Suffix borrowing and conflict through Latin-Greek hybrid formations

Emprunt et conflit de suffixes à travers les formations hybrides latino-grecques

Suffix borrowing and conflict through Latin-Greek hybrid formations

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Résumés

Français English
Dans le domaine largement exploré du contact linguistique entre latin et grec, l'interférence peut se produire d'une façon particulière à travers les formations hybrides qui, bien que classifiées comme des emprunts indirects et parfois considérées comme des phénomènes marginaux, sont néanmoins pertinentes pour les dynamiques du bilinguisme. Sous cette hypothèse, cet article analyse la diffusion du suffixe emprunté -*ĭnus* et la création d'hybrides, mettant l'accent sur les chevauchements fonctionnels et sémantiques entre divers morphèmes. L'analyse montre que ces mécanismes peuvent offrir des perspectives intéressantes non seulement en matière de contact linguistique, mais aussi pour l'évolution de la langue.

In the widely explored domain of language contact between Latin and Greek, interference can surface in a peculiar way through hybrid formations that, although classified as indirect borrowing and sometimes considered as marginal phenomena, are nonetheless relevant to the dynamics of bilingualism. Under this assumption, this paper examines the diffusion of the borrowed suffix -*ĭnus*, and the creation of hybrids, with a focus on the functional and semantic overlaps between various morphemes. The discussion shows that these mechanisms can offer interesting perspectives not only on language contact, but also on language change.

Entrées d'index

Mots-clés : contact linguistique, emprunt, bilinguisme, grec

Texte intégral

1. Morphological interference[1]

1. 1. Borrowing of affixes and creation of hybrids

1   Discussing phenomena of language contact, Biville (2002, p. 98) points out that "hybridization is to single words what code-switching is to sentences or utterances: Greek and Latin are yoked together to produce a superior linguistic unit". As it is well known, hybrid formations include compound words that display elements attributable, at least in origin, to two languages, like *inanilogista* 'blabber', and derived words resulting from the union between a lexical morpheme of a language and a grammatical morpheme of another language, like *lupatria* 'prostitute'. Both types pertain to the domain of borrowing, which for Van Coetsem (2000, p. 49) "takes place on a scale of imitation and adaptation". In this regard, the role of imitation seems stronger with hybrid compounds, whereas adaptation, i.e. interaction within the structures of the recipient language, tends to be more "creative" with derived hybrids.

2   More precisely, when a foreign root is given a Latin affix, as in *contechnor* 'conspire', the hybridisation merely reflects the integration of the borrowed term into the language, but when a Latin root is given a foreign affix, as in *iuncĭnus* 'made from rushes', the formation is definitely more interesting because morphemes are less likely to be borrowed than lexemes, and to take on productive life in the recipient language (Adams, 2003, p. 165).

3   The ease with which morpheme induction can take place is inversely proportional to the degree of boundness of the affix, and also depends on its frequency in a series of loans already acquired, since affixes are usually borrowed as part of complex loanwords.[2] Next, they may spread to native stems, creating hybrids in a process of language-internal analogical extension. In the case of -*ĭnus*, as we will see, this happens under ideal conditions, for Latin already has a 284

4   suffix that resembles phonetically the suffix of the donor language.[3] However, crucial to such innovations is the speaker's role to detect structural similarities, modulate adaptive strategies, balance competing motivations or conflicting rules. In this sense, derived hybrids can thus offer insights not only on language contact, but also on language change.[4]

2. The suffixes *-ĭnus* and *-īnus*

2. 1. The suffix -ĭnus

5   For Butler (1971, p. 52-5), the inherited suffix -*ĭnus* was already moribund in pre-literary Latin due to syncope affecting the atonic short vowel, and it can be only reconstructed in a handful of adjectives derived from dendronyms, like *pōpulnus* 'of poplar' or *acernus* 'of maple'. According to Leumann, except for the problematic word *fraxĭnus*, the affix is borrowed from Greek,[5] a language where it was productive[6] and from which Latin received a large amount of adjectives in the Republican era, and even more in the Imperial era.

