

PAROLA

Una nozione unica per una ricerca multidisciplinare

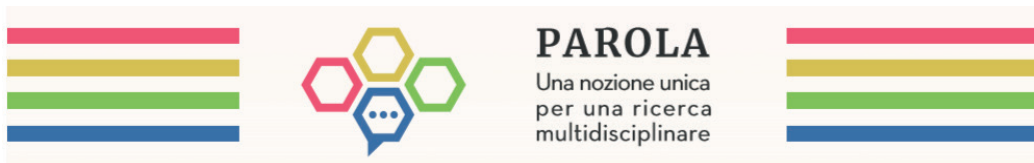
a cura di
B. Aldinucci, V. Carbonara, G. Caruso,
M. La Grassa, C. Nadal, E. Salvatore

Studi e ricerche

2019

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Università per Stranieri di Siena

Edizioni Unistrasi



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PREMESSA

L'elaborazione di questo volume nasce da due presupposti: la convinzione della centralità delle riflessioni sulla parola nelle scienze umane, e la volontà di aprire un proficuo spazio di riflessione per giovani ricercatori.

Volendo partire dal secondo presupposto, facciamoci accompagnare dalla parola “artistica”: sono passati venticinque anni da quando Jovanotti intonava una canzone manifesto degli anni Novanta come *Io penso positivo*, e vent'anni da quando i Lunapop cantavano una giovinezza spensierata tra i colli bolognesi in sella a una *50 special*. Con l'arrivo, poi, della crisi economica del 2008 un'intera generazione ha vissuto l'ossessione dei *Soldi* (titolo non a caso vincente a Sanremo nel 2019) e della stabilità che non arriva; insomma, si è riconosciuta in quel film del 2008 dal titolo, che oggi suona addirittura come un auspicio, *Generazione mille euro*. All'interno di questa generazione ci sono anche, e pienamente, i giovani ricercatori, speranzosi di non divenire tristi epigoni della famigerata banda delle «migliori menti d'Italia» protagonista della fortunatissima commedia del 2013 *Smetto quando voglio*. A questa generazione è stata rivolta una *call for papers* per un volume multidisciplinare, che si è voluto incentrare su un cardine – in diacronia e ancor più in sincronia – delle scienze umane: la parola.

La parola è l'oggetto di studio di molte discipline umanistiche (la letteratura, la filologia, la linguistica), ed è allo stesso tempo uno degli scopi dell'apprendimento linguistico. La riflessione sulla parola permette dunque di mostrare quanto sia salda la continuità tra le ricerche condotte in ambito umanistico, e quanto i diversi settori di ricerca si sfiorino concentrandosi spesso sul medesimo oggetto d'indagine. Questo ancor più in epoca di rivoluzione digitale, mentre non pochi concordano con quanto a suo tempo sostenne il ricercatore di informatica ceco-statunitense Frederick Jelinek: «Every time I fire a linguist, the performance of the speech recognizer goes up».¹ L'attuale ricerca sull'intelligenza artificiale, difatti, sta tentando di trasformare il concetto di parola in un dato numerico, in un elemento statistico che può ricorrere

¹ Julia Hirschberg, 'Every time I fire a linguist, my performance goes up', and other myths of the statistical natural language processing revolution, 15th National Conference on Artificial Intelligence [July 29, 1998], Madison, Wisconsin.

più o meno plausibilmente in un determinato contesto linguistico (anch'esso determinato algebricamente, si capisce). Tuttavia, come osservato in una recente analisi sull'argomento, «associare parole ad azioni è naturalmente qualcosa di molto diverso rispetto alla comprensione umana».² Le riflessioni presenti in questo volume vanno nella direzione opposta, nel tentativo – sempre più cogente e, crediamo, necessario – di fissare un equilibrio tra le esigenze delle scienze informatiche e la realtà della comunicazione (quotidiana, letteraria, tra parlanti di lingue diverse) che è, e sempre resterà, un affare umano.

