

# Virgil's Program of Sabellic Etymologizing and the Construction of Italic Identity\*

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SUMMARY: I argue that several Sabellic glosses, in addition to the two already recognized by Servius, are to be found in *Aeneid* 7, and that the preponderance of Sabellic etymological plays in this book constitutes an implicit declaration by Virgil that the remaining half of the epic is to be anchored to Italian soil.

THAT VIRGIL'S *AENEID* IS RIFE WITH LEARNED ETYMOLOGICAL GLOSSES IS WELL established: Servius recognized many of them, and more recently significant studies have been undertaken by G. J. M. Bartelink (1965) and Jim O'Hara (1999).<sup>1</sup> The glosses are primarily confined to Latin and Greek, but some on Punic, Gallic, and the Sabellic dialects also exist, and it is the last category that forms the focus of this article.<sup>2</sup> Servius already noted the presence of

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<sup>1</sup> O'Hara 1999: 91–92 contains a comprehensive catalogue of instances: he lists almost two hundred etymological wordplays in Latin and well over a hundred in Greek, and also provides a list of examples in other languages. Cf. also Bartelink 1965: 36–58.

<sup>2</sup> The Sabellic dialects comprise one of the two major branches of the Italic language family (Latino-Faliscan being the other). The main representatives of the former are Oscan and Umbrian (hence the former name “Osco-Umbrian” for this group), though a handful of other much more poorly attested dialects are also known (such as Aequan, Marsian, Paelignian, Vestinian, and Volscian: the remains of these and others are collected in Vetter 1953 and Rix 2002). My use of the terms “Sabine” and “Sabellic” throughout this paper merits brief explanation. In the parlance of modern Indo-European linguistics, “Sabine” is the name of one specific Italic dialect, of which little is known and nothing remains (Conway 1897: 351), while “Sabellic” is the term applied to one of the two major

several likely Sabellic etymological plays in the *Aeneid*, the most convincing being those at 7.516–17 and 7.684.<sup>3</sup> I present here what I believe to be several as-yet-unnoticed Sabellic glosses from *Aeneid* 7, and proceed to explain the vital role such glosses play in the book and the epic as a whole. I argue that Sabellic etymological plays serve to anchor the action of the seventh book, and with it the entire second, “Iliadic” half of the *Aeneid*, to the land and traditions of Italy.

The first of the two Servian glosses mentioned above is to be found in Virgil’s description of Allecto’s cry to war, as it rings out across Latium and its

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branches of the Italic language family. The Roman uses of these and related terms are often imprecise. Furthermore, they are employed to denote different groups from our modern “Sabine” and “Sabellic.” The *OLD* and *OCD*, e.g., both state that *Sabelli* is the Roman term for speakers of Oscan, but Oscans, on the rare occasions that they are differentiated from the general Italic population, are also called *O(p)sci* and said to speak *Osce* (cf. Varro, *Ling.* 7.28–29, 8 fr. 5). The *OLD* defines *Sabini* as “an ancient people living to the north-east of Rome,” but in the ancient sources this term is at times used indiscriminately to mean non-Latin Italics (Serv. *ad Aen.* 7.517, quoted below, for example, clearly uses *Sabini* to denote Umbrians alone, as the river Nar is located in their territory), while any distinction between Oscan and Umbrian speakers (to say nothing of those who spoke other dialects) is made infrequently.

<sup>3</sup> Two additional instances of Sabellic wordplay (though they do not fall under the heading of glosses proper) have also been perceived by Servius and his successors. At *Aen.* 9.570, *Lucetium ... ignis ... ferentem* (“Lucetius ... bringing fire”), Servius states that the latter phrase glosses the name Lucetius. This is clearly the case, but it seems unnecessary, as Servius claims, to understand *Lucetius* as a specifically Oscan name for Jupiter given the prominent presence within the term of Latin *lux*. Indeed Paulus-Festus (114M/82Th) implies that it is simply Old Latin: *Lucetium Iovem appellabant, quod eum lucis esse causam credebant* (“they used to call Jupiter Lucetius, because they believed that he was the cause of light”). In addition, the suffix *-et-io-* is not clearly Sabellic. In the second instance, at 12.539, *nec di texere Cupencum* (“and the gods did not protect Cupencus”), Servius informs us that *cupencus* is a Sabellic word for priest. Thus the preceding phrase, *nec di texere*, would be intended to underscore the bitter irony of his misfortune: though a priest, the gods did not protect him. Ernout and Meillet 1985: 158, however, note that the word may be Etruscan (instead of, or as well as, Sabine), and Untermann 2000: 406 also records the suggestion that it is the Latin, not Sabellic, term for “Priester des Hercules.” A connection with a Sabellic dialect in this case seems plausible on account of the relation of *cupencus* with the known Sabine adjective *\*kup-ro-*, “good” (cf. Untermann 2000: 406 and Varro, *Ling.* 5.159), but, once again, there is much uncertainty (in particular as the suffix *-en-* is problematic; cf. Walde and Hofmann 1965: 311–12). If Servius is correct, however, in identifying these phrases at *Aen.* 9.570 and 12.539 as additional examples of Sabellic etymologizing, they would represent the continued trajectory throughout the remainder of the *Aeneid* of the project of Italicization that begins in book 7.

environs. Among the natural features of the landscape that hear this chilling sound are the following (*Aen.* 7.516–17):

audiit et Triviae longe lacus, audiit amnis  
sulpurea Nar albus aqua fontesque Velini.

And the far-off lake of Trivia heard it, and the river Nar, white with sulfurous water, heard it, and the springs of Velinus.

The river Nar runs down from the Apennine mountains through Umbria, joining the Tiber near Horta,<sup>4</sup> and as if to emphasize its location and national affiliations, Virgil employs the first of his Sabellic glosses in his description of this river. Servius (*ad Aen.* 7.517) explains:

ideo autem dicit “sulphurea Nar albus aqua,” quia dum currit, est sulphurei coloris, dum hauritur, albi. et Sabini lingua sua nar dicunt sulphur.

And [Virgil] says “Nar, white with sulfurous water,” because when it runs it is of a sulfurous color, and when it is drawn, of a white one. And the Sabellic peoples in their language call sulfur *nar*.