6   These include forms derived from phytonyms, especially when the species was foreign to Italy (e.g. *cannabĭnus* < καννάβινος 'made of hemp', *cedrĭnus* < κέδρινος 'of cedar wood'), forms describing oils and ointments, or fabrics and jewels made from exotic products and precious stones (e.g. *balsamĭnus* < βαλσάμινος 'of balsam', *amethystĭnus* < ἀμεθύστινος 'adorned with amethyst'), and forms defining nuances of colour (e.g. *prasĭnus* < πράσινος 'leek green-coloured', *anthracĭnus* < ἀνθράκινος 'coal black-coloured').

7   Following Butler (1971, p. 59), we may say that these words "bespeak a culture far more refined, more sophisticated and more 'oriental' in tastes and in subtle distinctions than the comparatively rustic commonwealth of early Rome".

2. 2. The suffix -īnus

8   In Cooper's view, the unsophisticated language of the rural world preferred the terms in *-īnus*, which belong to the older language and are rare in classic writers, but abound instead in early comedy and in the *scriptores rerum rusticarum*. The majority is derived from zoonyms, and is sometimes associated with *fimus / fimum* or *stercus* 'manure, dung' (e.g. *fimum caballīnum*, Plin. *Nat.* 29, 102; *stercus caprīnum*, Cato *Agr.* 36), while the substantivized feminine often presupposes *caro* 'meat' (e.g. *vitulīna* 'calf 's meat, veal'). Moreover, their frequent use in proverbs and metaphors (e.g. *move formicīnum gradum* "move your antlike step", Plaut. *Men.* 888; *alter rixatur de lana saepe caprīna* "the other man wrangles often about goat's wool", i.e. "contends about trifles", Hor. *Epist.* 1, 18, 15) is "a further evidence of their popular character" (Cooper, 1895, p. 139).

9   Discussing the data, the scholar also remarks that the use of these forms decreases in later authors, but their overall number remains relevant "owing partly, perhaps, to their fusion with forms in *-ĭnus*, caused by the shifting of accent to the short vowel in the latter suffix" (Cooper, 1895, p. 141).

10   The collision between *-ĭnus* and *-īnus* is indeed in keeping with the increasing preference for tonic over atonic suffixes (Väänänen, 1982, p. 154), but the details of the process rest on the semantics and the functions of the two categories of derived adjectives.

2. 3. Polysemy and ambiguity

11   As we have seen, the forms in *-ĭnus* derive from specific lexical areas,[7] but they also tend to occur in diverse combinations. The term *crocĭnus*, for instance, can refer either to saffron oil (cf. the ointment in Prop. 3, 10, 22), or to saffron yellow (cf. the *tunica* in Catull. 68, 134), and the peculiar relevance of the meanings related to colours will be discussed in detail in Section 3.4.

12   In addition, considering the diffusion of these adjectives, we can observe that many terms are part of the everyday language of merchants, gardeners, chiefs, artisans, and are likely to have easily infiltrated the lexicon of Roman consumers, whereas others fall into the sphere of rare technical or learned terms. In this sense, *fāgĭnus* 'of beech' is particularly instructive, because the Virgilian phrase *fāgĭnus axis* (Verg. *Georg.* 3, 172) clearly imitates the Homeric expression φήγινος ἄξων 'oaken axle' (*Il.* 5, 837).

13   The examples also suggest that these forms are ambiguous, as far as their creation and origin are concerned.[8] If *cannabĭnus* is a direct borrowing from καννάβινος, and *fagĭnus* imitates Gr. φήγινος building on Lat. *fāgus*, for *crocĭnus*, on the other hand, both the ready-made adjective κρόκινος and the base *crŏcum* (an integrated loanword from Gr. κρόκον) can be posited, whereas *iuncĭnus* can be based only on Lat. *iuncus*. Besides, in cases like *laurĭnus/laurīnus*, scholars clash in assessing the quantity of the penultimate vowel (Butler, 1971, p. 55).

2. 4. Two suffixes, two functions?

