Linguistic Contact in Prehistoric Italy: At The Origins of the Placename *Imola*

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This paper explores possible connections between the Indo-European roots **yem-/*jem-* and **am-* (**me-*) and the Etruscan stem *am-* through the analysis and reconstruction of the pre-Latin etymology of the Italian placename *Imola* (Bologna, Emilia-Romagna). The evaluation of plausible links between Indo-European (Italic and, especially, Celtic) and Etruscan in this area, in the specific field of historical toponomastics, could allow relevant considerations inherently in the notions of reuse and refunctionalization of roots pertaining to different languages and linguistic families in the (mainly Prehistoric or Proto-historic) toponymy of border areas. The placename *Imola* is, therefore, reconstructed through a "convergent" methodology that takes into account the possibility of different and heterogeneous influences in the naming process. The work starts from the analysis of the Indo-European root **yem-/*jem-* inferring the possibility of contacts between Indo-Europeans and Etruscans in the area of the inhabited center. The proposal of possible linguistic interexchange envisages the hypothesis of a semantic alignment between the Indo-European root **yem-/*jem-* and the Etruscan stem *am-* or an analogy between the two bases and the Indo-European theme **am-* (**me-*). The conclusions (a plausible contact and alignment between Indo-European and Etruscan in a border area) of this paper could be relevant also in the field of historical semantics and in the re-interpretation of Etruscan stem *am-*. The study, therefore, highlights the possibility of contacts and interexchange, in border areas, between different languages and linguistic families.

KEYWORDS Imola, Indo-European roots **yem-/*jem-* and **am-* (**me-*), Celtic, Italic, Etruscan stem *am-*, reuse and refunctionalization of word-roots and (loan) words, linguistic contact and alignment

Introduction and historical overview

Imola (geographic coordinates 44°21′12″N 11°42′51″E) is an Italian town in the Province of Bologna (region Emilia-Romagna), situated along the ancient *Via Æmilia*, at the point where the Apennine valley of the Santerno river joins the Po valley (Montanari, 2000: passim; Nanetti, 2008: passim; Nanetti and Giberti, 2014: passim).

The area where the present-day city is located was already inhabited in Prehistoric and Proto-historic times (between 8000 and 3000 years ago, during the Neolithic and the Metal Ages, but the origins of the settlement of the area can be traced back to the Upper Paleolithic). A Villanovan village is attested in the Pontesanto locality, on the *Via Æmilia*, after the archaeological excavations that date back to the 1999–2000 biennium. Umbrian populations settled in Romagna and Umbria between the sixth and fifth centuries BC, also in the territory of Imola. The area of Monte Castellaccio (d'Imola) is a testimony of these settlements (perhaps chronologically dating back, at least in part, to the most remote ages), while the seventy-seven graves of the Montericco necropolis represent the most extreme advancing point of Umbrian people towards the West (Montanari, 2000: 35–52).

The use of a route that, for unavoidable or traditional functional reasons, connected Rimini (*Arimna*) with Bologna (*Velzna/Felzna*) can be traced back at least to the Etruscans. The route dates between the fifth and fourth centuries BC, spreading out at the foothills of the Apennine Mountains and at the intersection of the rivers and paths of Apennine valleys with the waterways of the Po valley. However, it is not possible to talk about "origins" when it is increasingly ascertained through the data from historical linguistics and palaeoanthropology that the piedmont, foothills, and other paths along waterways are a peculiar feature of the human movements in the Indo-European area; moreover, archaeology confirms that prehistoric populations usually established settlements at the confluence of two or more rivers or on bodies of water (Facchini, 1993: passim; Layton and Ucko, 2004: passim). During the same fifth and fourth centuries BC, among other things, Celtic populations (perhaps moving from Central Europe) settled along the whole Cispadane Italy, extending their presence to the borders of the Picenian and Umbrian territories.

