

THE TOWN ON THE RIVER'S BEND: DIACHRONIC TOPONOMASTICS UNDER THE LENS OF HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY AND ETYMOLOGY

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Abstract: *The town on the river's bend: diachronic toponomastics under the lens of historical geography and etymology.* This paper is a sample of application of Historical Geography and Etymology criteria to the study of Diachronic Toponomastics, evaluating 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 place name *Imola* (Imola is an important town located in Emilia-Romagna). The examination of plausible links between Indo-European (Italic and, especially, Celtic) and Etruscan (commenting on a hypothesis by Adolfo Zavaroni about the stem *am-*) 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 place name *Imola* is, therefore, reconstructed through a convergent methodology that takes into account the possibility of different and heterogeneous influences in the naming process, always focusing the analysis also on data from Historical Geography and Landscape Archaeology. 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 case of *Imola* is also an interesting opportunity to test the most relevant aspect of the New Convergence Theory (NCT, in Italian *Teoria della Conciliazione*) 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

Rezumat: *Orașul de la cotitura râului. O toponomastică diacronică prin intermediul analizei geografiei istorice și etimologiei.* Lucrarea de față este un model al aplicării criteriilor din cadrul geografiei istorice și al etimologiei în studiul toponomasticii diacronice, evaluând posibilele conexiuni dintre originile indo-europene ale termenilor *yem- / *jem- and *am- (*me-) și a celor etrusce, prin intermediul reconstrucției și analizei etimologiei prelatine în contextul numelor de locuri din Italia. Este cazul localității Imola, un oraș important localizat în Emilia-Romagna. Evaluarea posibilelor legături dintre cultura indo-europeană (italiană și, în special, cea celtică) și cea etruscă (luând în considerare comentariile asupra ipotezei lansată de Adolfo Zavaroni cu privire la am-) în acest spațiu geografic, poate permite lansarea unor considerații relevante în contextul reutilizării și al refuncționalizării originii diferitelor familii de limbi din toponimia preistorică și cea proto-istorică. Numele Imola este reconstruit prin intermediul unei metodologii convergente, care ia în considerare posibilitatea prezenței unor influențe eterogene în procesul de denumire al localităților, concentrându-se asupra analizelor asupra informațiilor provenite din geografia istorică și din arheologia peisajului. Concluzia, generată de ideea unei legături plauzibile între cultura indo-europeană și cea etruscă, este relevantă în contextul semanticii istorice, precum și în reinterpretarea conceptului etrusc am-. Studiul de caz al Imolei este, de asemenea, interesant din perspectiva oportunității oferite în testarea celui mai relevant aspect al Teoriei Noii Convergențe (NCT, în italiană *Teoria della Conciliazione*). despre posibilitatea contactelor lingvistice și legăturile dintre limile Indo-europene și alte familii de limbi. în concordanță cu refuncționalizarea mutuală în diferitele sisteme ale familiilor lingvistice provenite din originea sau împrumutul unor cuvinte sau nume geografice.

Key Words: *New Convergence Theory; Indo-European roots *yem- / *jem- and *am- (*me-); Celtic; Italic; Umbrian; Etruscan stem am-; reuse and refunctionalization of word-roots and (loan)words; Imola; linguistic contact and alignment*

Cuvinte cheie: *Teoria Noii Convergențe, origini indo-europene *yem- / *jem- and *am- (*me-); celtic, italic, etrusc am-; reutilizare și refuncționalizare a originii cuvintelor, Imola, contact și aliniere lingvistică.*

1. INTRODUCTION

To my beloved wife, DuoDuo

This paper presents an attempt to etymologically reconstruct the remote origins of the place name *Imola*, studying this denomination according to an all-embracing point of view, starting from the Indo-European root *yem- / *jem- and analyzing 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 aim of this short study consists, therefore, in highlighting the possibility of contacts and interexchange, in border areas, between different languages and linguistic families. The analysis presented

in this article 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 process. The objective of this convergent dialectics is to elaborate and to provide a pattern finalized to return the right etymology of Prehistoric and Proto-historic place names. This methodology takes always into account data provided by Historical Semantics, Historical Geography, Historical Topography, and Landscape Archaeology, in order to find direct links and connections between the place names and the geo-morphology of the territory, interpreting Diachronic Toponomastics in an organic and coherent way¹.