14   Comparing the functions of these formations, Kircher-Durand (2002b, p. 140-4) claims that the adjectives with long-vowel suffix classify the noun they determine, while those with short-vowel suffix qualify the noun. This is because the first type entails a "possessive" relation built on the global semantic content of the base, whereas the second type entails a similarity relation built on a single element of the semantic content, and this element is perceived and selected by one of the five senses.

15   Visual faculties, for instance, are involved with colours like *cerĭnus* 'wax-coloured' or *coccĭnus* 'of a brilliant red'. The sense of smell is involved with forms describing oils or ointments like *amaracĭnus* 'of marjoram' or *rhodĭnus* 'prepared from roses'. And the sense of taste is involved with adjectives referred to foods containing herbs and spices like *thymĭnus* 'made of thyme' or *murrĭnus* 'wine flavored with myrrh'. The proposed classification, however, shows its limits when the sense of touch is said to motivate terms describing fabrics and fibers like *bombycĭnus* 'of silk, silken', *carbasĭnus* 'of fine linen', and artefacts made from wood and plants like *cupressĭnus* 'of cypress', *lentiscĭnus* 'from the mastic-tree', or from stones and other materials like *adamantĭnus* 'adamantine' and *elephantĭnus* 'of ivory'.

16   As for the last example, discussing uncertainties about the penultimate vowel, KircherDurand (2002b, p. 139) says that doublets like *elephantĭnus* 'of ivory' / *elephantīnus* 'of the elephant' confirm her idea of "partial relation" (only the tusks) vs. "global relation" (the beast in general). Starting from these useful observations, in the following sections we will discuss a different interpretation that builds on the overlaps between suffixes.

3. Overlaps and scales

3. 1. Hybrids in flora and fauna

17   The often observed overlaps between the forms in *-ĕus* and those in *-ĭnus* (cf. *fāgĕus/fāgĭnus*, *crocĕus/crocĭnus*, etc.) signal their semantic proximity, but also suggest that the borrowed affix displays some specificities or functional advantages in order to engage the competition with the native morpheme.

18   Not surprisingly, the adjectives in *-ĕus* cover the same semantic areas of those in *-ĭnus*,[9] including colour terms as well (Leumann, 1977, p. 286-7), but they seem more formal and literary: *On peut [...] affirmer le caractère prosaïque des formations in -aceus, -inus et -atus et la valeur généralement poetique du suffixe -eus*" (André, 1949, p. 212). This can help to explain why the new forms in *-ĭnus* start to duplicate the forms of the older category, and mainly those derived from loanwords, like *carbasĕus* (*carbasus* < κάρπασος), *murrĕus* (*murra* < μύρρα), *balsamĕus* (*balsamum* < βάλσαμον), etc.

19   As a side effect, this process reinforces the use of *-ĭnus* for adjectives derived from phytonyms: a growing category where we also find hybrids that combine the Greek suffix with Latin roots, like *cupressĭnus* < *cupressus* 'cypress', *fungĭnus* < *fungus* 'mushroom', *iuncĭnus* < *iuncus* 'rush', *laurĭnus* < *laurus* 'laurel', *lentiscĭnus* < *lentiscus* 'mastic-tree', *nucĭnus* < *nux* 'nut', *quercĭnus* < *quercus* 'oak', *triticĭnus* < *triticum* 'wheat' (Adams, 2013, p. 564-5).[10]

20   Long-vowel *-īnus*, on the other hand, is so strongly preferred for derivation from zoonyms that "in this category it dominates adjectives formed on even the most patently Greek loanwords" (Butler, 1971, p. 60), thus creating hybrids like *camelīnus* 'of a camel' (*camēlus* < κάμελος), *cant(h)erīnus* 'of a packhorse' (*cant(h)ērius* < κανθήλιος (ὄνος) 'beast of burden'), *castorīnus* 'of a beaver' (*castor* < κάστωρ),

hydrīnus 'of a water-snake' (*hydrus* < ὕδρος), *leopardīnus* 'of a leopard' (*leopardus* < λεόπαρδος), *pantherīnus* 'of a panther' (*panthēra* < πάνθηρ), *phasianīnus* 'of a pheasant' (*phasiānus* < φασιανός), *tigrīnus* 'of a tiger' (*tigris* < τίγρις).