The consolidation of this path as a road acquires historical visibility only in the context of the Roman interregional road infrastructure. In 220 BC the layout of the military road *Flaminia* from Rome to Fano was completed and allowed a faster access to the Po Valley. Its continuation to *Placentia* (Piacenza), for reasons related to the Second Punic War, was suspended and resumed only after 189 BC, when *Bona/Bononia* (Bologna) was founded after Romans had eradicated the last stands of the Gauls (the *Boii*), in 191 BC. The viability of the new road was provided in a very short time, just two years later. In 187 BC the *Via Æmilia* had the name from the consul Marcus Æmilius Lepidus (denomination still existing today, Marini Calvani, 2000: passim).

The *Via Æmilia* was linked to the re-establishment or new foundation of Roman settlements like *Caesena* (Cesena), *Forum Popilii* (Forlimpopoli), *Forum Livii* (Forlì), *Faventia* (Faenza), *Forum Cornelii* (Imola), *Claterna* (†), *Bononia* (Bologna), *Mutina* (Modena), *Regium Lepidi* (Reggio Emilia), *Tannetum* (Taneto di Gattatico), *Fidentia* (Fidenza), *Placentia* (Piacenza), and to the network of the relevant municipal districts.[1]

In Roman times the town had the name of *Forum Cornelii* or, less commonly, *Forum Cornelium*. In AD ca. 403, Prudentius connected the toponym to Lucius Cornelius Sulla ("Sylla Forum statuit Cornelius; hoc Itali urbem/ voc{it}ant ab ipso conditoris nomine").[2] This is commonly believed as an incorrect attribution, because of the very "late" age, around 82 BC, to which the foundation of the *forum* should be referred, even if the most ancient mention of *Forum Cornelii* dates back only to the *Epistulæ ad familiares* (XII, V) by Marcus Tullius Cicero (first century BC) and the archaeological findings do not preserve evidence that can be dated earlier than the first century BC (Nanetti, 2008: 90–97; Nanetti and Giberti, 2014: ch. 1, and ch. 4, doc. 1). Nevertheless, *Forum Cornelii* is commonly believed to have been founded by Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica (who defeated the *Boii* in 191 BC) or, with relatively less likelihood, by Gaius Cornelius Cethegus (consul in 197 BC, who fought against the *Boii*, the *Cenomani*, and the *Insubres*) or by Publius Cornelius Cethegus (consul in 181 BC, who managed the land division in the territory of Imola in 173 BC). The decline of the Roman town of *Forum Cornelii* seems to start in the third century, if after AD 255 historical sources do not indicate anymore the name of the *Curator Viæ Æmiliæ* (Nanetti, 2008: 92).

In any case, the Roman foundation of *Forum Cornelii* did not cause the disappearance of the pre-Roman village in the area of present-day *Castellaccio*, which was possibly called *Imola* since pre-Roman times. In fact, the existence of human settlements in the territory where the city of Imola is now located is the result of a single factor: that area is the place where the ancient road (the foothills east–west route) crosses the river Santerno that flows from south to north. A natural ford was seamless used, over the centuries, in order to facilitate the crossing of the river. That ford is currently known as *Le Lastre* (The Slabs); it connected two additional roads, with one coming from the neighboring valley of the river Senio and the other from the valley of the river Santerno. The role played by this natural ford in pre-Roman times was re-established during Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, when the section of the Roman road towards Faenza close to *Forum Cornelii* became a mire and impassable, and was finally deleted by the river Santerno (Nanetti and Giberti, 2014: passim). This "meeting place" was the aggregator of the human settlement, as it is demonstrated, in the field of historical toponomastics, by the following etymological reconstructions (by Francesco Perono Cacciafoco) about the origins of the placename *Imola* and of the river name *Santerno* and about possible contacts and exchanges, in the naming process of the toponym, between Indo-European (Italic — specifically Umbrian — and, especially, Celtic) and Etruscan speakers.

Etymological reconstruction of the placename *Imola*

The current (highly questionable and, in a way, "volatile") etymology (DTI, 328; Galassi, 1999: passim) of the placename *Imola* (*Jômla* in the *Emiliano-Romagnolo* dialect) derives the denomination from an unspecified Germanic anthroponym *Immilo*, crossed (without a valid historical-linguistic explanation in support of this hypothesis) with the name of *Via Æmilia* (Violi, 1982: 252–69; Gamillscheg, 1934–36: II, passim).

