%

According to our epigraphic sources, the diagonal mark is adopted up to the second century, particularly during the first two centuries CE (1835 token instances, i.e. 96% of the total occurrences, belong to this time frame; cf. Table 4). It is instead no longer recorded after the 3rd c. The horizontal mark has an opposite evolution (cf. Table 5):²⁰ it is rarely used before the 1st c. (when only 2 token instances are recorded), then it starts to be more often employed in the 1st-2nd c. (520 tokens, i.e. 36%), and it is very often used from the third century onwards (928 tokens, i.e. 64%). Note that the apparent decrease in frequency in the third century (13% vs the 36% relative frequency recorded for the 1st-2nd c.) should not be over-emphasized since a lower number of tokens are available for this time span (193 vs more than 500 recorded for the other time frames). However, despite this unbalanced distribution of the data, due to the inescapable shortcomings of closed corpus languages, it is possible to observe a sharp increase in the frequency of the horizontal mark after the third century, when the diagonal mark is no longer found in inscriptions (Table 4).

Furthermore, the analysis of the distribution of the diagonal mark – which can be found both in abbreviated and unabbreviated forms (§ 3.1, Table 1) – can help to shed more light on the picture illustrated so far, as is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of the diagonal diacritic in plural abbreviations

	Before 1st c.		1st-2nd c.		3rd c.		After 3rd c.	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
Unabbreviated forms	32	97%	1645	90%	12	34%	0	0%
Abbreviations	1	3%	190	10%	23	66%	0	0%
Total	33	100%	1835	100%	35	100%	0	0%

In the first phase (before the 1st c. CE), the diagonal diacritic is almost exclusively adopted in unabbreviated forms (32 token instances, i.e. 97%). However, from the first century onwards, it slowly begins to be adopted also for abbreviations (10% of

20 Since the horizontal mark is almost exclusively used in abbreviations (Table 1), the data for this diacritic only refer to abbreviated forms.

the instances), until, during the third century, the diagonal mark occurs mostly in abbreviations (66%), although it is generally less used (35 total cases vs 1835 dating to the 1st-2nd c.). These results correlate favourably with the data provided by Giovè Marchioli²¹. Finally, since the fourth century, the diagonal diacritic is no longer used.

3.3. Interim summary

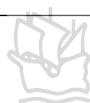
To summarise, several strategies for abbreviation marking are recorded in our epigraphic corpus. Although the majority of abbreviations are not marked, also consonant gemination and diacritics could be used. However, the diacritic marks recorded in our corpus display a high degree of variation, both in terms of shape and function. On the one hand, a diagonal mark was originally adopted in unabbreviated forms and was also seldom used to signal plural abbreviations ending in a double consonant, especially from the first century CE. On the other hand, in the same period, also a horizontal diacritic was increasingly used in the same context, i.e. to signal plural abbreviations. After this period of overlap, from the fourth century onwards only the horizontal mark is recorded in our epigraphic material. As will be shown in the following paragraphs, these preliminary data can also be related to the lemmas displaying the diacritics, as well as to their use in abbreviations for singular and indeclinable forms.

3.4. Lemmas involved

The variations in the shape of the examined diacritics do not seem to be correlated to a specific lemma (Table 7). However, our corpus displays some lemmas whose plural abbreviation displays both diacritics. In these cases, an overlap of shapes is clearly visible: the list of the most frequent lemmas displaying abbreviated forms with both diacritics in our corpus is reported in Table 7.

Table 7. Most frequent abbreviations displaying both diacritics

Abbreviation	Diagonal	Horizontal	Total
<i>m(ensibus)/m(enses)</i>	9	46	55
<i>n(ostri)</i>	2	31	33
<i>u(irginum)/u(irginis)</i>	7	10	17
<i>u(estali)</i>	7	9	16
<i>ann(is)/ann(os)</i>	2	12	14
<i>d(iebus)</i>	1	13	14
Total	28	121	149



21 Giovè Marchioli (1993). For the increase in the systematicity of abbreviated forms throughout the centuries, see Barchi and Tamponi (in press).

As is shown above, the most frequent plural abbreviation displaying either a diagonal mark or a horizontal one is *m(ensibus)/m(enses)*, where more than 8 token instances of both types of diacritics are recorded. This abbreviation always occurs in funerary inscriptions dating to the second-third century in the formula indicating the age of the deceased (e.g. CIL X 8189: *uixit ann(is) XXIII m(ensibus) X d(ies) VII*). Therefore, in such cases variability cannot be attributed to the diachronic or diaphasic levels of variation. It is thus worth examining variations in the shape of the diacritic mark over these abbreviated forms.

4. The case of *mensis*

By delving into the analysis of the single lemma *mensis* we may gain a nuanced understanding of the continuum of variability in forms of the diacritics potentially associated with abbreviations.