3. 2. Two competing patterns

21   In this context, doublets like *elephantīnus/elephantĭnus* (cf. ἐλεφάντινος), *crocodilīnus/ crocodilĭnus* (cf. κροκοδείλινος), and *psittacīnus/psittacĭnus* (cf. *psittacus* < ψιττακός) can thus be interpreted as reflecting two competing mechanisms of derivation.

22   As for the first pattern, -*ĭnus* is preferred for i) names of plants/substances, and ii) bases of Greek origin; as for the second pattern, -*īnus* is preferred for i) names of animals, and ii) bases of Latin origin.

23   Accordingly, speakers may create hybrids both when phytonyms are indigenous terms, as in the case of *iuncĭnus*, and when exotic terms are recognized as zoonyms, as in the case of *psittacīnus*. Notably, for *psittacĭnus* no corresponding Greek adjective exists, but the sense of 'parrot-coloured' in combination with *collyrium* (Scrib. Larg. 27; Marc. Emp. 8) suggests the idea of a Latin creation modelled on the pattern of colour terms in -*ĭnus*. Similarly, *elephantĭnus* selects the meaning 'ivory' of the base *elephantus*, and is thus consistent with the pattern 'name of substance borrowed from Greek + short-vowel suffix'.

24   In support of this interpretation, we can add some examples: beside *fāgĭnus*, Du Cange and Meyer-Lübke (*s. v.*) reconstruct *fāgīna as the antecedent of it. *faina* and fr. *fouine*, whose etymology is thus '(marten) of the beech'. Speaking of martens, note also the different etymologies of the apparent couple *mēlīnus* 'of marten' and *mēlĭnus* 'of quinces, quince-yellow, quince-ointment', where both forms are consistent with the patterns described above. Partially consistent, and thus a sort of hybrid, is instead *mĕlĭnus* 'of honey', from Lat. *mĕl*.

3. 3. Two suffixes, one function

25   The fusion between the suffixes, however, does not simply involve fuzziness concerning the origin and the semantics of the bases. The schema in fig. (1) shows that the two patterns above are part of a broader opposition, whereby forms derived with long-vowel suffixes are higher on the animacy/individuation scale with respect to forms derived with short-vowel suffixes.

Figure 1: Suffixes and scales
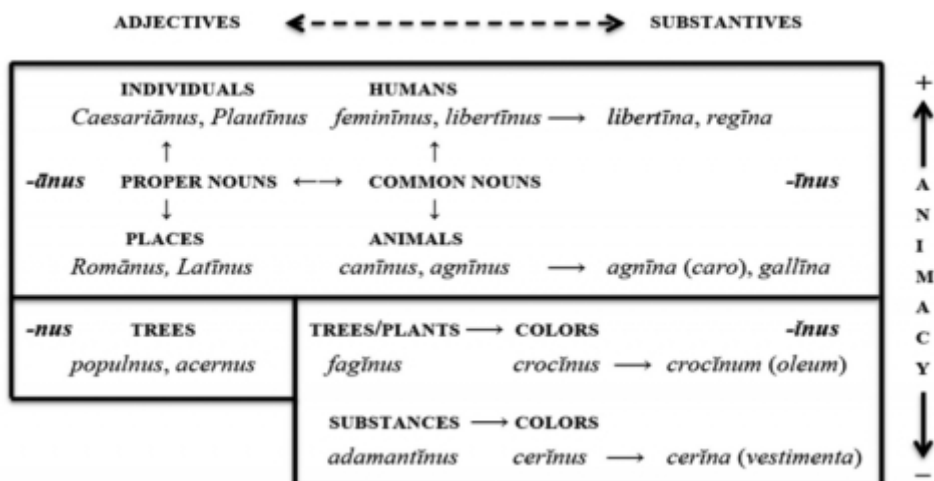
26   In particular, -*īnus* selects proper nouns of individuals and places, or common

nouns of humans and animals; therefore derived adjectives usually describe a relation with animated and/ or individuated entities. The suffix -*ĭnus*, on the other hand, selects nouns of trees and plants, or substances; therefore derived adjectives usually describe a relation with inanimate and nonindividuated entities.