The ancient form of the *Santerno* river name, *Vatreno*, Latin *Vatrenus/Vaternus*, is a pre-Latin (Italic or, more likely, Celtic) hydronym, derived from the root

*uat- (Pokorny, 1959–69: 1113, 2), "to bend," "curve" + *(s)reu- (from which, for example, the ancient Greek verb ῥέω), "to stream," "to flow" (Pokorny, 1959–69: 1003), and, in fact, it bends in the vicinity of a sandstone massif of prehistoric origins — between five and two million years ago — just outside the town of Imola in the area currently called *Le Lastre*/The Slabs (Nanetti and Giberti, 2014: Abstract in English). The hydronym's etymological reconstruction sequence, therefore, could be the following, *Vatreno < *Uat-reu(-o) → *Uat-re(u)(-o) → *Uat-re(u)-o → *Uat-re(u)-n-o* (euphonic "n") = *Uat-re-n-o > *Uatreno > Vatreno*, Lat. *Vatrenus*/*Vaternus* (with change -tre- → -ter-), meaning "(flowing) bending river." The later transformation *Vatrenus → Vaternus → Santernus/Saternus (Santerno)*[3] could be explained on the basis of the assimilation of the river name to a Roman (but, in origin, Etruscan) gentilitial family name attested in that area, *Santernius* (CIL XI 6689), when speakers had already lost the original meaning of the same river name. Etymology, historical semantics, and hydro-geo-morphological analysis of the territory converge in the explanation of this hydronym and we can safely assume that — if we do not follow the unscientific and undocumented widespread reconstruction — the placename *Imola* is also pre-Roman.

The local language immediately preceding Latin (and, therefore, pre-Latin) in the area was the Gaulish of the *Boii*, *Senones*, and *Lingones*. This was a language that, at its turn, was conceivably preceded by an Italic — specifically Umbrian — substratum. Anyway, the first official (written) attestation of the placename is *Castrum Imolas* (maybe a regular plural or, rather, an archaic/Celtic genitive also due to the form *Castrum Imolæ*), reported by Paul the Deacon (*Historia Langobardorum*, II, 18) at the end of the eighth century AD, but referring to the territory before the Lombard conquest (Thomsen, 1947: 253–56; Nanetti and Giberti, 2014: ch. 4, doc. 7). As demonstrated on the basis of a historical and philological analysis by Andrea Nanetti and Mario Giberti (2014: ch. 3.2), the name *Imola* is linked to the settlement that was in the area of the present-day *Monte Castellaccio* (to be considered as the pre-Roman Imola). This village was located on the right bank of the Santerno (*Vatrenus*) river near the abovementioned natural ford called *Le Lastre* (The Slabs), used by the path coming from the right side of the valley of the river Santerno (*Vatrenus*), as well as by the tracks coming from the valley of the river Senio, and by the pre-Roman foothills path. This route remained in use until the end of the Middle Ages (even after the demolition of *Castrum Imolae* in 1222), being still visible in the local historical maps of the Modern Age (starting from the map of Imola possibly drawn by Danesio Maineri in 1473 and used with some updates by Leonardo da Vinci in 1502 in proposals for strengthening the fortifications of Imola).

The spellings/writings attested after *Imolas* (of *Castrum Imolas*), *Immola*, *Imula*, *Emola*, can be explained respectively as vulgarism,[4] cultism, and dialect form (in the *Emiliano-Romagnolo* dialect the Latin long stressed /i:/ becomes /e:/). The Dissimilatory Lateralization of Nasal Sequences, a Romance phonetic law, provides a simple passage /n/ → /l/ between Latin and Italian, for example *uenēnum > veleno*, "poison," *Bŏnōnĭa > Bologna*, *Hieronymus > Gerolamo (Geronimo)*, "Jerome." It is, however, subject to debate whether this is also true for /n/ when this comes after a /m/, because it is difficult to exactly understand if *Gemolo* (Saint's name) may be derived from *Gĕmĭnus* (as stated in some biographies, *Gĕmŭlus* is also attested as

an alternative form, not in the meaning of "plaintive," but as a variant of *Gĕmĭnus*, "twin," "geminous") or from *Hiemulus* or *Gemmulus* (forms attested for the same Saint's name) or from other (Polloni, 1966: 157).