2. THE TOWN

Imola (geographic coordinates 44°21'12"N 11°42'51"E) is an important Italian town in the Province of Bologna, Emilia-Romagna, situated along the ancient *Via Æmilia*, at the point where the Apennine valley of the Santerno river enters into the Po valley. The region 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 zone can be traced back to the Upper Paleolithic), long before the Roman conquest. The territory has been, in historical times, a border area characterized by Celtic, Italic (Umbrian), Etruscan, and Roman cultural influences.

3. THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE PLACE NAME

The current (highly questionable and, in a way, 'volatile') etymology² of the place name *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*³. In Roman times the official designation of the town (presumably located, as told, in another place than the original village) was *Forum Cornelii* (less common the denomination *Forum Corneliium*⁴).

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*⁵, 'to bend', 'curve' + **(s)reu-* (from which, for example, the ancient Greek verb *ῥέω*), 'to stream', 'to flow'⁶, and, in fact, it bends in the vicinity of a sandstone massif of prehistoric origins – between 5 and 2 million years ago – just outside the town of Imola. The hydronym's etymological reconstruction sequence, therefore, could be the following, *Vatreno* < **Uat-*

¹ These are the epistemological foundations of the New Convergence Theory (NCT, in Italian *Teoria della Conciliazione*) in the field of Indo-European Linguistics. Cf., e.g., Perono Cacciafoco, F., (2014), pp. 79-98.

² Cf. DTI, (1990), p. 328, s. v. *Imola*.

³ Cf. Violi, F., (1982), pp. 252-269; Gamillscheg, E., (1934-1936), vol. II, *passim*.

⁴ The plausibly earliest mention of *Forum Cornelii* seems to date back to the *Epistulae ad familiares* (XII, V) by Marcus Tullius Cicero (I century BC).

⁵ Cf. Pokorny, J., (1959-1969), p. 1113, 2.

⁶ Cf. Pokorny, J., cit., p. 1003.

*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*)⁷ 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, with Historical Geography and Landscape Archaeology, converge in the explanation of this hydronym and we can safely assume that – if we don’t follow the unscientific and undocumented widespread reconstruction – the place name *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 place name is *Castrum Imolas*⁸ (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) only in the VIII century AD. The subsequent spellings / writings *Immola*, *Imula*, *Emola* can be explained respectively as vulgarism⁹, 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’, *Bōnōnīa* > *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 *Gēmīnus* (as stated in some Biographies, *Gēmūlus* is also attested as an alternative form, not in the meaning of ‘plaintive’, but as a variant of *Gēmīnus*, ‘twin’, ‘geminous’) or from *Hiemulus* or *Gemmulus* (forms attested for the same Saint’s name) or from other¹⁰.

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

⁷ *Vaternus* in Martial, *Epigrammata*, III, 67, 2; *Vatrenus* / *Saternus* in Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, III, 120; *Santernus* in Frontin, *Stratagemata*, 3, 14, 3.

⁸ The pre-Roman place name *Imolas* (*Imola*), plausibly attested only during the Middle Ages (starting from the beginning of the VII century, ‘officially’ reported by Paul the Deacon – in his *Historia Langobardorum*, II, 18 – in the VIII century), may have been associated, originally, with a really ancient inhabited core located on the right bank of the Santerno (*Vatreno*) river (a possible ‘candidate’ is the village of the Monte Castellaccio d’Imola). There, the same river ‘bends’ near a sandstone massif.

⁹ See, e.g., *camera non cammara* in the *Appendix Probi*, I, 84. Cf. Baehrens, W.A., (1922), pp. 5-8 and *passim*; Rohlf’s, G., (1969³), p. 16.

¹⁰ Cf. Apolloni, A., (1966), p. 157.

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 the territory of Imola in Prehistoric and Proto-historic ages (for example, the Montericco and/or the Pontesanto localities and the Monte Castellaccio village). The inhabited center would have been, in such a case, a 'composite' human settlement.

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 *ol*), from Indo-European **h3olah* ← √**h3el-*, 'to bend', or **holhah* ← √**helh-*, 'to push in one direction', 'to move', 'to go', a possible reference – as it appears self-evident – to the river Santerno (*Vatreno*) flowing in the territory of Imola and 'bending' near the town.

It should be noted that this Indo-European compound **yemo-h3olah*, or **yemo-holhah*, '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, **Imola*.