27 The merge between the morphemes presupposes the loss of this animacy-based polarization, and is basically favoured by the fact that they share the same function, which is the creation of adjectives expressing "possessive" relations.[11] Latin pertains in fact to the type of languages where the possessor can be usually denoted by means of an adjective, as can be seen from the passage where Petronius (33, 5) writes first *pavonīna ova*, and immediately afterwards *pavonis ova* 'peahen's eggs'.[12]

3. 4. Three logical operations

28 Fauna, flora, and colours, but also natural products and artefacts are conceptual domains where experiential and material data are labelled and classified, and where complexity is organized by assigning entities to specific categories. These processes can entail forms that describe belonging relations based on three logical operations:[13]

29 inclusion: when the entity is 'of the species X' or 'of the type X' (e.g. *flore crocĭno* 'saffron blossom', Plin. *Nat.* 13, 9, and (*pulli*) *pavonīni* 'peacock chicks', Varro *Rust.* 3, 9);

30 attribution: when the entity is 'pertaining to X' or 'similar to X' (e.g. *crocĭna tunica* 'saffron yellow tunic', Catull. 68, 134, and *lectus pavonīnus* 'couch coloured like a peacock's tail', Mart. 14, 85 *tit.*);

31 ingredience: when the entity is 'part of X' or 'made of X' (e.g. *crocĭnum* (*oleum*) 'saffron oil', Prop. 3, 10, 22), and *muscaria pavonīna* 'fly-flaps made of peacocks' tails', Mart. 14, 67 *tit.*).

32 In sum, the examples confirm that the same adjective can express different belonging relations according to the name it modifies, and that both adjective types can serve for the same functions.

3. 5. Mixing colours

33 These shared features can explain some overlaps in the area of colours, which includes a number of terms: *āerĭnus* 'light blue-coloured', *amethystĭnus* 'of the colour of amethyst', *ampelĭnus* 'dark green-coloured', *anthracĭnus* 'coal black-coloured', *blattĭnus* 'purple-dyed', *cerasĭnus* 'cherry-coloured', *cerĭnus* 'wax-coloured', *coccĭnus* 'of a brilliant red', *coracĭnus* 'raven black-coloured', *crocĭnus* 'saffron yellow-coloured', *ferrugĭnus* 'of the colour of iron-rust', *fucĭnus* 'coloured with orchil', *galbĭnus* 'of a greenish-yellow colour', *haematĭnus* 'blood red-coloured', *hyacinthĭnus* 'hyacinth-coloured' *hyalĭnus* 'of a glass-green colour', *ianthĭnus* 'of a violet-blue', *mālĭnus* 'apple green-coloured', *molochĭnus* 'of a pale purple colour, mauve', *picĭnus* 'pitch blackcoloured', *prasĭnus* 'leek green-coloured', *sandaracĭnus* 'of a brilliant red', *smaragdĭnus* 'of a bright green', *thalassĭnus* 'sea green-coloured', *tyrianthĭnus* 'of a colour between purple and violet'.

34 In the list we find the odd one out *coracĭnus* < κοράκινος, whose meaning 'raven blackcoloured' goes well with those of the forms that suggest comparison and similarity (André, 1949, p. 212-18) to the plumage or coat of various animals, like *cervīnus* 'deer-coloured', *columbīnus* 'dove-coloured', *murīnus* 'mouse-coloured', *mustelīnus* 'weasel-coloured', *nite(l)līnus* 'of the colour of a dormouse'.

35 That colour terms are a further convergence area centered on the operation of attribution is confirmed not only by doublets like *crocĕus/crocĭnus*, but also by forms like *coccĭnĕus, cērĭnĕus, ferrugĭnĕus, smaragdĭnĕus*, where the three suffixes seem to amalgamate into a single one.