It is necessary to consider that in Cisalpine Gaulish the initial word sequence /#je-/ becomes /i-/, assumed in (Vulgar) Latin as [i] (not a rounded high front vowel) and then equalized to the Latin phoneme /i:/ (long). If the just-mentioned Romance phonetic law is valid, the only possible source — in this position (beginning of a word not followed by palatal consonants) — of the Italian accented /i/ would correspond to /e/ in the *Emiliano-Romagnolo* dialect. Therefore, a Celtic etymon of <*Imola*> would be very likely **Jemonā*, "twin" (> Cisalpine Gaulish **Imonā*), female of **jemono-s* > Irish *emon* (the female of which, *emuin*, has an antecedent with a different theme, that is always Indo-European, **jemonī*). Unless this is not the equally regular corresponding form of ablauting/apophonic reduced radical degree, **imono-s* (in this case **jemono-s* would be "equable" of *emon*, rather than its "equate," therefore partially corresponding — but still regular — rather than totally corresponding). The *sema* linked to the meaning of "twin" may derive from the presence of more than one settlement (at least two), homologous and connected to each other, in Prehistoric and Proto-historic ages in the territory of Imola, where archaeological excavations provided evidence of human settlements in the areas of Montericco, Pontesanto, and Monte Castellaccio (Montanari, 2000: 35–52; Nanetti, 2008: 87–89).

*Jemonā is a secondary derivative of the Indo-European stem **yemo-* (**yem-*/**jem-*), "twin." If the Dissimilatory Lateralization of Nasal Sequences law was not working in the context of the nasal /m/ - /n/ , the Indo-European **yemo-* would remain valid to explain the first part of the name, while the final part of the same name could be interpreted as the second element of the compound, always Celtic, **olā*, "curve," "turn," "twist," "bend," "fold," "loop," "spiral" (> Irish [7]*ol*), from Indo-European **h_3olah_a* ← √**h_3el-*, "to bend," or **h_1olh_aah_a* ← [6]√**h_1elh_a-*, "to push in one direction," "to move," "to go." It is a possible reference — as it appears self-evident — to the river Santerno (*Vatreno*) flowing in the territory of Imola and "bending" just in front of the Monte Castellaccio settlement, which was called *Imola* (Nanetti and Giberti, 2014: ch. 3.2).

It should be noted that this Indo-European compound **yemo-h_3olah_a*, or **yemo-h_1olh_aah_a*, "twin curve" (both forms become in late Indo-European **yemolā*), would have produced even in the Italic **Jemolā* that the Cisalpine Gauls adopted, regularly transformed in **Imolā*, and that, at its turn, became, in Vulgar Latin, **Ịmola*.

The Etruscan hypothesis (or the Adolfo Zavaroni proposal) and its evaluation

The Etruscan hypothesis, proposed by Adolfo Zavaroni (2001: 281–306), does not directly imply a reconstruction of the placename *Imola*, but a sort of interpretation of the **yem-*/**jem-* root that would be juxtaposed or, rather, entirely replaced by the Etruscan (*)*am-* (< **H_2e-_mb_b-*, prefix + stem), changed in its semantics (not "to be," but "twin" and/or "curve") and in its function and aligned to the meaning of **yem-*/**jem-*. The Indo-European root **yem-*/**jem-*, in fact, in this proposal, seems to be completely replaced, indeed, by **H_2e-_mb_b-* > **amb(h)-* > **am-* = Etruscan *am-*.

Zavaroni's reconstruction shows some epistemological problems and contraindications, because it is difficult to connect the Indo-European root *yem-/*jem- with the Etruscan am- and, even if it would be possible, the direction would start from Indo-European to Etruscan and not vice versa.

The linguistic Prehistory preceding Indo-European seems to demonstrate the impossibility of a passage **/a/ > */ye/ (Mailhammer, 2011: 671–82; Vennemann, 1989: passim). It may be useful to clearly repeat again that it could be difficult also to propose a derivation from the Indo-European *yem-/*jem- to the Etruscan am-, but, theoretically, if they were linked, the hypothetical sequence would start always from Indo-European to Etruscan (also for chronological reasons).