In questa *Premessa* possiamo dunque porci, per paradosso solo apparente, delle domande *ex post* rispetto alla redazione del libro. Vale ancora la pena interrogarsi su questioni minute come l'etimologia delle parole, la loro storia, il loro valore nell'apprendimento linguistico? Per i curatori di un volume di questo tipo, la risposta è tautologica. Azzardando una previsione sul futuro delle scienze linguistiche, pur consapevoli che le previsioni su questo piano, come sull'evoluzione delle lingue e dei linguaggi, possono essere soggette a nette smentite, possiamo ipotizzare che in futuro andrà rimodellato l'approccio scientifico delle scienze umane: che potrà esistere una filologia che lavori anche in funzione delle *digital sciences*; una linguistica che concentri i suoi sforzi sulla semantica, nel tentativo di colmare l'evidente lacuna di qualsiasi applicazione digitale per la lettura, trascrizione e traduzione di testi: lo scioglimento della pluralità semantica di ciascun termine di una lingua; una didattica delle lingue che tenga conto della presenza sempre più pervasiva delle tecnologie educative e delle applicazioni di traduzione simultanea, senza rinunciare all'assunto per cui la comunicazione è realtà umana, non tecnica.

In questa prospettiva, questo volume costituisce dunque un contributo di giovani ricercatori alla ricerca scientifica nell'ambito delle scienze umane, ma soprattutto ambisce a rappresentare un punto di partenza per una nuova via. Siamo riusciti a riunire, persistendo sulla strada della ricognizione musicale con la menzione di una canzone “generazionale” del 2002, *La grande onda* dei giovani ricercatori italiani di discipline umanistiche. E, rileggendo il testo di quel brano, viene in mente che davvero «qui il futuro è già domani», e che sarebbe dunque auspicabile che si incontrino e dialoghino ricercatori non solo di discipline, ma anche di ambiti diversi. E incontri di studio e pubblicazioni comuni possono rappresentare, a nostro avviso, lo stimolo per una più proficua collaborazione tra chi guarda alla comunicazione come a un fatto tecnico-scientifico prevedibile, e chi invece la osserva sotto la lente descrittiva, per sua natura basata sull'imprevedibilità dei risultati, come non prevedibile al 100% è qualsiasi azione e reazione umana.

2 Mirko Tamosanis, *Lingue e intelligenza artificiale*, Roma, Carocci, 2018, p. 19.

I curatori

Per la riuscita di questa pubblicazione dobbiamo sinceri ringraziamenti per la collaborazione organizzativa a Cristina Placido, Ibraam G. M. Abdelsayed, Irene Fioravanti, Maria Vittoria D'Onghia, Martina Bellinzona e Monica Alba.

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Dedichiamo questo lavoro alla collega e amica Sara Panichi.

Siena, dicembre 2019

Benedetta Aldinucci, Valentina Carbonara, Giuseppe Caruso, Matteo La Grassa, Cèlia Nadal Pasqual, Eugenio Salvatore

PROTO-ROMANCE **PĪK*(*K*)- ‘SMALL, LITTLE’ AND
PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN **PEIK*- ‘CUT (OFF),
CARVE, FASHION’: ON THE ORIGIN OF ITALIAN
PICCOLO, SPANISH *PEQUEÑO*, SICILIAN *PICCA*,
LATIN **PĪCUS* ‘SMALL’ AND *PĪCUS* ‘DIVINE
FASHIONER; WOODPECKER’¹

1. INTRODUCTION

As is well known, Italian (It.) and the other Romance languages trace their origins back to Proto-Romance (PRom.), the direct descendant of the Vulgar Latin language spoken in the Roman Empire. Latin (Lat.), in turn, is part of the Indo-European (IE) language family, which groups together several (originally) Eurasian languages (inter alia, Greek, Sanskrit, Tocharian, Lithuanian, Icelandic, and English) which developed from a common prehistoric ancestor, conventionally called Proto-Indo-European.

¹ It is a pleasant duty to express my gratitude to Marina Benedetti, Francesco Burrone, Andrea Lorenzo Covini, Saverio Dalpedri, Paola Dardano, Paolo Gresti, Stefan Höfler, Daniel Kölligan, Jan-Niklas Linnemeier, and Tatiana Quintas, for their critique, suggestions, or help regarding specific aspects of this research, as well as to José Luis García Ramón, who engaged in detailed discussion of the final version of the present contribution. I also wish to thank Robert Tegethoff for improving my English version. Final responsibility remains my own. Texts and translations of Greek and Latin sources are adapted from de Melo 2011 (Plautus), Perrin 1914 (Plutarch), and Rackham 1938 (Plinius).

an (PIE). This proto-language thus relates to IE languages as Proto-Romance does to Romance languages (though a substantial difference lies in the fact that the former is a prehistoric language): as we shall see, an integrated approach to both through the instruments of historical linguistics may provide us with important insights into problematic issues of language history, etymology, and semantic change.

