

What's in a Name? Latin names in Greek script

James Clackson - University of Cambridge

Greek inscriptions written by or for Romans during the Republican period frequently spelt the name Marcus and its derivatives with a double A. The practice of writing two letters to represent a long vowel in Latin is associated with Accius by some ancient grammarians and has come to be termed 'Accian' in modern scholarship. In this paper I compare the representation of long /a:/ with another Accian spelling found in Roman Greek texts during the Republic, EI to represent long /i:/. The picture is confused by the fact that both Latin and Greek speakers merged long close front vowels and long near close front vowels, represented in writing in both languages by <I> and the digraph <EI> respectively. Nevertheless, it is still possible to show that the Accian spellings were a strategy that was available to the drafters of Roman documents written in Greek to impart an orthographic *color latinus* to their texts, in parallel to the well known syntactic devices (omission of the article, 'dative absolute' etc.).