It is relevant, anyway, to analyze some aspects of Zavaroni's proposal, with all the hermeneutical precautions that have been just reported. According to Zavaroni, the Etruscan words ame, amu(c)e/amuke > amce would not be related to a "hypothetical" Etruscan verb (*)am- in the meaning of "to be," as it is in accordance with the traditional reconstruction, but to a root expressing the sema of "to redouble" and/or "pair," "couple." This, in principle, seems to link, in the reconstruction of the placename Imola, the Indo-European milieu with the Etruscan one, in a dialectics providing linguistic interexchange and contacts according to the interpretative key of reuse and refunctionalization of toponymic and hydronymic word-roots in an area (the present-day Emilia-Romagna) where Etruscan and Indo-European languages in a certain time period had to coexist, perhaps interpenetrating (at least within some limits) each other.

Alessandro Morandi (1984: I, 10–11; 1991: 79) has proposed an Indo-European stem for the words ame and amce, assuming that they are voices of the verb "to be." But it seems difficult to link the Etruscan am- with a root *es-, because it appears as unknown, in Etruscan, a hypothetical passage -s-m- > -m- either with lengthening of the preceding vowel or with redoubled consonant. The sm group, not uncommon, seems stable, in a language in which even zn, sn, zr > sr appear, at their turn, stable. In addition, the preterit am(u)ce < *es-m-ce would have a -m- that could derive only from a first person (mi) or from a hypothetical Osco-Umbrian infinite *es-um. In any case, the "sequence" ame, amuce, ama does not justify, in itself, the automatic assumption of the meaning "to be" (all these notations have always followed the specific analyzed proposal).

According to Adolfo Zavaroni, it is possible to hypothesize that amce is associated in particular with the words puia, "wife," and zilaθ, a position/rank — in the Etruscan society — that involves more people (Maggiani, 1996 [1998]: 95–138), because it means "co-, iunctus, -a" (Zavaroni, 2001: 288).

The term am(u)ce may indicate, following this reconstruction, "to be united," "to make a pair with," "co-." And this may be the explanation of the really frequent abovementioned connection of amce with the words puia, "wife," and zilaθ, magistracy, as discussed above, constituted by two or more persons. In extant inscriptions the word ame appears twice connected to puia, yet in most cases ame is a particle placed after the verb, where it seems to fulfill the same function of the Latin pre-verb "cum," "co-."

In the Tabula Cortonensis the words eprus ame could mean "co-operantur," "(they) sacrifice together." Moreover, we have the testimonies of five occurrences of

the particle *ama* connected with the word *ipa* (Zavaroni, 2001: 296–301). According to Adolfo Zavaroni, *ipa [...] ama* can be interpreted as "*simul [...] cum*" = "*pariter [...] cum.*"

Further Etruscan words beginning with (*)*am-* seem to belong to the same root of *ame*, *am(u)ce*. It is possible to mention, for example, *amθuras*, *amavunice*, *amnu*, *aminθ*. There is also a personage represented in several engravings on mirrors called *amuke*, a plausible echo of Greek Ἄμυκος. Nonetheless, *amuke* should have an Etruscan meaning.

The Indo-European root **yem-/*jem-*, "to pair," "to match," "couple," "to hold," "to defeat," "to geminate," "twin," has been used also in order to explain some Germanic words as Gothic *ibns*, "eben," Anglo-Saxon *efn*, *emn*, and Latin *imitor*, *æmulus*, for example. In Zavaroni's reconstruction it could be replaced with a hypothetical root *$*_mb_h$-*, "united," "pair," "together" > *$*H_2e$-$_mb_h$-* (prefix + stem) > **amb(h)-* > **am-* > *am-*, that might also explain words as Latin *amb-*, Greek ἀμφ-, Gaulish *amb-*. Moreover, this theme could be connected to Etruscan *ame*, *amce*, Latin *amussis*, *amuletum*, *Amulius*, etc., together with words like Etruscan *ipa* and *inpa*, Umbrian *ife*, *ifont*, Faliscan *efiles*, and Latin *ip(se)*.