It. *piccolo*, *picciolo*, and *piccino*, all meaning ‘small, little’, are currently traced back to PRom. **pĭk(k)*- ‘small, little’, a root which also underlies several further Romance formations, for an overview of which see the comprehensive works by Ivan Pauli (1919: 255 ff.) and Przemysław Dębowiak (2017: *passim*). Within the scope of the present research, we shall exclusively take into consideration a selection of these formations (in addition to the already mentioned Italian adjectives), namely: Spanish (Sp.) *pequeño* ‘small, little’; Portuguese (Port.) *peco* ‘stunted, dumb, imbecile’ and *pequeno* ‘small, little’; Sicilian (Sic.) *picciottu* ‘kid’, *picciriddu* ‘child’, and *picca* ‘small quantity, a little’; Old Logudorese Sardinian (OLog.) *pikinnu* ‘small, little’; Romanian (Rum.) *pic* ‘drop, small quantity’ and Megleno-Romanian (Meg.-Rum.) *pică* ‘small quantity, a little’.

This lexical family is of unclear etymology, as it appears to have no evident parallels in Latin. According to a popular hypothesis,² PRom. **pĭk(k)*- ‘small, little’ should be analyzed as an expressive/onomatopoetic root and traced back to “baby talk”, together with other (more or less) similar Romance roots attested by words meaning ‘small, little’, such as French (Fr.) *petit* or Meg.-Rum. *puṭon*.³ The connection between these words and the family of It. *piccolo*, however, is exclusively supported by either trivial correspondences which are likely to be due to chance, e.g. the initial *p*-,⁴ or by common grammatical features which by no means require a common etymology, namely their formation by means of diminutive suffixes, which are frequently attested by terms for ‘small’ (cfr. *infra*, par. 2.2). Moreover, as shown by Blasi *et al.* (2016: 10820), the two phones which appear to be most often associated with the concept ‘small’ in the world’s languages are the high front vowel [i] and the voiceless postalveolar affricate [tʃ], whereas the consonants [p] and [k] seem to lack this association, with [p] rather being unusually frequent in words meaning ‘full’.

According to a further theory, PRom. **pĭk(k)*- may reflect a loan from a Celtic language (cf. e.g. Monlau 1946, s.v. *pequeño*): if this were the case, the only possible candidate would be Insular Celtic **bekko*- ‘small, little’ (Old Irish *bec*, Middle Welsh

2 This is the interpretation found in most etymological dictionaries of the Romance languages: cf., inter alia, REW, s.v. *pikk*-; Devoto 1966, s.v. *piccolo*; DEI, s.v. *picca*³; DELI, s.v. *piccino*; Corominas - Pascual 1980-1991, s.v. *pequeño*.

3 Cf. Dębowiak 2017: 176-179 for a schematic and comprehensive overview.

4 Cf. e.g. Lat. *parvus*, *paucus*, and *paulus*, all reflexes of a Proto-Italic root **pau*- ‘little, few’ (de Vaan 2008, s. vv.), which has beyond doubt no etymological connection to PRom. **pĭk(k)*- ‘small, little’.

bach ‘id.’), of unclear etymology (cf. Matasović 2009, s.v.). The reflex of a Celtic loan **bekko-* ‘small, little’, however, would have attested initial **be-* as well (e.g. It. **beccolo* rather than *piccolo*), cf. It. *becco* ‘beak’, the reflex of Lat. *beccus* ‘id.’, a loan from Gaulish **bekko-* ‘id.’ (cf. Suet. *Vit.* 18).