Virgil would thus seem to have explained a Sabellic toponym with a Latin adjective that translates it. In doing so, he appears to have used as his model Ennius, who wrote, *sulpureas posuit spiramina Naris ad undas* (“he placed the breathing-holes by the sulfurous waves of the Nar,” *Ann.* 222 Skutsch). It should be noted that, unlike in many other instances of etymological play in the *Aeneid*, the adjective providing the translation (*sulpurea*) does not modify the noun it explains (*Nar*); rather, in both Virgil and Ennius, it is the water (*aqua*) or waves (*undas*) of the *Nar* that are sulfurous. Virgil’s divergence from the structure he more conventionally employs (that is, an adjective glossing the relevant noun directly by modifying it) can likely be attributed to his use of Ennius as a model for these lines.<sup>5</sup>

The second of Servius’s two generally accepted Sabellic glosses is to be found some 150 lines later in the same book, in the so-called Catalogue of Italian Heroes, a self-consciously epic device with which Virgil, as Horsfall

<sup>4</sup> All geographical details cited here are based on Talbert 2000, Plates 42–44.

<sup>5</sup> O’Hara 1999: 51, 72, 180, 190, 191, and 275 notes this borrowing from Ennius in Virgil, along with several others. This Sabellic gloss in Ennius seems to be unique—though the poet is an avid glossator (cf. O’Hara 1999: 51), his etymological plays seem otherwise confined to Latin and Greek (cf. O’Hara 1999: 51–52) and, even in the fragment cited above, he vacillates, also suggesting a connection between *Nar* and Latin *naris*, “nose,” through the juxtaposition of the name with the word *spiramina*, “nostrils.”

2000: 415 puts it, “represents all of central Italy in warlike movement.”<sup>6</sup> Virgil begins with a plea to the goddesses of poetic inspiration to sing the Italian tribes and kings that joined the war effort against the invading foreigners (*Aen.* 7.641–42), and then proceeds to name thirteen leaders or pairs of leaders,<sup>7</sup> the fifth of whom is Caeculus (*Aen.* 7.681–85):

hunc [sc. Caeculum] legio late comitatur agrestis:  
 quique altum Praeneste viri quique arva Gabinae  
 Iunonis gelidumque Anienem et roscida rivis  
 Hernica saxa colunt, quos dives Anagnia pascit,  
 quos, Amasene pater.

A widely spread-out rustic legion follows this man [sc. Caeculus]: the men who inhabit high Praeneste and the fields of Gabine Juno and icy Anio and the Hernican rocks, dewy with streams, whom rich Anagnia feeds, along with you, father Amasenus.

The geographical focus here is the territory of the Hernici—a populace located east of Rome who spoke a language akin to Oscan—and the Sabellic gloss is present in the very phrase containing their ethnonym: *Hernica saxa*. Servius informs us that *Sabinorum lingua saxa hernae vocantur* (“in the language of the Sabines, rocks are called *hernae*”). Thus the toponymic adjective of Sabellic origin and Latinized form, *Hernica*, would appear to be translated here by the Latin word *saxa*.

Servius is our sole authority for the meanings of these ostensibly Sabellic words, around which the two glosses examined so far are constructed,<sup>8</sup> but even if Servius is mistaken, and the words *nar* and *hernae* do not mean what he claims or are perhaps not even of Sabellic origin, it nevertheless seems likely

<sup>6</sup>On the catalogue, see Paschalis 1997.

<sup>7</sup>On the arrangement of the leaders within the catalogue, see O’Hara 1989.

<sup>8</sup>Cf. Conway 1897: 355, Walde and Hofmann 1965: 643, and Maltby 1991: 275, 403. The same meaning for *hernae* is also recorded in Paulus-Festus (100M/71Th), but the form given is neuter plural (rather than feminine plural), and it is attributed to the Marsi instead. If this information was present in Verrius Flaccus’s original *De verborum significatu* (of which Paulus-Festus is an epitome), it would pre-date Servius’s claim by several centuries, and perhaps lend some credence to it, despite the divergence between the two sources on certain crucial details (it is possible that Servius was simply following, and for some reason modifying, Flaccus). Neither *hernae* nor *Nar* merits an entry in the authoritative work of Untermann 2000, but as our knowledge of Oscan and Umbrian is largely dependent on a small selection of extant texts, most of which are official or legal in nature, it is not necessarily surprising that the words for rock and sulfur would not be widely attested.

that he was recording commonly-accepted wisdom, familiar also to Virgil and many of his Roman readers. Servius is most helpful, however, because he illuminates the assumptions and mechanisms that form the basis of the etymological gloss in Virgil: that toponyms are necessarily in the language or dialect of the area in which the place they denote is located,<sup>9</sup> and that names often have meanings. These two tenets are also evidenced in Varro's *De lingua Latina*, which was published only a little over a decade before Virgil began to compose the *Aeneid*. At *Ling.* 5.29, Varro explains, *Tiberis quod caput extra Latium, si inde nomen quoque exfluit in linguam nostram, nihil <ad> ἔτυμολόγον Latinum, ut, quod oritur ex Samnio, Volturnus nihil ad Latinam linguam* ("because the head of the Tiber is outside Latium, if the name has also flowed out from there into our language, it is of no relevance to the Latin etymologist, just as, because it originates in Samnium, the Volturnus has nothing to do with Latin"), and at 7.35, he repeats the idea once again with a different example: *subulo dictus, quod ita dicunt tibicines Tusci: quocirca radices eius in Etr<ur>ia, non Latio quaerundae* ("it is called a *subulo* because that is what the Etruscans call pipe-players; wherefore its roots must be sought in Etruria, not in Latium").<sup>10</sup> That Virgil's etymological plays may not be what we would consider linguistically defensible is irrelevant to the present discussion.<sup>11</sup> How Virgil knew (or thought he knew) the meanings of the foreign toponyms he so expertly glosses in the *Aeneid* is an interesting problem, though one that is beyond the scope of this article, and likely insoluble. Although it is not inconceivable that he had some personal familiarity with certain Italic dialects other than Latin (many Romans spoke Latin, Greek, and the dialect particular to the region of their birth,<sup>12</sup> but Virgil's birthplace in the far north

<sup>9</sup> Hanssen 1948: 120 makes this same argument.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. also *Ling.* 6.5, where Varro is explicit about the fact that people could derive their names from the place of their birth, and that these names would be in the language of the place in which they were born: *dicitur crepusculum a crepero; id vocabulum sumpserunt a Sabinis, unde veniunt Crepusci nominati Amiterno, qui eo tempore erant nati* ("the word *crepusculum* ['twilight'] comes from *creperum*; they took this word from the Sabines, from which people come those from Amiternum called *Crepusci*, who had been born at that time of day"). Varro also provides an instance of a foreign people imposing their foreign name upon a Latin place: *Vicus Cyprius a cypro, quod ibi Sabini cives additi consederunt, qui a bono omine id appellarunt: nam cyprum Sabine bonum* ("the Cyprian quarter is so called because Sabines settled there, and they named it after the good omen, for *cyprum* means 'good' in Sabine," *Ling.* 5.159).