The comparison between the terms with stem *amu-* and those with stem *ama-* does not show significant differences. It could be plausible to hypothesize that *amu-* expresses more frequently "to be equal," "to be similar," and *ama-* "to join," "to pair," "to be companion/mate," but other evidences of proof would be necessary. It is, in fact, even impossible to determine if *amce*, "joint," "conjunct," "united," derives from *amake* or *amuce*.

Pokorny (1959–69: 505) reconstructed the Latin *gĕmĭnus* (that 'hat wohl das *g-* von der Wurzel gem "greifen," "zusammenpressen" bezogen') from the Indo-European root **yem-/*jem* (/ **iem-*). Zavaroni (2001: 296–97) proposes a derivation from *$*g_/(m)$-* + *$*H_2mino$-* > *$*gvmmino$-* > *gemino-*. *$*H_2mino$-* would be composed by a stem *$*H_2m$-* resulting from a *$*_mb_h$-* pre-nasalized consonant (using the symbology of André Martinet). Latin *ambo*, Greek ἄμφω, Gothic *bai*, Lithuanian *abù*, Italian *ambo*, German *beide* are linked with some particles (that have the value of prepositions), Latin *amb-*, Greek ἀμφί, Gothic *bi*, Gaulish *ambi-*, Old Irish *imb-*, *imm-*, Breton *am-*. It is necessary to note, however, that the root **ambhi/*mbhi* (Pokorny, 1959–69: 34–35) seems to have the original meaning of Latin *par*, "companion," "consort," "coupled," "equal," "at both sides," "around."

Gothic *ibns*, "eben," Norse *jafn*, *jamn*, Anglo-Saxon *efn*, *emn*, Old High German *eban* are connected by Pokorny (1959–69: 505) to the Indo-European root **yem-/*jem-*, following the passage *ibna* * < **imná-* < **jemnó-*, while Norse *Ymir*, commonly understood as "Zwitter," could come from Germanic **jumijáz* < IE *$*i_em(i)jós$*. According to Zavaroni, the stem *$*_mb_h$-*, "equal," "joint," could be attributable both to Germanic **ibna*, **imna* (Gothic *ibns*, "eben") and to Germanic **ba-* (Gothic *bai* and *bi*). The pre-nasalized initial *$*_mb_h$-* may assume a form *$*H_2e_mb_h$-* > **amb(h)-* that could explain the Latin *amb-*, Greek ἀμφ-, and Gaulish *amb-*.[5] *$*_mb_h$-* could also be considered as the root of other words. The Germanic **i/na-* has been connected to the Latin *imitor*, *imago*, *æmulor*, whose original meaning is "make equal," "make similar." For this reconstruction to be valid, in Latin it would be necessary to assume

a reduction $*_mb_b$- > $*imb_b$- > $*im$- (it could be difficult to explain the diphthong in *æmulus*, perhaps due to the influence of *æquus*).

According to Zavaroni, if the fall of b_b- to m- occurs in $*imb_b$-, then a homologous "fade" of b_b- even in the parallel form $*H_2e_mb_b$- > $*amb_b$- > $*am$- > am- could be plausible. Through this hypothesis it should be possible to explain the etymology of some Latin words as well as the Etruscan *ame*, *am(u)ce*. In *amussis*, "level (useful for the *Ein-ebnung*)," *am*- would correspond to the Germanic $*ib$-n-, "to equalize" > "to level." It would be possible to postulate Etruscan origins (< $*amust$-is) inherently in *amussis*. And it could be plausible to reconstruct from the stem (*)*am*- also *amita*, "father's sister," and with this figure, in the Roman family, the brother's wife and her children probably had a special relationship (Italian *comare*, "godmother" < "*cum matre*," "godmother," for example, in christenings). Also the name of the mythical *Amulius* could be analyzed according to this interpretation. He is either the "uncle" < Latin *par*, *coniunctus*, "*cum patre*," Italian *compare*, of Romulus and Remo and/or the "pretending" usurper. Therefore, *amulētum* would define the object that "simulates" a person, from which one must not be separated, as if it was a sort of "double" and secret "protector." At the same time *amœnus* could derive from $*ame$-$venos$, "*complacens*," or, alternatively, from the Etruscan *amavun*-, "to compensate" (Zavaroni, 2001: 293–95). The Latin *amīcus* would be a synonym of the Latin *par*, "companion," "partner," "joint," "equal," and the original meaning of *amāre* would have had to be "be companions," before shifting to indicate "to wish the company of (someone)," then "to love someone." The original *sema* of *dēmum*, *dēmus* < *dē* + *amu*- (or < *dē* + *emu*-), "precisely," "exactly," could be "away from the group." At its turn, the ancestral meaning of *iam* < $*e(i)$-am would be "together with that" > "at that time." The stem $*yem$-/$*jem$- has been connected with *redimiō* (< $*red$ + $amiō$), "sheaf," "interlacement," already by Pokorny (1959–69: 505). Through another vocalism, according to Zavaroni, it could be possible also to reconstruct *omnes*, "everyone" < "those who are together," "those who are united." The same notion is showed by the Armenian *amēn*, *amēn-ein* that is connected to $*sem$-/$*semo$- "in eins zusammen, samt, mit" (Pokorny, 1959–69: 903).