Table 8 presents the data related to the distribution of the lemma within the corpus. The occurrence of abbreviated and unabbreviated forms, distinguished between singular and plural, are considered. Data on the potential presence of diacritics, with their incidence within each variable, are also included. In the third row, the total instances of diacritics in unabbreviated and abbreviated forms are reported.

Table 8. Distribution of the lemma *mensis* within the corpus

		Abbreviated		Unabbreviated	
		N.	%	N.	%
SINGULAR	Not marked	73	90%	70	100%
	Diagonal	0	0%	0	0%
	Horizontal	8	10%	0	0%
	Total	81	100%	70	100%
PLURAL	Not marked	2268	97.6%	466	99%
	Diagonal	9	0.4%	5	1%
	Horizontal	46	2%	0	0%
	Total	2323	100%	471	100%
TOTAL	Not marked	2341	97.4%	536	99%
	Diagonal	9	0.3%	5	1%
	Horizontal	54	2.3%	0	0%
	Total	2404	100%	541	100%

Plural forms, both abbreviated and unabbreviated, are found to be more attested within the corpus. The high incidence of plural forms is obviously due to the syntagmatic relations within the epigraphic formula.

Solidarity between horizontal diacritics and abbreviated forms is observed, whereas the diagonal diacritic is also attested in unabbreviated forms. The data reported in the ‘total’ row of Table 8 show that, in unabbreviated forms, 1% presents a diagonal

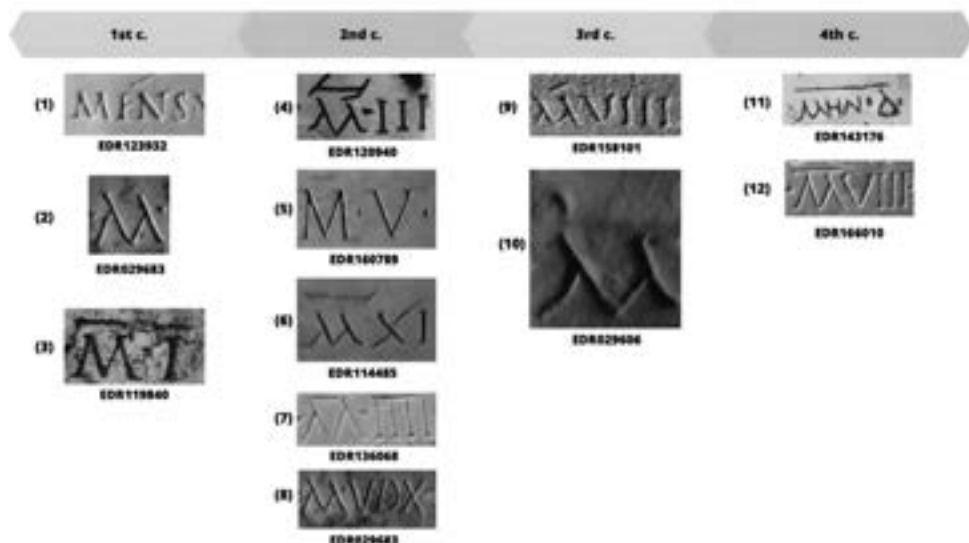


Figure 4. Most common shapes of diacritics on the lemma *mensis*.

diacritic, whereas horizontal diacritics are not found; in abbreviated forms, 2.6% displays a diacritic, which is mostly represented by a horizontal sign (2.3% vs 0.3%); moreover, the horizontal diacritic is only found on abbreviated forms. However, the ‘zero-marking’ strategy is by far the most widespread (97.4%). These data are fully consistent with what outlined in § 3.

As for the possible relation between the abbreviation indicated by the diacritic and the singular / plural form of the word, which has not been carried out on the entire corpus (§ 3), the analysis of lemma *mensis* revealed that no relation is observed between diacritics and plural forms (with the horizontal sign seeming to occur more often in singular forms). Additionally, no examples were found of abbreviations indicated via gemination.

We now examine the distribution of these data along the diachronic axis, by analysing the most representative examples (cf. Figure 4).²²

In inscriptions dating to the first century, the diagonal sign is found in both abbreviated and unabbreviated forms, whereas the horizontal one appears only in abbreviated forms. An examination of the forms with the diagonal sign reveals that this is to be understood in most cases as an *apex*, as is evident in (1). It is then occasionally employed, especially in careless inscriptions, also on acrophonic abbreviations (2), overlapping with the horizontal sign, which spread as an abbreviation

22 For expository convenience, we will refer to inscriptions only by the code of the EDR entry the image was extracted from.