On the assumption that the analysis of Romance formations may benefit from the insights of IE historical linguistics when more straightforward Latin comparanda appear to be absent, the present contribution argues for a possible etymology of It. *piccolo* and its Romance cognates as reflexes of the PIE root **peǵk-* ‘cut’. Firstly, an unattested Latin adjective **pīc-us* ‘small, little’ will be shown to underlie all Romance formations (par. 2), both simplex ones (par. 2.1) and more complex derivatives (par. 2.2). Secondly, a case will be made for its analysis as the outcome of a PIE formation **peǵk-ó-* ‘who/that is cut (passive meaning); who/that cuts (agentive meaning)’ (par. 3), the reconstruction of which finds support in both semantic (par. 3.1) and formal parallels (par. 3.2) in Romance, Latin, and other IE languages.

2. PROM. **PĪK-U/PĪKK-U* AS REFLEXES OF LAT. **PĪCUS* ‘SMALL, LITTLE’

Let us first turn our attention to It. *piccolo* and its Romance cognates, the reflexes of Lat. **pīcus* ‘small, little’ through its two possible Proto-Romance outcomes, namely **pīk-u* and the secondary outcome **pīkk-u*, by the so-called “*littera* Rule” (or “*Iuppiter* Rule”).⁵ No Romance reflex has kept unaltered both the semantics and the formation type of the Latin adjective: most of them have undergone either semantic shift or substantivization (par. 2.1) or derivation by means of suffixes (par. 2.2), a distribution in accordance with Jerzy Kuryłowicz’s (1945-1949) “Fourth Law of Analogy” (the morphologically re-characterized form retains the primary function, the more archaic form is restricted to a secondary function).⁶

2.1 Port. *peco* ‘stunted, dumb, imbecile’, Rum. *pic* ‘drop, small quantity’, Sic. *picca* ‘small quantity, a little’, and Meg.-Rum. *pică* ‘id.’

From a formal point of view, Lat. **pīcus* ‘small, little’ is directly reflected by some simplex formations, most of which have substantival or adverbial semantics. The only adjective among them is Port. *peco* ‘stunted (of plants); dumb, imbecile (of people)’ (PRom. **pīkk-u*),⁷ attesting the same semantic shift as Port. *parvo* ‘idiot’ from Lat.

5 According to this phonological law, for reasons yet unknown, a Latin sequence *-i/ūTT-* may result in *-i/ūTT-*, cf. the variants *lītera* vs. *littera* and *Iūpiter* vs. *Iūppiter* (all attested); the co-existence of both outcomes was most probably due to sociolinguistic variation. Cf. further Benedetti 1996; Meiser 1998: 77; Weiss 2009: 144; 2010; Benedetti - Marotta 2014; Sen 2015: 42-78.

6 As pointed out to me by Andrea Lorenzo Covini.

7 For the phonological development, cf. Sp. and Port. *seco* ‘dry’ from PRom. **sikk-u* :

parvus ‘small’ (Corominas-Pascual 1980-1991, s.v. *pequeño*).

The semantics of Rum. *pic* ‘drop, small quantity’ (PRom. **pīk-u*)⁸ reflects those of the substantivized Lat. neut. nom.-acc. sg. **pīc-um*, whereas Sic. *picca* ‘small quantity, a little’ (PRom. **pīkk-a*) and Meg-Rum. *pică* ‘id.’ (PRom. **pīk-a*), employed both as substantives and as adverbs,⁹ are the reflexes (with and without the effects of the “*littera* Rule”, respectively) of the Lat. neut. nom.-acc. pl. **pīc-a*. The use of the neut. nom.-acc. of an adjective meaning ‘small’ as a substantive meaning ‘small quantity’ or as an adverb meaning ‘a little’ has parallels in Latin, cf. *parum* ‘too little’ (**parvom*, neut. nom.-acc. sg. of *parvus* ‘small, little’) and *paulum* ‘a little’ (neut. nom.-acc. sg. of *paulus* ‘small, little’).