<sup>11</sup> On the irrelevance to etymological plays of modern, or even ancient, linguistic theorizing, cf. O'Hara 1999: 58–59, 61–62.

<sup>12</sup> On bilingualism in the Roman world, see Adams 2003 (in particular 112–59, where he discusses the interplay of Latin with Oscan, Umbrian, Venetic, and Messapic).

of Italy makes native knowledge of Oscan or Umbrian implausible), it is far more likely that he had access to local traditions of naming lore (either aurally/orally, or in the treatises of grammarians such as Varro<sup>13</sup>), or that the fabled meanings of place-names circulated within the cultural consciousness.<sup>14</sup>

Given both the prevalence of etymological glosses in the *Aeneid* and, as I shall argue, the importance of Sabellic glosses in particular to the work, it seems likely that further wordplays on Oscan and Umbrian, in addition to those noted by Servius, might lurk in Virgil's epic. I have uncovered what I believe to be four additional examples.<sup>15</sup> The first two of my suggestions have long been recognized as glosses, but I argue that we ought now to refine our understanding of them and regard them as specifically Sabellic ones.

In the epic catalogue, once again, in the description of Oebalus, Virgil enumerates those under this leader's command (*Aen.* 7.736–41):

patriis sed non et filius arvis  
contentus late iam tum dicione premebat  
Sarrastis populos et quae rigat aequora Sarnus,  
quique Rufrae Batulumque tenent atque arva Celemnae,  
et quos maliferae despectant moenia Abellae,  
Teutonico ritu soliti torquere cateias.

But the son also, not content with his father's fields, was then already widely oppressing the Sarrastian peoples with his dominion, and the plains that the Sarnus waters, and the men who hold Rufrae and Batulum and the fields of Celemna, and those whom the walls of apple-bearing Abella look down upon, who are accustomed to hurl their boomerangs in Teutonic fashion.

The towns and river named here are located in Campania, a solidly Oscan-speaking region, and the gloss occurs in the phrase *maliferae Abellae*.<sup>16</sup> The

<sup>13</sup> For the influence of Varro on Virgil's formulation of etymological plays, cf. Deschamps 1986.

<sup>14</sup> Horsfall 2000: 482, commenting specifically on the gloss *maliferae Abellae* at 7.740 (on which see my discussion below), asserts repeatedly that Virgil "clearly knew" of the meaning of Abella: "V. clearly knew that apples lurked in the name Abella" and "V. clearly knew of the link in some form, and challenges his readers, some of whom must have shared his knowledge."

<sup>15</sup> A brief note on methodology: I compiled a list of all the place-names in the *Aeneid*, and studied each item in the list with the aid of Servius's commentary and a number of etymological dictionaries in order to determine which toponyms, if any, might involve Sabellic glosses. The examples from *Aeneid* 7 presented here are thus the result of exhaustive searching throughout the whole work.

<sup>16</sup> Although the reading of the codices is *Bellae*, Servius already saw that this could not be correct, and he preserves in its stead the suggestion he attributes simply to *alii*, *Abellae*.

name Abella is thought to be related to the English word “apple”: both come from the Indo-European root *\*ab(e)l-*,<sup>17</sup> derivatives of which are found in many Indo-European languages throughout Europe,<sup>18</sup> though not the Italic ones.<sup>19</sup> The phrase *maliferae Abellae* should thus be taken to mean “apple-bearing Apple-town.”<sup>20</sup> Although Abella is not a natively Oscan word, Virgil would naturally have regarded it as such given the location of the town.<sup>21</sup> The town of Abella was in fact famed for its hazelnuts,<sup>22</sup> and thus its identification with apples must be a reflection not of any physical characteristic, but rather of a deeper onomastic one. *Maliferae Abellae* should therefore, I argue, be regarded as a Sabellic etymological play in the sense that Virgil understood this phenomenon: in glossing the name with a hapax epithet of his own coining (Horsfall 2000: 482),<sup>23</sup> Virgil considered himself to be elucidating the

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Watkins 2001: 1.

<sup>18</sup> Muller 1926: 1, Walde and Hofmann 1965: 3, and Ernout and Meillet 1985: 5 all provide extensive lists of known cognates from the Balto-Slavic, Germanic, and Celtic branches.

<sup>19</sup> Fordyce 1977: 195 suggests that Abella may be Italic, and O'Hara 1999: 91 also tentatively categorizes it as such. If this is the case, however, then this Oscan name preserves a meaning attested nowhere else in this group of dialects: the regular Italic and Latin word for apple, *malum*, appears in the epithet, *maliferae*. As for how a non-Italic Indo-European term for apple became the name of an Oscan town, Horsfall 2000: 482 suggests that it must be either “a Celtic import into Campania or a Campanian export into N.Europe,” and that “it remains unclear ... whether Abella was named ‘apple-town’ some time during or after the c.5/4 Celtic invasion ... or whether the apple is in fact ‘the fruit of Abella.’”

<sup>20</sup> Ernout and Meillet 1985: 5 say of *Abella* that it is “sans doute proprement ‘la ville des pommes,’” and Muller 1926: 1 that it means “Apfelstadt” (Finamore 1980: 33 alone provides a dissenting opinion—“Il nome dovrebbe significare ‘città del cinghiale’, di radice italica. In latino *ap-er* è il termine indicante il cinghiale. Nel linguaggio osco troviamo il corrispondente *ab-el* per la sua preferenza alle consonanti sonore in luogo delle sorde. Da *Abel*, *Abella*, e *Avella*”—but this etymology is not sound).

<sup>21</sup> Hanssen 1948: 120 wonders, “how did Virgil know that *Abella* had the meaning ‘apple-town’? The Indo-European word for ‘apple’ may have survived as a Celtic relic in the neighborhood of Mantua. It was exactly of the type of words which the Celts in Italy may be supposed to have preserved. More probable, however, is that Virgil had the word from Varro—as an Oscan word—or that it was an Oscan survival at Virgil’s time” (italics mine).

<sup>22</sup> Servius relates that *ab nucibus Abellanis Abella nomen accepit* (“Abella received its name from hazelnuts”), though he adds a moment later, *alii quod inbelle vulgus et otiosum ibi fuerit, ideo Abellam appellatam* (“others [say that] because the populace there was unwarlike and leisure-loving, it was therefore called Abella”). Horsfall 2000: 482 provides a list of ancient sources that identify Abella with hazelnuts, and rightly adds that *malum*, though it may denote various different fruits, cannot be construed as referring to a nut.