sign from the diacritic initially attested on numerals (3).²³ This is in line with the higher frequency of the diagonal mark in unabbreviated forms and a negligible presence on abbreviations (§ 3). The scope of overlap is twofold: on the one hand, the overextension of the distinctive function of the *apex* (which is a consequence of its suprasegmental value); on the other hand, the high variability of shapes presented by the horizontal sign. This variability is most evident in the second century, e.g. with inscriptions displaying horizontal with lateral oblique bars (4), wavy bars (5), and elongated bars (6). Note that the elongated shape tends to mark a sign unit with the numeral as an alternative to the presence of separate diacritics on both signs (7). Within this variety, the diagonal abbreviation mark (8) is also found, which continues to be attested in the third century (9). In the third century, the semicircular-shaped diacritic in (10) is of particular interest: this form, although being a *testis unus*, would corroborate the picture of super-impossibility between *apex* and *sicilicus* outlined in § 1, albeit to be configured in a different causal relation (i.e. not from the equivalence *geminatio consonantium: nota geminandi* = abbreviation via gemination: abbreviation via diacritic). From the fourth century only the horizontal diacritic is attested (cf. § 3), which is also documented in Greek inscriptions (11). Finally, the drift towards the creation of a monogram, which would explain the scanty significance of the singular/plural distinction of abbreviated forms, might be evidenced by the presence of a single stroke on the entire abbreviation + numeral combination (11) or the absence of the separating dot (12).

5. Conclusions

Our results allow us to answer some of the research questions posed in § 1.3. Firstly, diacritics of varying shapes are associated with abbreviations. In particular, a more marked association is found between the horizontal diacritic and abbreviation marking, whereas a comparable correlation is not recorded for the diagonal diacritic. Furthermore, a strong correlation between consonant doubling and plural abbreviation marking is not observed in our corpus, although the two strategies might seldom overlap (§ 3.1). These results are thus partially in contrast with the hypothesis by Oliver²⁴ (§ 1.3), since there is no strong evidence for the use of the diagonal diacritic as an abbreviation mark in our corpus.

Secondly, the hypothesis put forward in § 1.3 is not confirmed by our data, since there is little evidence for the origin of the use of the diagonal diacritic mark as a *nota geminandi*. The general data examined in § 3.1 revealed that *geminatio* is only scarcely adopted to signal plural abbreviation. Also, the analysis of the lemma *mensis* does not show a strong correlation between the diacritic and abbreviation marking (§ 4).

However, the close examination of the diacritics recorded in our corpus might support the hypothesis of a derivation of the diagonal mark from the *sicilicus*, possibly

23 On this issue, see Giovè Marchioli (1993).

24 Oliver (1966).

with a graphic evolution due to stone carving, since the two marks can seldom overlap as for both context and function (§§ 1, 4). The presence of a continuum of shapes, ranging from a more markedly diagonal sign to a clearly horizontal one, including a semicircular-shaped mark, might further support this guesswork (cf. Figure 4). These results must however be taken with due caution, owing to the relatively late chronology of the attestations.

In addition, both diacritics can be related to the horizontal *titulus*, since an overlap of shape and function of these marks is attested in abbreviations during the first to third century (§§ 3.2, 4). During this period, our data show two converging tendencies. On the one hand, the diagonal mark was seldom adopted also to signal (plural) abbreviations. On the other hand, the horizontal diacritic was increasingly used in the same context, i.e. in abbreviations. This overlap is no longer attested from the third century onwards, when the horizontal mark prevails over the diagonal one. The diagonal mark would have originally indicated an additional element related to syllable weight (§ 1), so that it had a phonetic iconicity; later, it would have acquired a 'semantic iconicity', indicating an additional element related to abbreviations.²⁵

Further research is however needed to explain the dynamics of the merger of the two marks, as well as their incidence over various classes of unabbreviated forms. This is being currently undertaken by the authors.

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25 For a more detailed insight on possible instances of semantic iconicity in Latin orthographic tradition, which cannot be examined here, see Mancini (2019b).

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▼ **ABSTRACT** The present paper builds upon the analysis of the *sicilicus*, a diacritic which, although occupying an altogether marginal space in Latin epigraphy, may provide insights into phono-orthographic issues in the Latin language. The *sicilicus* is seldom attested in Latin orthographic tradition, and ancient grammarians' testimonies suggest that it could have marked long consonants before the spread of *geminatio consonantium*.

Traces of the evolution of this mark might be spotted in the epigraphic notation of abbreviations standing for plural forms. Such forms can be notated either through *geminatio consonantium* or through a supralinear diacritic of varying shape, which can be identified with a *sicilicus* or with an *apex*. Therefore, a common origin of both the *sicilicus* and the *apex* has been suggested by some scholars, to indicate the doubling of a grapheme.

In order to shed light on the variability of shape and function of these marks, we examined the diacritics and abbreviations attested in a corpus of Latin inscriptions from *Latium* (including Rome) and *Campania*. Our preliminary results will explore the possibility of relating the use of the examined diacritic marks of varying shape to the *sicilicus*, discussing whether they can represent its evolution.

▼ **KEYWORDS** Latin epigraphy; Latin linguistics; Phonology; Orthography; Historical linguistics.