Finally, the etymologically unclear Insular Celtic **bekko-* ‘small, little’ may be a loan from Lat. **pīccus*, as noted already by Sophus Bugge (apud Stokes 1879-80: 345 n. 1). The pronunciation of Lat. /i/ became close to [e] pretty early, cf. e.g. spellings like *vecēs* for *vīcēs* in the inscriptions in Pompeii,¹⁰ and the substitution of Lat. **p-* by Insular Celtic **b-* may have further parallels in loans like Old Irish *baramail* from Lat. *parabola*.¹¹

2.2 It. *piccolo*, *pìcciolo*, *piccino*, Sp. *pequeño*, Port. *pequeno*, Sic. *picciriddu*, *picciottu*, OLog. *pikinnu*

Several reflexes of PRom. **pīk-u/pīkk-u* arose within the single Romance daughter branches by means of various derivational suffixes, mostly with diminutive function, as is often the case with terms referring to the semantic field of smallness, cf., e.g., Italo-Romance formations like *bambo* ‘child; dumb’ and *bamb-occio*, *bamb-ino*, *bamb-olo*; *fante* ‘servant’ (originally ‘child’, cf. Lat. *infans* ‘id.’) and *fanci-ullo*, *fant-ino*, *fant-occio*, *fant-olino*; *citto* ‘child; kid’ and *citt-ino*, *cit-olo*, *citt-arello*.¹²

It. *piccolo* may be analyzed as the reflex with post-tonic gemination¹³ of **pīc-olo*, a derivative with diminutive suffix *-olo* (a learned reflex of Lat. *-ulus*, as is well known) of **pīc-o*, the expected outcome of PRom. **pīk-u*.¹⁴

Lat. *sicc-us*.

8 In fact, **pīkk-u* would have yielded Rum. **pec*, cf. *sec* ‘dry’ from PRom. **sīkk-u* : Lat. *sicc-us*.

9 Cf. e.g. Rohlfs 1968-70: III, § 291, for the possible uses of Sic. *picca*.

10 On which cf. Väänänen 1981: 36; Weiss 2009: 508 n. 38.

11 I am grateful to Jan-Niklas Linnemeier for pointing out this example to me; cf. Stokes 1879-80: 345 n. 1 for further possible cases of substitution of Latin *p-* by Celtic *b-*.

12 On these formations, cf. Pauli 1919: 34ff; 236ff; 382. Cf. also the various Italo-Romance formations meaning ‘small’ attesting reflexes of Lat. *-innus* (Rohlfs 1968-70: III, 424).

13 On this phenomenon, occurring in proparoxytone words (It. *màccchina* ‘machine’: Lat. *machina*; It. *legittimo* ‘legitimate’: Lat. *legitimum* ‘lawful’), cf. Rohlfs 1968-70: I, 320-321.

14 I am especially indebted to Saverio Dalpedri and Paolo Gresti for useful discussion on

Sp. *pequeño* and Port. *pequeno* were formed by means of reflexes of the Latin diminutive suffix *-innus* (on which cf. Niedermann 1954: 338-342; Rohlf 1968-70: III,424; Adams 2013: 569-570) from the regular outcomes of PRom. **pīkku*, namely Sp. **peco* and Port. *peco* (on which cf. +, 2.1). These formations must certainly be old, but not old enough to have undergone palatalization of /k/ before a front vowel.¹⁵ OLog. *pikinnu*, attested in medieval documents also as *pichinnu* and *pickinu*, was probably derived from PRom. **pīk-u* by means of the same suffix.

In contrast, Italo-Romance formations like It. *pìcciolo*, *piccino* and Sic. *picciottu*, *picciriddu* attest a palatalized outcome /tʃ/, which may have spread from derivatives in which the /k/ occurred before suffixes with initial front vowel, as in the case of It. *picc-ino*. Alternatively, these formations may reflect variants with a PRom. suffix **-jū* (cf. It. *goccia* : PRom. **gutt-ja*, variant of Lat. *gutt-a*), namely **pīk-jū*, resulting in It. **piccio* (: *pìcciolo*, perhaps *piccino*), and **pīkk-jū*, resulting in Sic. **picciu* (: *picciottu*, *picciriddu*).¹⁶

3. LAT. **PĪCUS* ‘SMALL, LITTLE’ AS REFLEX OF PIE **PEĪK̑-ó-* ‘WHO/ THAT IS CUT’

Lat. **pīcus* ‘small, little’ (PRom. **pīk-u* and **pīkk-u*) may in turn be traced back to OLat. **peicos*,¹⁷ the outcome of PIE **peĪk̑-ó-*, a derivative of the CeC-ó- type (Nussbaum 2017: 243ff) of the verbal root **peĪk̑-* ‘cut (out), carve, fashion, adorn’ (LIV²: 465-466; Jackson 2002), attested, inter alia, by Vedic Sanskrit (Ved.) *pīmśá-ti* ‘id.’, Old Persian *a-pa-i-θa* ‘they adorned’, and Old Norse *fá* ‘depict, draw, paint’.¹⁸ There are two expected meanings of a PIE formation **peĪk̑-ó-*, namely (examples from Nussbaum 2017: 249):

