Oscan was spoken in Southern Italy in the second half of the first millennium BC. Here, for the first time, all the evidence for the spelling of Oscan in the Greek alphabet is collected and examined. Understanding the orthography of these inscriptions has far-reaching implications for the historical phonology and morphology of Oscan and the Italic languages (for example, providing unique evidence for the reconstruction of the genitive plural). A striking discovery is the lack of a standardised orthography for Oscan in the Greek alphabet, which seriously problematises attempts to date inscriptions by assuming the consistent chronological development of spelling features. There are also intriguing insights into the linguistic situation in South Italy. Rather than a separate community of Oscan-speakers who had adopted and subsequently adapted the Greek alphabet in isolation, we should posit groups who were in touch with contemporary developments in Greek orthography due to widespread Greek–Oscan bilingualism.

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OSCAN IN THE GREEK ALPHABET

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# CONTENTS

**List of tables and figure**  
*page vii*

**Acknowledgements**  
ix

**Conventions and readings**  
xi

**List of abbreviations**  
xiii

1. **Introduction**  
   1  
   - Oscan and its alphabets  
   1  
   - The linguistic situation of south Italy  
   5  
   - Oscan phonology and morphology  
   8  
   - Dating inscriptions  
   10  
   - Oscan or Greek? Defining the corpus  
   19

2. **Vowels**  
   26  
   - Introduction  
   26  
   - Identifying vowels  
   27  
   - Lejeune’s theory  
   30  
   - Data and analysis  
   44  
   - Conclusion  
   79

3. **Consonants**  
   96  
   - Introduction  
   96  
   - Letter shapes of <h>: dating  
   96  
   - The spelling of /l/  
   98  
   - The value and sources of < >::  
   105  
   - Word-internal *-Cj- sequences  
   112  
   - Nasals before another consonant  
   129  
   - Final -τ for -δ  
   133  
   - Conclusion  
   135

4. **Influence from the Oscan alphabet**  
   136  
   - Introduction  
   136  
   - The Messina inscriptions  
   137  
   - The use of <πσ> for /ps/ and <κσ> for /ks/  
   141  
   - Diphthongs ending in <φ>  
   144  
   - Use of <h>  
   147  
   - Double writing of long vowels  
   156

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Contents

Writing of geminate consonants 159
The use of <νγ> for /ng/ 164
Conclusion 165

5. Conclusions 167
   Orthographic variation and possible explanations 167
   Dating of inscriptions on orthographic grounds 175
   Phonology 181
   Morphology 183

6. Oscan words discussed in this book 184
   Introduction 184
   Oscan words 186

Bibliography 229
Index of words 244
Index of subjects 259
TABLES

1 Consonants in Oscan  page 9
2 Dates of Oscan inscriptions  13
3 Oscan vowels in the Oscan and Latin alphabets  27
4 Lejeune’s model of the orthography of Oscan vowels in the Greek alphabet  34
5 <ι> for /e/  36
6 <ο> for /u/ in a non-final syllable  37
7 <ε> for /e/ from 200  37
8 <ει> for /ei/ from 200  38
9 <ω> for /o/ not next to a labial  38
10 <ουϝ> for /ow/  38
11 <ο> for /o/  39
12 Inscriptions which could belong to alternative scribal schools  41
13 Inscriptions which must belong to Lejeune’s system  43
14 Spelling of /e/  45
15 Spelling of /ei/  51
16 Spelling of /o/  54
17 Spelling of *-ā  57
18 Spelling of tautosyllabic /ou/  58
19 Spelling of heterosyllabic /ow/  60
20 Spelling of /o/, all evidence  61
21 Spelling of /u/  64
22 /u/ in initial syllables  70
23 /u/ in non-initial syllables  71
24 /u:/ from *-ō- in initial syllables  72
25 /u/ from *-ō- in non-initial syllables  72
26 Spelling of /u/ from *-u-  75
27 Spelling of Oscan vowels in the Greek alphabet  79
28 o-stem dative singulars  80
List of tables and figure