<sup>23</sup> Though it should be noted that there exists the cognate Greek adjective, *mēlophoros*.



meaning of an Oscan toponym.<sup>24</sup> The presence of a gloss in *maliferae Abellae* is further highlighted by a second one in the line that immediately follows. In the phrase *Teutonico ritu soliti torquere cateias*, the adjective *Teutonico* seems to draw attention to the probable status of the noun *cateias* as a loan-word.<sup>25</sup> O'Hara 1999: 92 rightly views such clustering as typical of etymological play, and as serving to draw attention to the poet's program.

The second of the two previously identified glosses that I propose to reinterpret as Sabellic is the phrase *Tetricae horrentis rupes*, found in the section of the catalogue devoted to Clausus (*Aen.* 7.706–17):

ecce Sabinorum prisco de sanguine magnum  
agmen agens Clausus magnique ipse agminis instar,  
Claudia nunc a quo diffunditur et tribus et gens  
per Latium, postquam in partem data Roma Sabinis.  
una ingens Amiterna cohors priscique Quirites,  
Ereti manus omnis oliviferaeque Mutuscae;  
qui Nomentum urbem, qui Rosea rura Velini,  
qui Tetricae horrentis rupes montemque Severum  
Casperiamque colunt Forulosque et flumen Himellae,  
qui Tiberim Fabarimque<sup>26</sup> bibunt, quos frigida misit  
Nursia, et Ortinae classes populique Latini,  
quosque secans infaustum interluit Allia nomen.

<sup>24</sup> Comparable to *maliferae Abellae* is the phrase *oliviferae Mutuscae* ("olive-bearing Mutusca," 7.711). Virgil's *Mutusca* is the (unmetrical) town Trebula Mutuesca located in Sabellic territory on the river Farfarus, but neither form of the name has any known or ascertainable meaning (although Bruno 1969: 98, 107 speculates that *Mutusca* may be connected to Etruscan *muthuna* or to the *Mutela mons*). Despite the impossibility of formulating an explanation for this gloss, given the lack of external evidence from sources such as Servius or Varro, it seems plausible that, as with *maliferae*, Virgil supplied the epithet *oliviferae* to elucidate the meaning of Trebula or Mutuesca (or, less compellingly, the physical characteristics of the town).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Horsfall 2000: 483 and *OLD* and *TLL* s.v. Though glossed with *Teutonico*, *cateia* would appear to be a Gallic word (*OLD*). Horsfall explains this as an "ethnographic puzzle" for the reader: "the historical Teutones ... had been wiped out by Marius and the name was thereafter largely used as though of a native Gallic tribe."

<sup>26</sup> The doublet *Tiberim Fabarimque* (7.715), like *sulpurea Nar albus aqua*, again demonstrates Virgil's sensitivity for features of the local landscape and their native names. Although this is not a gloss proper, Virgil seems to have gone out of his way to name not only the Tiber (this being the only occasion when he refers to this river by its regular name, as Horsfall 2000: 468 notes; likewise Cairns 2006), but also one of its Sabellic tributaries. The name Fabaris, although Latinized from Sabellic *Farfarus*, is nevertheless conspicuously Osco-Umbrian: the Romans were well aware of the preponderance of the letter *f* in these dialects, as, e.g., Varro, *Ling.* 5.97 indicates. Thus the phrase *Tiberim Fabarimque*, while being an instance of fairly straightforward alliterative wordplay (Horsfall 2000: 468



Behold Clausus, descended from the ancient bloodline of the Sabines, leading a great marching-column, himself its equal, from whom the Claudian tribe and lineage is now scattered throughout Latium, after Rome has been given in part to the Sabines. Together [come] an enormous cohort from Amiternum and the ancient Quirites, a whole band from Eretum and olive-bearing [Trebula] Mutu[e]sca, and the men who inhabit the city of Nomentum, the Rosean fields of Velinus, the crags of bristling Tetrica and Mount Severus and Casperia and Foruli and the river of Himella, the men who drink the Tiber and the Fabaris, whom chilly Nursia sent, and the fleets of Ortina and the Latin peoples, and the men through whose land the river Allia—ill-omened name—runs.

The forces of Clausus are drawn from a comparatively large area: the wedge-shaped swath of Umbrian land extending north-westwards from Rome, terminating high in the Apennines at Nursia and the Tetricus Mons.<sup>27</sup> The adjective *horrentis* in line 713 (whether genitive singular modifying *Tetricae*, as I have taken it, or accusative plural, going with *rupes*) has long been read as a Latin gloss on what is held to be a Latin place-name.<sup>28</sup> Servius, however, treats the toponym as Sabellic, stating that it is from this forbidding place that the Latin adjective *tetricus* is taken: *Tetricus mons in Sabinis asperrimus, unde tristes homines tetricos dicimus* ("the Tetrican mountain in the land of the Sabines is most rugged, whence we call gloomy men *tetrici*").<sup>29</sup> Servius's assertion would seem to be supported by the curious tendency of this rare Latin adjective to appear in close proximity to a mention of *Sabini*. Of the 34 uses of this word in extant Latin literature no less than four occur in just such a context<sup>30</sup>: Ovid (*Am.* 3.8.61–62) speaks of *tetricas Sabinas*; Persius (6.1–2) and Martial (1.62.1–2) both use the word *Sabinus* one line prior to the appearance of the adjective *tetricus*; and Livy (1.18.4) gives his opinion

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speaks also of the "marked internal echo of *-er-*, *-ar-*"), draws attention to the closeness of the Latin and Sabellic territories, languages, and peoples, as Muzzioli 1984–91: 451 explains: "Il particolare sviluppo della descrizione ... va probabilmente visto in relazione con l'importanza dell'elemento sabino nelle narrazioni sulla storia arcaica di Roma."

<sup>27</sup> Whereas in Virgil and Varro (*Rust.* 2.1.5) it is a feminine noun, Servius seems to treat *Tetricus* as an adjective, employing it to modify masculine *mons*. I follow Talbert 2000 in referring to it as the Tetricus Mons. A discussion of these terms can be found in Fruyt 1986: 250, 255.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. O'Hara 1999: 195.

<sup>29</sup> O'Hara 1999: 195 is skeptical of Servius's derivation, and Bartelink 1965: 57 seems resigned to uncertainty, saying that the etymology of *tetricus* is unknown, and that its relationship to the name of the mountain is unclear.