(a) a passive meaning ‘who/that is cut’, cf. Lat. *fīd-us* ‘trusted, trusty’, reflex of **b^heĭd^h-ó-* ‘who/that is trusted’ (PIE **b^heĭd^h-* ‘(en)trust’, cf. Gk *πειθομαι* ‘id., believe, be persuaded’ : **b^héĭd^h-o/e-*);

(b) an agentive meaning ‘who/that cuts’, cf. Lat. *mer-us* ‘pure’ (*‘clear’, of liquids),

this matter.

15 Aliter Corominas - Pascual 1980-1991, s.v. *pequeño* (sound symbolism).

16 The Sicilian terms may reflect **pīk-jū* as well, but an analysis as reflexes of **pīkk-jū* may be supported by Sic. *picca*, which can only reflect **pīkk-a*.

17 For the phonological development, cf. e.g. Lat. *dīcerent*, outcome of OLat. *deicerent* (*Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*, 186 a.C.; cf. Weiss 2009: 101). The “littera Rule” is often attested by formations whose long *-ī/-ū-* is the reflex of an original diphthong *-ei-/ou-* (cf. Benedetti 1996), cf. e.g. Lat. *lītera* and *littera* (OLat. *leitera*), Lat. *lūpiter* and *lūppiter* (OLat. **Ioupiter*, reflecting a PIE formula **dġéu₂-pə₂tér-* ‘Father Sky’). On the connection between monophthongization and consonant gemination, cf. Benedetti-Marotta 2014.

18 Cf. also Gk *ποικίλος* ‘varicolored, manifold, cunning’, Gothic **faihs* in *filufaihs* ‘manifold’, Ved. *péśa-* ‘ornament’, and Lithuanian *paĩšas* ‘smut, dust-spot’. The semantics of this root were already rich in PIE itself (cf. Jackson 2002: 10-12).

reflex of **mer-ó-* ‘who/that sparkles’ (PIE **mer-* ‘sparkle’, cf. Gk μαρμαίρω ‘id.’ : **-mr-* *jó/é-*).

In the following paragraphs, the reconstruction of both meanings of PIE **peĭk-ó-* will be supported by semantic and formal parallels (par. 3.1 and 3.2, respectively) attested in Latin and Romance, as well as in other IE languages.¹⁹

3.1 Semantic parallels: from ‘cut, cropped’ to ‘small’

The semantic shift from PIE **peĭk-ó-* ‘who/that is cut’ to Lat. **pīc-us* ‘small’ finds support, inter alia, in the derivational and semantic history of (1) It. *corto*, (2) Eng. *short* and (3) Ved. *kṛdh-ú-*.

(1) It. *corto* ‘short’ (: Fr. *court*, Sp. *corto*, Port. *curto*) is a reflex of Lat. *curtus* ‘shortened, mutilated’, which may be traced back to PIE **kṛ-tó-* ‘cut, cropped’,²⁰ a verbal adjective of the root *(s)*ker-* ‘cut, scratch’ (LIV²: 556-557; cf. Gk κείρω ‘cut off, shave’; Arm. *k’erem* ‘scratch, scrape off’).

(2) Eng. *short* (OEng. *scort*) and Old High German *scurz* ‘short’ reflect PGmc **skurt-a-* ‘cut out, cropped’ (Heidermanns 1993, s.v.), a derivative of the root **skert-* ‘cut’ (cf. Old High German *scherze* ‘cut-out chunk’; Eng. *shirt* and *skirt*, both referring to ‘cut-out’ pieces of cloth).

(3) Ved. *kṛdh-ú-* ‘shortened, mutilated, small’ originally meant ‘cut, cropped’ as well, as a reflex of PIE *(s)*kerd^h-* ‘cut’ (EWAia, s.v.; LIV²: 558; cf. Old Irish *scerdaid* ‘peel, scrape off’; Lithuanian *skerdziù*, *skėrsti* ‘cut, slit’).