We have just described, so far, the substance of Adolfo Zavaroni's proposal. In order to try to analyze this position, without taking into account the "extreme" interpretations of the same (the "non-existence" of $*yem$-/$*jem$-), thoroughly considering the two roots, Indo-European $*yem$-/$*jem$- and Etruscan *am*-, and interpreting the second through the meaning proposed by Zavaroni, we can attempt to link the two stems in a "convergent" way, without one excluding the other. Inherently in the root $*yem$-/$*jem$- it could be possible to talk, in fact, about an Indo-European hereditary linguistic "coinage" shared by Italic and Celtic. Even if the Etruscan *am*- was connected to $*yem$-/$*jem$-, the naming process of the placename *Imola* would concern only $*yem$-/$*jem$- and the derivation would be only from Italic and/or Celtic, without (for chronological reasons) the intervention of Etruscan. Etruscan, in fact, would not be involved in any case in the naming process, because it would be too "recent" for this kind of "coinage" and "obsolete," at this point, for a transmission to Latin. The right sequence of the onomastic composition of *Imola* should be 1)

Indo-European "coinage" → 2) Italic evolution → 3) passage through the Celtic, starting from Italic (if the "coinage" is not only and directly Celtic) → 4) passage in Latin, from Celtic.

At the basis of — and before — Italic and Celtic we have to consider their common ancestor, the Italo-Celtic (Late Western Indo-European), which was a regional Western Late Indo-European assuming the form of a singular collective linguistic "collector." Before the Etruscan, on the other hand, in the area, the substratum was constituted by Italic and Celtic, from the already differentiated Italo-Celtic.

In any case, the Celtic "mark" for *Imola*'s etymology, the Indo-European root **yem-/*jem-* (**iem-*), may have been associated, in the "sensitivity" and perception of speakers of that time, with the Etruscan *am-*, if we accept the semantics of *am-* proposed by Zavaroni. The naming process would have been Indo-European — Italic and Celtic or only and directly Celtic —, but, through the semantic relevancy and similarity, the placename could have been "clear" and "understandable" also according to Etruscan.

Conclusions

The reconstruction of the etymology of the placename *Imola* offers an interesting opportunity to test the most relevant aspect of the New Convergence Theory (Perono Cacciafoco, 2014: 79–98) about the possibility, in border areas, of linguistic contacts and interexchange between Indo-European and other languages, according to the point of view of the mutual reuse and refunctionalization, in the different systems of the various linguistic families (or languages), of word-roots and/or (loan)words (Perono Cacciafoco, 2013a: 7–25; 2013b, 91–107).

The territory of Imola, in Emilia-Romagna, was occupied by the Celts and the Indo-European "mark," in local toponymy, seems really strong. It is possible, however, to hypothesize, also in the naming process of the places of that area, an Etruscan influence (and/or sharing, and/or participation), due to the proximity of Etruscan towns and centers and to the mutual cultural, social, political, and economic relationships between Celts and Etruscan in that territory.