<sup>30</sup> This number is the result of a search of the *Library of Latin Texts* on Brepolis. Ernout and Meillet 1985: 1218 label the adjective "rare" and "poétique." Harvey 1981: 181 also notes this strange confluence of *tetricus* with Sabellic subject matter ("the adjective ... is sometimes found in a Sabine context"), as does Scaffai 1992.

that Numa was steeped in the austere and stern (*tetrica ac tristi*) teachings of the ancient Sabellic peoples.<sup>31</sup> As these examples indicate, *tetricus* as a Latin adjective would not seem to be of great antiquity, affirming its likely status as a borrowing.<sup>32</sup> Whether or not Servius is correct in asserting that the Latin adjective *tetricus* has a Sabellic origin is, once again, of secondary importance: several Latin authors (two of them Augustan) regarded the word as having ties to Sabellic, and Virgil, in glossing the eponymous mountain with the adjective *horrentis*, can be deduced to have been acting on the assumption that he was creating another Sabellic gloss.<sup>33</sup>

I turn now to the two glosses that seem not to have been previously recognized at all. The first immediately precedes the phrase just examined: in line 712 of the passage quoted above, also listed among Clausus's followers, are the men who inhabit the *Rosea rura Velini*. The phrase *Rosea rura* has exercised Virgil's readers: no place by this exact name is known, but it seems likely that it refers to *Rosea* or *campi Roseae*,<sup>34</sup> a low-lying area some forty miles north-east of Rome

<sup>31</sup> Martial's fondness for this adjective is pronounced: he is responsible for sixteen of the 34 extant instances. As the passages of Martial and Livy (and Servius) cited here (in which *tetricus* occurs in conjunction with the word *tristis*) suggest, Latin *tetricus* is probably related to other adjectives of similar meaning, such as *taeter* and *tristis*. O'Hara 1999: 195 and Williams 1973: 220 connect it to *taeter*, and Ernout and Meillet 1985: 1218 cite the appearance of the form *tētrica* (rather than *tē-*) at Sen. *Hercules Furens* 579 as evidence that it was understood as *taetricus*, from *taeter* (though according to Walde and Hofmann 1965: 677–78, the usual spelling with *tē-* renders a connection with *taeter* implausible). Ernout and Meillet further suggest that it is formed by reduplication from the same root that yields *taeter* and *tristis* (hence the form *tertrikos* proposed by Muller 1926: 482).

<sup>32</sup> Muller 1926: 482 and Scaffai 1992 conclude that its earliest appearance is in Varro, and Muller further adds his opinion that the word is “v[iel]l[eicht] also Dialektwort.”

<sup>33</sup> Should *Aen.* 7.713 be counted as one gloss or two? The phrase that follows *tetricae horrentis rupes, montemque Severum*, constitutes either a reference to a separate place (i.e., a Mount Severus neighboring Mount Tetricus) or a further gloss on *Tetricae* (which would give the sense “the men who inhabit ... the crags and harsh mount of bristling Tetrica”). O'Hara 1999: 195 notes that both are possibilities, and Ross 1973: 62 suggests that Virgil is responsible for inventing the *mons Severus* altogether, “to cap the idea begun by *horrens* as an etymological gloss on *Tetrica*.” I am inclined, however, to side with Horsfall 2000: 468 who favors reading *montemque Severum* as another, separate mountain, on the grounds that it is rare to find a full line devoted to describing a fairly insignificant natural feature (the fact that no mountain by this name is known is hardly an objection to this argument: the region is extremely hilly, and few of the peaks surrounding the Tetricus Mons are named in Talbert 2000, Plate 42 E3).

<sup>34</sup> The variant spellings *Rosia* and *campi Rosiae* are also found. Horsfall 2000: 467 notes that “the place was called Rosea or Rosia in prose,” but in fact, the variability seems

in Umbria. There is disagreement also as to the meaning of *Rosea*: although it would appear to be simply the Latin adjective meaning “rose-colored” (though the scansion of the line—*Rōsea* as opposed to *rōsea*—makes this unlikely), the consensus is that it is an adjectival coinage from the Latin noun *rōs*, and would therefore mean “dew.”<sup>35</sup> It is possible, however, that *Rosea* means neither of these, and that Virgil’s idiosyncratic form of the toponym, namely, his addition of the element *rura*, is so formulated to draw attention to the Sabellic gloss contained within this phrase. *Rosea* can, I suggest, be understood as the adjectival form of the Sabellic noun that is cognate with Latin *rura*. The *Rosea rura* are located at a crossroads of different dialects, but closest to the *Aequi*, whose language, like Oscan, did not exhibit rhotacism between vowels, and, like Umbrian and Old Latin, may have monophthongized -ou- to -ō-.<sup>36</sup> My suggestion here, if correct, would render this example different from those considered previously, since the etymological play would involve a genuine cognate pair with fully explicable sound changes, but this detail should not be understood to affect Virgil’s handling of the situation at all: once again, he is simply reflecting his knowledge of the meaning of a Sabellic toponym (*Rosea*) in Sabellic territory by accompanying it with a Latin word that translates the name (*rura*). It is easy to see how, even without access to local naming lore, Virgil might have deduced that *Rosea* had a similar meaning to Latin *rura*: not

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to have been rather more pronounced: Cicero (*Att.* 4.15.5) and Varro (*Rust.* 3.2.10) use *Rosia*; Pliny the Elder (*HN* 17.32) and Varro (*Rust.* 1.7.10) speak of *campi Roseae*; and finally, *Rosea* is found in Paulus-Festus (n35 below), Pliny the Elder (*HN* 19.174), and Varro (*Rust.* 2.1.17, 2.7.6, 3.17.6).

<sup>35</sup> Paulus-Festus (283M/393Th) seems to have been the first to make the connection with dew (*Rosea in agro Reatino campus appellatur, quod in eo arva rore humida semper seruntur*, “a field in the Reatine area is called *Rosea*, because the lands in it are always made moist with dew”), and is followed by Ross 1973: 62 who says, “the *Rosea rura* ... would appear to be Virgil’s free association from *rura* to *rora* (\**rosa*) to the nominative *ros*.” Bruno 1969: 97 and Horsfall 2000: 467 express the same view.