These parallels clearly attest that a semantic shift from ‘cut, cropped’ to ‘small’ is not only conceivable, but fairly common in the IE languages, reflecting a traditional (and fairly trivial) association between these concepts.

3.2 Formal parallels: Lat. *Pīcus* ‘(divine) fashioner’, *pīcus* ‘woodpecker’, and Gk *πικρός* ‘sharp, stinging, bitter’

Two Latin formations which are formally identical to **pīcus* ‘small, little’, namely (1) the theonym *Pīcus* and (2) the bird-name *pīcus* ‘woodpecker’, as well as (3) the Gk adjective *πικρός* ‘sharp, stinging, bitter’, may be traced back to the agentive meaning of PIE **peĭk-ó-*.

(1) Lat. *Pīcus*, name of “a deity native to Roman soil” (Ov. *Fasti* 3.291) and mythical king of pre-Roman Latium, is the expected outcome of PIE **peĭk-ó-* ‘who fashions’. The semantic shift of PIE **peĭk-* from ‘cut, carve’ to ‘fashion, adorn’ is well attested (cf. LIV²: 466 n. 2; Jackson 2002: 7 ff), and the characterization of *Pīcus* as a god

19 The same derivative may attest both passive and agentive semantics within a single IE language (cf. Nussbaum 2017: 242), cf. Homeric Gk σκοπός (a derivative of the *CoC-ó-* type, akin to the *CeC-ó-* type; cf. Nussbaum 2017: passim), which may mean both ‘guardian’ (‘he who watches’; e.g. *Il.* 23.359) and ‘target’ (‘that which is watched’; e.g. *Od.* 22.6).

20 Lat. *curtus* may be alternatively traced back to PIE **k^wer-* ‘cut’ (LIV²: 391-392), cf. the literature in de Vaan 2008, s.v. *curtus*.

‘who fashions (objects)’, i.e. as a divine craftsman, finds support in the mythological sources, cf. Plut. *Numa* 15.3-4 λέγονται ταῦτά τοις ὑφ’ Ἑλλήνων προσαγορευθεῖσιν Ἰδαίοις Δακτύλοις σοφίζόμενοι περιῖέναι τὴν Ἰταλίαν “(Picus and his son Faunus) are said to have traversed Italy practicing the same arts as the so-called Idaean Dactyli of the Greeks”, i.e. the art of black-smithing, cf. Plin. *Nat.* 7.80 *ferrum Hesiodus in Creta eos qui vocati sunt Dactyli Idaei* “Hesiod (ascribes the forging of) iron to the people called the Idaean Dactyli in Crete”.

(2) Lat. *pīcus* ‘woodpecker’ may be traced back to PIE **peǵk-ó-* ‘who/that carves’,²¹ reflecting this bird’s most typical behavior (to carve trees with its beak in order to build nests and hunt insects), descriptions of which occur both in Greek (e.g. Arist. *Hist. an.* 593a3-14) and Roman sources, cf. Plaut. *Asin.* 262 *sed quid hoc quod picus ulmum tundit?* [...] “But what’s this? A woodpecker is tapping an elm?”.²²

(3) Gk πεικός ‘sharp, stinging, bitter’, exclusively attested by the Hesychian gloss πεικόν · πικρόν, πευκεδανόν, may reflect PIE **peǵk-ó-* ‘who/that cuts, stings’, with a close parallel in its synonym πικρός itself, a further reflex (with different formation) of PIE **peǵk-* (cf. e.g. Beekes 2010, s.v.).

We may observe in passing that a similar semantics appears to underlie PRom. **pikkāre* ‘pierce, prick’ (: Sp. *picar*; Fr. *piquer*) and **pikka* ‘pike’ (: Fr. *pique*), otherwise etymologically unclear (cf. *FEW*, s.vv.), possibly pointing to their origin as reflexes of the PIE root **peǵk-* as well. Future investigations may attempt to pursue a possible connection between these formations and the lexical family of It. *piccolo*, as already proposed e.g. by Walther Goldberger (1929: 52ff) and Giacomo Devoto (1966, s.v. *piccolo*).

