

Gary D. FARNEY

“Lucumo to Lucius: Etruscans with Both Etruscan and Latin Names on Bilingual Inscriptions from Etruria”

The half-Greek, half-Etruscan Lucumo of Tarquinii adopted the name Lucius Tarquinius Priscus when he arrived at Rome in order to help himself assimilate into Roman society. Similarly, his wife Tanaquil also took the name Gaia Caecilia after their immigration to Rome. In another story known to the Emperor Claudius, Servius Tullius had originally had the name Macstarna before adopting his more familiar one. Outside of the Tarquins, the first member of the Claudian family possessed a Sabine form of his name (variously given as Attius Clausus, Appius Clausus or Atta Claudius) which changed to the famous Appius Claudius. These legendary name adoptions and alterations must be seen in the light of the fact that there were many historical men and women of non-Latin ethnic identity, mostly Etruscans, who adopted Latin names, too, presumably in order to integrate into Roman society. Indeed, in over two dozen bilingual epitaphs from the late Republic and early Empire, we find that many Etruscans had an Etruscan and a Latin name that they must have used at the same time.

Just how these Etruscans came up with their Latin names is instructive: most did not simply transcribe their Etruscan one, or merely render it friendlier for use in Latin. Some Etruscans changed all elements of their names in their “Latin” names, almost as if assuming a new identity entirely. Frequently, some epitaphs have the paternal and/or maternal filiation in one form of a person’s name and not in the other. We know that keeping track of maternal filiation was characteristic of the Etruscans; it is interesting, however, that often the maternal filiation is in found their Latin names and not in their Etruscan ones. Among *praenomina*, often in epitaphs the Etruscan Larth by alliteration becomes Lucius—much like Lucumo became Lucius in the story of Tarquinius Priscus. Other individuals, however, dropped their Etruscan *praenomina* (e.g. Velche/Velthur/Vel and Arnth/Arruns) altogether and adopted standard Latin ones like Quintus, Aulus and Manius, but most often the quintessentially Roman name Gaius. A number of epitaphs demonstrate that convention or Roman law did not necessitate these changes either: some Etruscans we know to be Roman citizens chose to keep their Etruscan *praenomina* virtually intact in their Latin names.

In the end, these epitaphs with their Etruscan and Latin names reveal an acute and widespread anxiety on the part of aristocratic Etruscans to assimilate into Roman society. Many must have felt the need to disguise their “un-Latin” *qua* “un-Roman” names in order to be accepted. One could argue that the legendary figures who adopt Latin names provided later Etruscans a precedent for doing this. Alternatively, the fact that these later Etruscans took on Latin names may have inspired the legends of the Tarquins to adopt a similar act for their immigrating heroes who were ambitious and willing to shed some of their Etruscan identity. On the other hand, like immigrants in other times and places, we should still recognize that many Etruscan Romans did choose to keep two identities going at once, rather than completely reject their “native” one.