<sup>36</sup> The status of Aequian is admittedly difficult to determine, as only one inscription is extant, but it does seem to have been an Umbroid dialect (cf., e.g., Rix 2002) and, as such, is likely not to have exhibited rhotacism and to have undergone monophthongization. Although the cognate of Latin *rus* is not attested in extant Sabellic texts, the noun is an Indo-European inherited form (cf., e.g., de Vaan 2008: 526–27), not a Latin or Italic invention, and therefore may well have existed in Sabellic as well. Proto-Indo-European \**reu(h<sub>x</sub>)os* [nominative], \**reu(h<sub>x</sub>)eses* [genitive] > \**rouos*, \**rouezes* > \**rous*, \**rouzes* > \**rōs*, \**rōris* > *rūs*, *rūris* in Latin and, theoretically, \**roūs*, \**rouzes* > \**rōs*, \**rōs/r-*, the form I argue can be seen in *Rōsea*, in the Umbroid dialects. For the Indo-European adjectival suffix \*-eyo- (Latin -eus), cf. Weiss 2009: 273.

only is there an obvious resemblance in sound and appearance between the two words,<sup>37</sup> but the standard form of the toponym further contains within it a word for “field,” *campi*. Virgil’s gloss is in fact signposted as such by his decision to replace this orthodox term *campi* with *rura*: not only is “plain” *vel sim.* a slightly unusual meaning for *rura* (wordplays frequently being heralded by an unexpected word or a familiar word used in a different sense),<sup>38</sup> but as a toponym unique to Virgil, *Rosea rura* openly declares Virgil’s belief that *campi*, too, was a translation of *Rosea*. Interestingly, Servius proffers yet another version of the name when he comments on Virgil’s *Rosea rura*: *Velinus lacus est circa Reate iuxta agrum, qui Rosulanus vocatur* (“the Veline Lake is near Reate, next to a field, which is called *Rosulanus*”). Horsfall 2000: 467 brands Servius’s *Rosulanus ager* a likely “autoschediasma,” but whether intentional or not, Servius’s phrase with its third formulation of the toponym alerts the reader to the possibility that Virgil had replaced *campus* with *rura* in order to stress the meaning of *Rosea* and the etymological play. I do not wish to assert that Virgil’s *Rosea rura* contains no traces of a “rose-colored plain” or a “dewy plain,” but rather that a third semantic possibility ought now to be added to the list: “a (Sabellic) plain-like plain.”<sup>39</sup>

The second new<sup>40</sup> gloss occurs shortly before the start of the catalogue in Virgil’s list of five cities near Rome that are engaged in the manufacture of arms (*Aen.* 7.629–31):

quinque adeo magnae positis incudibus urbes  
tela novant, Amitina potens Tiburque superbum,  
Ardea Crustumerique et turrigeræ Antemnae.

Five great cities, with anvils set in place, replenish their weapons: powerful Amitina and lofty Tibur, Ardea and Crustumeri and turreted Antemnae.

<sup>37</sup> See O’Hara 1999: 60–63 on paronomasia facilitating or prompting wordplay.

<sup>38</sup> On the role of metonymy in wordplay, cf. O’Hara 1999: 88–90.

<sup>39</sup> The phrase I have discussed here, *Rosea rura*, is notoriously murky, and O’Hara (*pers. comm.*) is also willing to see Virgil possibly offering more than one etymology.

<sup>40</sup> This gloss may have been alluded to previously, though the reference is rather opaque. Bartelink 1965: 31–32 says that, “Marouzeau sluit in *Aen.* 7, 630 Tibur superbum een zinspelend op de etymologie van superbus (super) niet uit: ‘Il n’est pas sûr, quoi qu’en dise B. Rehm ..., qu’en qualifiant Tibur de superbum ... Virgile ne pense pas au sens étymologique (*super*) de cette épithète.’” Marouzeau, therefore, contrary to B. Rehm, acknowledged the possibility that Virgil was etymologizing in glossing *Tibur* with *superbus*, but what is left unspecified by both Marouzeau and Bartelink is precisely how the *super* component in *superbus* would gloss *Tibur*, and what meaning and etymology would be required for *Tibur* itself in this situation.

My proposed gloss lurks in the phrase *Tibur superbum* (7.630) and involves, once more, an etymology that is unlikely to be justifiable according to any modern linguistic criteria. Varro, explaining the origin of the city-name Thebes, states that it is related to the word *teba*, which he further claims meant “hill” in Sabellic (*Rust.* 3.1.6):

nam lingua prisca et in Graecia Aeolis Boeoti sine afflatu vocant collis tebas, et in Sabinis, quo e Graecia venerunt Pelasgi, etiam nunc ita dicunt, cuius vestigium in agro Sabino via Salaria non longe a Reate miliarius clivus cum appellatur tebae.

For in the ancient language, both the Aeolians of Boeotia in Greece call hills *tebae* without aspiration, and also among the Sabines, to which place the Pelasgians migrated from Greece, they call them so even now, and there is a trace of this in the Sabine country on the via Salaria not far from Reate, where a mile-long slope is called *tebae*.

The derivation of *Tibur* as well, in addition to Thebes, from this Sabellic word for hill has been proposed recently, though not in relation to Virgil's phrase. Ceci 1987: 87 states, “*Tibur* nulla ha da fare con *Tiberis* e va col sabino *tēba* ‘collis’. La forma antica di *Tibur* è *Teibur* (C.I.L., XIV, 3584), come la forma antica di *tēba* è *teiba*,” and Bruno 1969: 108 likewise mentions the possibility that “il top. *Tibur* [è] un derivato di *tēba* ... con esito *ī* da *ē*.”<sup>41</sup> Whether a genuine cognate relationship exists between *Tibur* and *teba*, and whether either word is really Sabellic is, once again, irrelevant: given the location of the town, Virgil could reasonably have regarded the name as Sabellic.<sup>42</sup> Although no direct connection is attested among the ancient sources between *teba* and *Tibur*, it therefore seems likely that Virgil would have seen them as related, as several other Latin authors seem to have. Although *Tibur* is nowhere else found with Virgil's *superbus*, other authors also allude to its height or incline: Horace with *supinus* (“sloping”) and Martial with *altus* (“lofty”), while both Martial and Juvenal refer to the *arx* (“citadel”) of the city (Mart. 7.13.3, *Tiburis*

<sup>41</sup> Ceci 1987: 88 mentions that “Virgilio ... chiama Tivoli *superbum*” but immediately adds “e questo non ci serve,” failing to see the etymological play present. Walde and Hofmann 1965: 653 admit the possibility of a connection between *Tibur* and *tēba*, but prefer to connect the former to the Phrygian names *Tembrios* and *Thymbres*.

<sup>42</sup> The geographical status of *Tibur* is admittedly somewhat liminal, as it is located in far eastern Latium, very near to the territories of the Aequi and Hernici. In addition, it is here included in a catalogue that consists of one Rutulian town, Ardea, and two Latin towns, Antemna and Crustumeri, the latter of which is also on the border with Sabine territory (the location of Amitina is unknown, through Atina, the variant reading, is a Lucanian town in which Oscan and Greek were spoken).

*alti*; Juv. 3.192, *proni Tiburis arce*, and 14.87, *Tiburis arce* once again).<sup>43</sup> The objection can be made, here and elsewhere, that the services of an etymologist are hardly required to point out that, for example, Tibur is situated atop a hill,<sup>44</sup> but Virgil's *superbus* seems marked as an etymological play given the similar adjectives used to describe this town in later authors, who may be engaging in similar glossing activities on the Virgilian model. *Superbus* also hints at the possible arrogance of the inhabitants, in addition to the lofty situation of their town, in a way that the adjectives employed by Horace, Juvenal, and Martial do not. I thus propose that Virgil indeed understood the name *Tibur* to be derived from the Sabellian word *teba*, and that his chosen adjective, *superbus*, is a deliberate gloss on this place-name: the phrase would thus have the meaning "high hill."