36   For Butler (1971, p. 62), *-ĭ́něus* emerges from the combination between the false separation of the final sequence in adjectives like *virgineus* 'maidenly', and the true "compound suffix, composed of *-inus + -eus*". Although the idea of a hybrid suffix is quite tempting, it also true that "*le grec, comme le latin, a parfois élargi le suffixe -ino- par le suffixe -eyo- qui indiquait également la matière*" (Chantraine, 1933, p. 203); therefore, Greek doublets like ἐλάϊνος/ἐλαίνεος 'made of olive wood', or φήγϊνος/φηγίνεος 'oaken' (cf. Lat. *fāgĭněus*) raise reasonable doubts about the borrowing of a further affix.

37   Be that as it may, if *-ĭ́něus* serves to renew some adjectives, on the other hand, as a competitor of *-ĭnus*, it also contributes to its loss in favour of *-īnus*.

3. 6. Merging suffixes

38   Due to the increasing use of tonic suffixes, but also to the overlaps revealed by hybrid formations, the boundaries between the various categories of adjectives expressing "possessive" relations start to fade away, and the morphemes gradually collide, as shown by the arrows in Figure 2, which completes the scheme in Figure 1.

Figure 2: Overlaps between suffixes
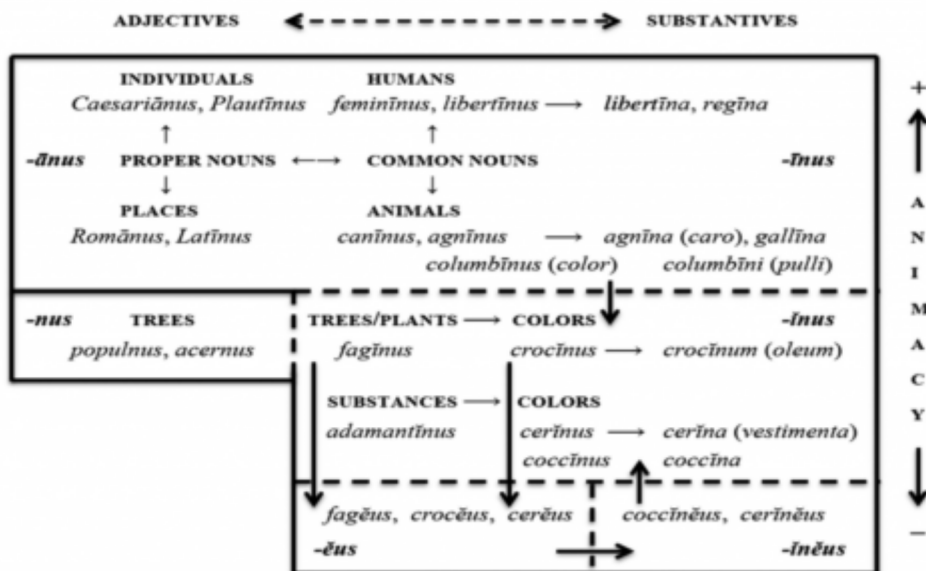
39   Nonetheless, as said in Section 2.2, the use of the adjectives in *-īnus* decreases, as they become "less popular in the later language" (Cooper, 1895, p. 141). In Wackernagel's view, similar phenomena in Latin as in Greek reflect the same development, i.e. the ousting of the adjective by the genitive.[14]

3. 7. The evaluative function

40   In this respect, it thus seems that the forms in *-īnus* are in decline, but the suffix itself finds new functions, starting to develop evaluative meanings in substandard formations (cf. *geminus, gemellus, gemininus*, Not. Tir.; *miserina, CIL* VIII, 12794), and completing the transition in a number of Romance languages.

41   A typical example of this development comes from Italian, where the affix *-ino* appears in proper diminutives, like *gattino* 'kitten' (cf. *gatto* 'cat'), but also in *fiorentino* 'Florentine', in *nomina agentis* and *nomina instrumenti* as *imbianchino* 'decorator', *accendino* 'lighter' (cf. *imbiancare* 'decorate', *accendere* 'light up'), and even in colours like *giallino* 'yellowish' (almost *giallo* 'yellow'), or in meronyms like *scalino* 'step' (part of a *scala* 'stairs'), or *cerino* 'match' (made of *cera* 'wax').