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Accusative singulars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Genitive plurals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Ablative singulars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Variation in spelling of /e/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Variation in spelling of /u/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Variation in spelling of /o/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Homography of /e/ and /ei/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Homography of /u/ and /o/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Examples of &lt;h&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Instances of /i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Instances of &lt;ζ&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Instances of [z]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>The writing of original *di-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>*-Ci- sequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>*-ns- and *-nt- sequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Final *-t and *-d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>/ps/ and /ks/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Spelling of tautosyllabic diphthongs ending in /u/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Names derived from *marâ-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Words in which &lt;h&gt; is present or expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Long vowels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Geminate consonants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Spelling of Oscan vowels in the Greek alphabet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>New datings of the inscriptions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Vowels in Oscan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

viii
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This book discusses the phonetics and phonology of the Sabellic language Oscan, and their representation in several different alphabets. The conventions used in the book to represent these aspects are, as far as possible, those used as standard in the fields of historical linguistics and phonology. Quoted forms from ancient languages are given in Roman font when in the Etruscan alphabet, in **bold** when written in an alphabet derived from the Etruscan alphabet (see pp. 1–2), in *italics* when written in the Latin alphabet, and in the Greek alphabet when written in the Greek alphabet (note that the Greek alphabet used to write Oscan had several additional letters compared to the East Ionic alphabet adopted by Athens at the end of the fifth century; see p. 3). In quoted forms I follow the conventions of Crawford et al. (2011: 62); in particular, note that [ ] surround missing letters, < > surround letters supplied by the editors to replace those omitted or engraved in error, and () enclose the expansion of an abbreviation. Crawford et al. (2011) themselves are often inconsistent in the use of the angled brackets and brackets. For example, while a missing initial <h> is enclosed in < > in <h>οριομ (Crimisa 3/Lu 44), <h>πειδ (Buxentum 1/Lu 62) and <h>ορτιηις (Vibo 8/tLu 6), it is supplied in ( ) in (h)εριηις (Crimisa 2/Lu 24) and omitted altogether in ορτοριες (Laos 3/Lu 63) and ελ[Φ]ομ (Thurii Copia 1/Lu 47) while these are (rightly) translated as ‘Hortorius’ and ‘Heluus’ respectively. These inconsistencies are unimportant, and have not been corrected in the forms used, for greater ease of comparison with the texts in Crawford et al. (2011).

When individual graphemes are being discussed, they are enclosed within < > (graphemes from the Latin alphabet are not italicised when between angled brackets); on the rare occasions when the actual symbol used for the grapheme is being discussed, this is not enclosed within angled brackets. Phonemes and
sequences of phonemes are enclosed within / /, phones within [ ] (phonetic transcription is as broad as possible). Phonemes and phones are represented according to the conventions of the IPA alphabet, as laid out in the IPA Handbook (International Phonetic Association 1999). Reconstructed forms are preceded by an asterisk * and use the standard orthography of historical linguistic and Indo-Europeanist literature. The reader’s attention is drawn to the fact that this leads to certain minor discrepancies between the two conventions, primarily that the labiovelar and palatal approximants (glides) written /w/ and /j/ ([w] and [j]) respectively are written *-u̯- and *-i̯- in reconstructions; as the second element of tautosyllabic diphthongs, these are written /u/ and /i/ in phonemic representation (e.g. /ai/), but as *-u̯- and *-i̯- in reconstructions (e.g. *-ai̯-). The reader will note that several of these conventions have more than one use (e.g. [ ] for missing letters in quoted forms, and for representation of phones). Which convention applies should in every case be clear from context.

Forms will be referred to according to first the reference system used by Crawford et al. (2011) and second that of Rix (2002), separated by a slash (some inscriptions are only in Crawford et al. 2011). Except forms from the Iguvine Tables (IT; taken from Rix 2002), and unless otherwise specified, usually in the discussion of a given word in Chapter 6, all readings of Oscan forms and forms from the other Sabellic languages are taken from Crawford et al. (2011). It should be noted that, even though I provide a reference to Rix (2002), some of the readings of Crawford et al. are very different from those of Rix. Only where I disagree with the reading of Crawford et al. (2011) have forms been changed, e.g. I read <h>ερεστ for Crawford et al.’s κερεστ (Buxentum 1/Lu 62).

A superscript ‘x’ indicates a reconstructed form that does not match what we actually find, while an asterisk following a reconstructed form indicates an unattested form that can be confidently reconstructed on the basis of the rest of the paradigm.
Abbreviations

abl. ablative
acc. accusative
adj. adjective
adv. adverb
C any consonant
col. column
conj. conjunction
dat. dative
Etr. Etruscan
f. feminine
fn. footnote
fut. future
gen. genitive
Gk. Greek
impv. imperative
inf. infinitive
IT Iguvine Tables (Rix 2002)
l. line
Lat. Latin
loc. locative
Luc. Lucretius
m. masculine
Mart. Martial
Mc. Marrucinian
n. neuter
neg. negative
nom. nominative
OLat. Old Latin
Osc. Oscan
P. Paelignian
perf. perfect

xiii
List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PIE</td>
<td>Proto-Indo-European</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pl.</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pres.</td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sg.</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subj.</td>
<td>subjunctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.</td>
<td>Umbrian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>any vowel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vest.</td>
<td>Vestinian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voc.</td>
<td>vocative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>