Certain clear patterns have now emerged: first, that the glosses involving Sabellian are confined exclusively (or almost so: see n3 above) to book 7 of the *Aeneid*; and second, that within this book, they occur in clusters. This evident Sabellianization of one section of the *Aeneid*—and, moreover, of certain specific portions of it—is of great significance. Wordplays in Virgil have traditionally been explained as providing auditory and intellectual pleasure for the reader, or as heralding the erudition of the poet—even his status as a poet. O'Hara 1999: 103 explains that etymological plays implicitly declare, "I too am a poet in the learned Alexandrian tradition." Although he speaks of the importance of providing pleasure for the reader (103–4) and working within the Alexandrian aesthetic, in which aetiological poetry was prized (104–5), O'Hara also warns against understanding etymologizing as nothing more than self-conscious, superficial adornment: "my strong belief is that Vergil etymologized not in order to be pedantic or to contribute to his reader's knowledge of etymologies, but because he saw etymological wordplay as one effective way of achieving some of the goals of his poems." In short, etymological plays "mark the text as other than ordinary nonfictional discourse" and create "a sense of tone, style, and allegiance to a tradition."<sup>45</sup> Such effects are undeniable, but Virgil's

<sup>43</sup> To Horace the place is at other times *udus*, "damp" (*Carm.* 3.29.6), and *vacuus* "deserted" (*Epist.* 1.7.45). Horsfall's interpretation (2000: 408) of these comparanda is as follows: "Horace's *supinum* (C.3.4.23) appears to mean something like 'gently sloping' (backwards); Juv.'s *proni* (3.192) sees the town as leaning forwards ... V.'s epithet might (*pace* Servius) refer to the proud position looking down over the Roman Campagna (cf. perhaps Hom. αἰνύ); alternatively, Serv.'s *nobile* could suffice: Catillus and Coras ruled a city of consequence."

<sup>44</sup> Cf., e.g., O'Hara 1999: 5–7.

<sup>45</sup> O'Hara 1999: 103. He declares in the third section of his Introduction, "The Poetic Function of Vergilian Etymologizing" (102–11), his hope that his study will enable others

program of etymologizing on the Sabellic dialects in particular seems to invite further, more nuanced interpretation.

I see the key to interpreting the role played by Sabellic glosses in the *Aeneid* in a wordplay that occurs early in book 7. The opening of this book finds Aeneas carrying out funeral rites for his nurse, Caieta, after which the Trojans set sail once more, before finally entering the mouth of the Tiber and setting foot on Italian shores. At this place they prepare to enjoy a humble feast (*Aen.* 7.109–17):

instituuntque dapes et adorea liba per herbam  
subiciunt epulis (sic Iuppiter ipse monebat)  
et Cereale solum pomis agrestibus augent.  
consumptis hic forte aliis, ut vertere morsus  
exiguam in Cererem penuria adegit edendi,  
et violare manu malisque audacibus orbem  
fatalis crusti patulis nec parcere quadris:  
“heus, etiam mensas consumimus?” inquit Iulus,  
nec plura, adludens.

And they set up a feast and place spelt wafers on the grass under the food (thus Jupiter himself instructed them to do), and they heap up Ceres' base with rustic fruits. When it happened that everything else had been eaten, as the paucity of food drove them to turn their teeth onto the thin cakes, and to violate with their hands and bold jaws the rounds of fateful cake, and not to spare the broad segments, Iulus said in jest, “Oh no, are we even eating our tables?” and nothing more.

Iulus's use of the word *mensas* in line 116 is arresting (see n37 above). He is making a joke about the fact that the Trojans, still hungry after dining, have eaten the plates (made of bread) that held their food, playing in some way on the multiple meanings inherent in *mensas*. The explanation of his comment as a jest, however, does little to mitigate the oddness of the lexical choice, or to explain the mechanics of the joke: why “tables” when “plates” are meant? Iulus's exclamation is immediately recognized by his father as the fulfillment of the prophecy that had been uttered by the Harpies in book 3: these creatures had cursed Aeneas, telling him that only when hunger compelled his people to eat their *mensas*, would they have found their permanent home

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to conduct further research into the topic of Virgilian etymological play, admitting that his monograph is “unlikely to provide the final word on the subject.” I would like to note that this project would have been considerably more challenging to undertake without the foundation provided by O'Hara's work.



(3.255–57). It has been suggested that the word *mensa* in these two passages (the prophecy and its fulfillment) should be read as a cipher for its Umbrian cognate, **mefa**/*mefa*, a word found repeatedly in the Iguvine Tables, where it denotes a broad, flat, sacrificial cake.<sup>46</sup> If this sense is transferred to *Aen.* 7.116, the reader could understand the Trojans, newly arrived in Italy, enjoying a distinctly local meal, while fulfilling the Harpies' apparently alarming prophecy. Some have found this reading "too hard" (Horsfall 2000: 118) by Virgil's usual standards, and appeal instead to Servius and Donatus, who claim "cake" as a perfectly regular, if archaic, meaning of Latin *mensa*.<sup>47</sup> Such an interpretation is, however, somewhat vitiated by the fact that Servius and Donatus are our only authorities for such a meaning of *mensa*, and that their explanations consequently have about them the air of having been invented purely to explain the unusual sense of the word in the passage concerned. I therefore, like Enk 1913, would interpret *mensa* at *Aen.* 7.116 as a deliberate

<sup>46</sup> Cf., e.g., Enk 1913 and Horsfall 2000: 118 ("it has long been suspected that V. is playing on *mefa/mensa*"). Umbrian regularly shows *-f-* where Latin has *-ns-*: *spefa*, for example, the participle found modifying *mefa* several times in the Iguvine tables (e.g., VIIb 9, VIIa 37, 38), is cognate with Latin *pensa*, "weighed" (cf. Walde and Hofmann 1965: 70 and Untermann 2000: 690). Cf. also Weiss 2009: 467n11, "[sc. Sabellic] final *\*-n(t)s* became *-f-*" and, e.g., the Umbrian accusative plural forms *vitlaf* (230) and *avif* (314)/*avef* (243), where the final *-f-* is in place of Latin *-s* (itself from *-Vns*). For text and commentary on the Iguvine Tables, see Buck 1928 and Poultney 1959, as well as Weiss 2010 for the third and fourth Tables (Weiss mentions **mefa**/*mefa* briefly at 81, 278, 361, 387, and 415). Interestingly, the echoes between *Aen.* 7.109–17 and *Tab. Ig.* Ia16–17 are quite extensive: in addition to the correspondence between *mensa* and **mefa**, *consumptis* seems to echo *sumtu*, while *Cereale* and *Cererem* recall the sense of *arvium* (I am grateful to the anonymous reader at TAPA for this observation).