42   As a matter of fact, many languages offer examples of similar polysemies, and

many affixes develop evaluative functions through semantic change from primary possessive and relational meanings. Also, in Magni (1999; 2001) the Latin and Greek descendants of the IE morphemes *-ko- and *-lo- are shown to connect with possession and with the logical operations discussed here. In this view, various sources of diminutive suffixes, and -*īnus* as well, can thus be interpreted as "proprietive markers" that link a *possessum* and a possessor according to a wide range of relations.

4. Conclusions

43   The peculiar force of -*īnus* lies in the fusion with the borrowed suffix -*ĭnus*, which extends the kinds of relations towards the bottom end of the animacy/individuation scale, and centres the whole category on the operation of attribution. From the idea of similarity, which motivates the use in colour terms, like *galbĭnus* 'yellowish', stems the notion of approximation, which favours the reanalysis of the forms built on the operation of inclusion, like *columbīni*, in terms of reduction. Eventually, from the value of 'small/young exemplar', extended to hypocoristic names meaning 'son/daughter of X', like *Agrippīna*, derives the idea of affection that explains *miserīnus*.[15]

44   In conclusion, although it is said that *Graeca per Ausoniae fines sine lege vagantur*, the wandering of the suffix -*ĭnus* seems to follow clear paths that, as also shown by hybrid formations, meet and compete with those of - *īnus*, feed the category of adjectives expressing 'possessive' relations, foreground relations based on the notion of similarity, and substantially contribute to the evolution towards the diminutive function.

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Notes

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2 On this point, see Weinreich (1953, p. 30); on direct and indirect affix borrowing, see Seifart (2015).

3 "If the borrowing language already has a suffix which resembles phonetically a suffix in the contact language, conditions are ideal for the suffix in the contact language to be borrowed" (Adams, 2003, p. 495).

4 For a discussion of these issues, see Magni, 2016.

5 *Jüngeres* -inus *von Pflanzennamen ist aus dem Griechischen entlehnt* (Leumann, 1977, p. 321). On the etymology of *fraxĭnus*, see Szemerényi (1959-1960).

6 *Il existe une catégorie importante de dérivés en -ινος [...], ce sont en général des adjectifs de matière* (Chantraine, 1933, p. 201).

7 Kircher-Durand (2002b, p. 139) counts about 100 forms from phytonyms, and 60 from names of substances or stones.

8 *En raison de l'ambigüité de leur origine, création latine ou emprunt au grec, ces [...] adjectifs peuvent être définis come gréco-latins* (Kircher-Durand, 2002b, p. 148).

9 Kircher-Durand (2002a, p. 88) finds 55 forms from phytonyms, and 45 from names of substances or elements.

10 Unlike the literary term *cyparissus*, *cupressus* is not a direct borrowing from κυπάρισσος: *les deux mots, grec et latin, doivent avoir été empruntés indépendamment à une langue méditerranéenne* (ErnoutMeillet, *s. v.*); the same considerations also apply to *fungus* (cf. Gr. σφόγγος). Among the forms derived from native plant names, only *cucurbitīnus < cucurbita* 'gourd' and *ebulīnus < ebulum* 'elder' are paroxytonic.

11 In Leumann (1973, p. 151), both types are in fact classified as *von Substantiven abgeleiteten Zugehörigkeitadjektive im weitesten Sinn*.

12 In Greek and Latin, as in Slavic and Germanic languages, *es geläufig ist, der Besitzer mittelst eines Adjectivum possessivum zu bezeichnen* (Wackernagel, 1928, p. 88).

13 See Desclés, 1996, and Magni, 1999; 2001.

14 *Immerhin zeigt sich auf lateinischem Boden dieselbe Entwicklung wie auf griechischem: Zurückdrängung des adjektivischen Ausdruck durch den genetivischen* (Wackernagel, 1928, p. 71).

15 "Like some other suffixes denoting resemblance, -*inus* acquired later a diminutive force, the idea of resemblance merging in that of not quite equalling, and so of being inferior to, or smaller than, the object of comparison" (Cooper, 1895, p. 141).

Table des illustrations

Pour citer cet article

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