It seems plausible, therefore, if not to assume a sort of "double naming process" of Imola (Indo-European and Etruscan) or the possibility of the presence of two names (Celtic and Etruscan) for the town, to postulate, at least, a natural common participation in the final fixing of the placename (and in the perception of its meaning starting from different roots — pertaining to different languages — similar and aligned in their semantics). This Indo-European reconstruction of *Imola* takes into account also the analysis of the hydro-geo-morphology and historical topography of the territory (Nanetti and Giberti, 2014: passim), with the semantic developments linked to the root(s) involved in the naming process of the place.

In Zavaroni's proposal the discretion (or arbitrariness) moments in the *iūdicium* are two, the lexical interpretation of the texts and the recognition of inter-linguistic segments (synonymous words in different languages) on which to reconstruct (and to build) the historical phonetics.

The difficulties connected to the "Etruscan hypothesis" (certainly open to new developments) about (*)*am-* = "to pair," that could imply relationships between

Indo-European and Etruscan in a possible "common" origin (naming process) of the placename *Imola* (**yem-*/**jem-* & **am-* [**me-*]), reside also in two facts: 1) the prenasalization, in Indo-European, is a highly hypothetical phenomenon, quite uncertain, so it is very difficult to base the "rewriting" and the reinterpretation of a root on this linguistic postulate; 2) the interpretation of Etruscan texts and documentation is strongly debatable and absolutely not confirmed (Etruscan is still an undeciphered language, although some scholars could disagree), and this is, with the current available philological bibliography, really an unbridgeable gap.

If Zavaroni's semantic interpretation of the Etruscan (*)*am-* was confirmed, without the elimination of the root **yem-*/**jem-*, it would be possible, in any case, to compare this stem with the same root **yem-*/**jem-* and this fact, as discussed earlier, would be an enormous breakthrough in the study of the naming process of *Imola* by considering it as the product of a natural common "participation" or "perception" (by Celts and Etruscans) in the final fixing of the placename.

If we would accept Zavaroni's *sema* "cum," "with," for *am-*, moreover, the same Etruscan *am-* might be connected to the Indo-European root **am-* (**me-*), in the meaning of "grab," "seize" $< \sqrt{*h_2 amh_3}$-, "to proceed with vigor," "to front," "to catch," "to grab," "to seize," "to firmly insist on something," "to establish," "to confirm by oath," "to suffer," from which the Latin *amō* (Pokorny, 1959–69: 35).

The possibility of mutual linguistic contacts and interexchange in that specific area of the Emilia-Romagna Italian region is, in any case, really high, and the probability of a double influence (and/or sharing, and/or participation) in the naming process of places appears plausible. The linguistic link between Celts and Etruscans in that territory seems to be reasonable also according to the evidence of cultural, social, political, and economic contacts between the two populations.

In conclusion, the linguistic analysis presented in this paper points to a natural reuse and refunctionalization (by speakers in the area) of roots and/or (loan)words between the different linguistic systems involved in this naming process. This "convergent" approach demonstrates how to elaborate and how to provide a pattern finalized to return the right and remote etymology of Prehistoric and Proto-historic placenames.

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Notes

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[1] Cf. Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, III, 115 ff.

[2] Cf. *Peristefanon* IX. *Passio Cassiani Forocorneliensis*, vv. 1–2.

[3] *Vaternus* in Martial, *Epigrammata*, III, 67, 2; *Vatrenus/Saternus* in Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, III, 120; *Santernus* in Frontin, *Stratagemata*, 3, 14, 3.

[4] Cf., e.g., *camera non cammara* in the *Appendix Probi*, l. 84 (Baehrens, 1922: 5–8, passim; Rohlfs, 1969³: 16).

[5] According to André Martinet (1987: 32) "Le même élément *mbhi* apparaît dans le grec *a-mphi* avec un préfixe *H2e-* et, avec un degré zéro du préfixe, dans le vieil-anglais *ymb* (*H2/_bhi*). Dans le latin *ambo*, le -*i* a été remplacé par la finale -*o* du duel. Les équivalents germaniques d'*ambo*, supposent un degré vocalique plein *mbhey* de la particule, qui est suivie, en germanique occidental, d'un élément démonstratif, d'où angl. *both*, all. *beide*."

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