<sup>47</sup> Servius twice speaks of *panicias mensas*, "cakes of millet," stating that they are a customary component of Roman rites: first at 1.736, commenting on [*in mensam*] *laticum libavit honorem* ("he poured a liquid offering onto the cake"), he says: *et tangit ritum Romanorum, qui panicias sacratasque mensas habebant, in quas libabant, ut est "heus etiam mensas consumimus," inquit Iulus* ("and it relates to a rite of the Romans, who used to have sacred cakes of millet, onto which they would make offerings, and so it is that Iulus said, 'Oh no, are we even eating our tables'"); and then at 3.257, on *ambesas*: *undique esas, hoc est rotundas: maiores enim nostri has mensas habebant in honore deorum, panicias scilicet* ("*ambesas* [means] eaten all around, that is, round: for our elders used to have these cakes, namely ones made of millet, in honor of the gods"). Donatus, commenting on *Aen.* 3.257, likewise speaks of sacred *mensae* made from grain: *has enim mensas dixit quae ex frumento confectae diis penatibus consecrantur* ("for he called these *mensae*, which, made from grain, are consecrated to the Penates"). Among modern scholars, Vine 1986, for example, holds that Latin *mensa* originally meant "a round sacrificial cake on which offerings were heaped" (112).

play on Umbrian *mefa/mefa*. Even if, however, *mensa* is simply an archaic Latin (rather than Sabellic) word for “cake” (and it should be noted that ancient writers did not distinguish consistently between the Italic dialects and Old Latin<sup>48</sup>), Virgil is still accessing an ancient, indigenous Italic religious substratum. Thus, an allusion is clearly being made at 7.116 to a pan-Italic religious patrimony: the early Italic-speaking inhabitants of Italy passed down their religious tradition to their Sabellic and Latin descendants, complete with cognate paraphernalia and nomenclature.

With *mensa* read as an instance of etymologizing—whether Sabellic or Old Latin—the very settling of the Trojans in Italy is effected by Italic: a wordplay on a language native to the shores at which they have arrived is the confirmation that this land is their destined home. Indeed, Aeneas and his followers seem to have already unconsciously become Italicized: without realizing it, they have carried out an Italic ritual, using an Italic ritual object that they refer to by a marked Italic name. It seems particularly appropriate that it is Iulus who utters the fateful word, as he more than any other character bridges the divide from Trojan to Roman, for the name by which he is called at *Aeneid* 7.116 is Latinate in form, and is to be the cognomen carried by the imperial family in Virgil's day.<sup>49</sup> Finally, the play on *mensa/mefa* seems to be alluded to obliquely at *Aeneid* 12.823–25, when Jupiter commands Aeneas not to force the indigenous Latin peoples to change their ancient name, language (*vox*), or style of dress and become Trojans.<sup>50</sup> The Latino-Sabellic ritual cake enjoyed by the Trojans, almost accidentally, as soon as they have landed, proleptically embodies this aspirational style of rule, in which syncretism between foreign and native traditions, rather than obliteration of the latter by the former, must predominate. Nevertheless, the unification of the Roman and the Italic is not entirely unproblematic: the second half of the *Aeneid* necessarily recalls the Social War, and thus the mention of Sabellic *mensa*, while occurring at a moment in which Italic and Roman come together, simultaneously serves to highlight the cultural distinctness of the other Italic peoples in relation to the Romans, and thus to draw attention to the difficulties necessarily inherent in socio-cultural syncretism.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Consider, for example, Varro's discussions of *februm*, which he explains at *Ling.* 5.79 as a word used by “the ancients” (*antiqui*) to mean “far off” (*extremum*) and at 6.13 as the Sabellic term for a “purification” (*purgamentum*).

<sup>49</sup> Virgil likewise emphasizes the derivation of the Claudian *gens* from Clausus at *Aen.* 7.707–8 to cement the ties between the Sabellic and Roman traditions.

<sup>50</sup> I am grateful to Richard Tarrant for pointing out the passage at *Aen.* 12.823–25 and suggesting how it might enhance the arguments I make regarding *mensa* here.

<sup>51</sup> I am grateful to the anonymous reader at *TAPA* for bringing to my attention the merits of this line of thinking.

Book 7 of the *Aeneid* marks a pivotal point in the epic—the inception of the second, so-called “Iliadic” half of the work, the action of which, in contrast to that of the first six books, is to take place entirely in Italy. Horsfall 2000: 354 has remarked on Virgil’s propensity for becoming “more Roman” the closer he gets to Italy, and I argue that etymologizing on Sabellic is yet another manifestation of this program of localization. The remarkable use of Sabellic etymological plays to achieve ties to the land stands in stark contrast to Virgil’s handling of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, also set on Italian soil, but entirely lacking in Sabellic glosses, and comparatively poor in glosses of any kind.<sup>52</sup> The crucial role played by the Sabellic element in the archaic history of Rome is undeniable, and the concentration of Sabellic etymological plays in *Aeneid* 7, and moreover in crucial portions of this book, serves to ground the text of this part of the narrative in the soil of Italy—soil that is to provide the stage for the events of the following five books, and is destined to become the home of the Roman race.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> For a list of etymological plays in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, see O’Hara 1999: 243–89. On the *Georgics*, cf. also Thomas 1988, esp. 1.105 (on G. 1.217–18) and 1.125 (on 1.337), as well as 2.67 (on G. 3.146–7), with his 1982 article.

<sup>53</sup> If what Virgil is doing in *Aeneid* 7 is indeed, as I argue here, weaving subtle linguistic strands into his work to emphasize the fated and natural connection of Aeneas and his men to the land of Italy, an interesting parallel for such activity may be present in Ovid’s *Fasti* (I am grateful to Ted Somerville for this observation, and for the reference). At *Fasti* 4.73–74 Ovid writes, *venerat Atridae fatis agitatus Halaesus, / a quo se dictam terra Falisca putat* (“Halaesus, from whom the Faliscan land thinks it was named, had come, driven by the fates of the descendant of Atreus”), apparently playing on the fact that Latin initial h frequently manifested itself as f in Faliscan—a phenomenon noted by Serv. *ad Aen.* 7.695. It seems significant that Ovid would choose to etymologize on an Italic dialect in the *Fasti* alone, and at a crucial juncture where the aetiology of the Faliscan people is being related.

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