21 Aliter WH (s.v.), who points out that two of its possible cognates, namely Ved. *piká-* ‘Cuculus micropterus’ and Old Prussian *picle* ‘Turdus pilaris’, cannot reflect PIE **k̑*; these parallels, however, are most probably *Scheingleichungen*, as both these birds look nothing like a woodpecker. The detail of the alleged connection with the etymologically unclear PGmc **spih-ta-* ‘woodpecker’ (cf. WH, *ibid.*; de Vaan 2008, s.v. *pīcus*) must remain open at the current state of the research.

An unequivocal cognate of *pīcus* is rather Umbrian *peico* (acc. sg.), *peiqu* (abl. sg.) ‘id.’, the outcome of Proto-Italic **pik-o-* (as per Meiser 1986: 47), which may reflect PIE **pik-ó-* (a derivative of the functionally similar CC-ó- type, cf. Nussbaum 2017: 250ff); I also assume Lat. *pīca* ‘jay, magpie’ to be a feminine derivative of *pīcus*. Aliter Meiser 1986: 47-48, followed by de Vaan 2008, s.v. *pīcus* (Lat. *pīca* as a feminine *vr̥ddhi* derivative of **pik-o-*; later spread of long *i* to the masculine by analogical levelling).

Cf. Goldberger 1929: 52ff, for an early attempt to connect It. *piccolo* and Lat. *pīcus*.

22 On this subject, cf. Mynott 2018: 230; 259-260; 278. On woodpeckers in folklore from all over the world, cf. Armstrong 1958: 94-112.

As expected, the formal identity between the theonym and the bird-name paved the way for folk-etymologies attested by various mythical narratives (cf. Serv. ad *Aen.* 7.190; Ov. *Met.* 14.320-434), according to which Picus would have been turned into a woodpecker by the witch Circe or would have kept a woodpecker in his home to predict the future.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Our conclusions may be summarized as follows:

(1) The Romance family of It. *piccolo* may be traced back to PRom. **pīk-u* and **pīkk-u*, the regular outcome and the “*littera Rule*” outcome, respectively, of Lat. **pīc-us* ‘small, little’, among whose direct reflexes are: Port. *peco* ‘stunted, dumb, imbecile’ (**pīkk-u*), cf. Port. *parvo* ‘idiot’ (: Lat. *parvus* ‘small’); Rum. *pic* ‘drop, small quantity’ (**pīk-u*), Sic. *picca* ‘small quantity, a little’ (**pīkk-a*), and Meg.-Rum. *picā* ‘id.’ (**pīk-a*), which reflect the use of the Lat. neut. nom.-acc. sg. **pīc-um* or pl. **pīc-a* as a substantive or adverb meaning ‘a little’, cf. e.g. *paulum* ‘id.’ (neut. nom.-acc. sg. of *paulus* ‘small’).

(2) It. *picc-olo* is a reflex with post-tonic gemination of **pīc-olo* (: Lat. *-ulus*), from **pīc-o* (PRom. **pīk-u*). Sp. *pequ-eño*, Port. *pequ-eno*, and OLog. *pik-innu* (: Lat. *-innus*) must be traced back to PRom. **pīkku* (Sp. and Port.) and **pīk-u* (OLog.), respectively. It. *picci-olo* and *picc-ino* and Sic. *picci-ottu* and *picc-iriddu* may attest a spread of the palatalized outcome expected in e.g. It. *picc-ino*; alternatively, they may reflect further PRom. variants, i.e. **pīk-ju* and **pīkk-ju*.

(3) Lat. **pīcus* ‘small, little’ is in turn the reflex of **peĭk-ó-*, a *CeC-ó-* derivative of PIE **peĭk-* ‘cut, carve, fashion, adorn’ with two possible meanings, namely a passive ‘who/that is cut, carved, fashioned, adorned’ and an agentive ‘who/that cuts, carves, fashions, adorns’. The meaning ‘small’ developed from the passive meaning, cf., inter alia, It. *corto* ‘short’ (PIE **kr̥-tó-* ‘who/that is cut, cropped’). The agentive meaning underlies three further formations, namely: the Lat. theonym *Pīcus* (*‘[god] who fashions [objects]’), Lat. *pīcus* ‘woodpecker’ (*‘[bird] that carves [trees]’), and Gk *παικός* ‘sharp, stinging, bitter’ (*‘who/that cuts, stings’).

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