4. THE ETRUSCAN HYPOTHESIS: THE ADOLFO ZAVARONI PROPOSAL AND ITS EVALUATION

The Etruscan Hypothesis, proposed by Adolfo Zavaroni¹¹, does not directly imply a reconstruction of the place name *Imola*, but a sort of interpretation of the **yem-* / **jem-* root that would be juxtaposed or, rather, entirely replaced by the Etruscan (**)am-* (< **H2e-mbh-*, 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 **H2e-mbh-* > **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/*¹². 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).

¹¹ Cf. Zavaroni, A., (2001), pp. 281-306 (from now on directly cited in the text).

¹² Cf. Mailhammer, R., (2011), *passim*.

5. INSIGHTS INTO THE ETRUSCAN HYPOTHESIS

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 place name *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 ancient Emilia-Romagna) where Etruscan and Indo-European languages had to coexist, perhaps interpenetrating (at least within some limits) each other.

Alessandro Morandi has proposed an Indo-European stem for the words *ame* and *amce*, assuming that they are voices of the verb 'to be'¹³. 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 people¹⁴, because it means 'co-, *iunctus*, -a' (Zavaroni 2001, p. 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 above-mentioned 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, pp. 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 *μυκος*. 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

¹³ Cf. Morandi, A., (1984), vol. I, pp. 10-11; Morandi, A., (1991), p. 79.

¹⁴ Cf. Maggiani, A., (1996 [1998]), pp. 95-138.

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 **mbh-*, 'united', 'pair', 'together' > **H2e-mbh-* (prefix + stem) > **amb(h)-* > **am-* > *am-*, that might also explain words as Latin *amb-*, Greek $\mu\phi-$, 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*.

Pokorny¹⁵ reconstructed the Latin *gēmīnus* (that "hat wohl das g- von der Wurzel gem 'greifen', 'zusammenpressen' bezogen") from the Indo-European root **yem-* / **jem-* / **iem-*. Zavaroni (2001, pp. 296-97) proposes a derivation from **g(m)-* + **H2mino-* > **gmmino-* > *gemino-*. **H2mino-* would be composed by a stem **H2m-* resulting from a **mbh-* pre-nasalized consonant (using the symbology of André Martinet). Latin *ambo*, Greek $\mu\phi\omega$, Gothic *bai*, Lithuanian *abù*, Italian *ambo*, German *beide* are linked with some particles (that have the value of prepositions), Latin *amb-*, Greek $\mu\phi\acute{\iota}$, Gothic *bi*, Gaulish *ambi-*, Old Irish *imb-*, *imm-*, Breton *am-*. It is necessary to note, however, that the root **ambhi* / **mbhi*¹⁶ 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 Pokorny¹⁷ to the Indo-European root **yem-* / **jem-*, following the passage *ibna* * < **inná-* < **jennó-*, while Norse *Ymir*, commonly understood as 'Zwitter', could come from Germanic **jumijáz* < IE **iem(i)jós*. According to Zavaroni, the stem **mbh-*, '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 **mbh-* may assume a form **H2embh-* > **amb(h)-* that could explain the Latin *amb-*, Greek $\mu\phi-$ and Gaulish *amb-*¹⁸. **mbh-* 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 **mbh-* > **imbh-* > **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 *bh-* to *m-* occurs in **imbh-*, then a homologous 'fade' of *bh-* even in the parallel form **H2embh-* > **ambh-* > **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

¹⁵ Cf. Pokorny, J., cit., p. 505.

¹⁶ Cf. Pokorny, J., cit., pp. 34-35.

¹⁷ Cf. Pokorny, J., cit., p. 505.

¹⁸ According to André Martinet "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 occidentale, d'un élément démonstratif, d'où angl. *both*, all. *beide*" (cf. Martinet, A., [1987], p. 176).

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, *amul-ētum* 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 *amænus* could derive from **ame-venos*, ‘*complacens*’, or, alternatively, from the Etruscan *amavun-*, ‘to compensate’ (Zavaroni 2001, pp. 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 Pokorny¹⁹. 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’²⁰.

6. INDO-EUROPEAN/ETRUSCAN ‘CONVERGENCE’

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 ‘not-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 place name *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

¹⁹ Cf. Pokorny, J., cit., p. 505.

²⁰ Cf. Pokorny, J., cit., p. 903.

'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, to 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 place name could have been 'clear' and 'understandable' also according to Etruscan.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The reconstruction of the etymology of the place name *Imola* offers an interesting opportunity to test the most relevant aspect of the New Convergence Theory (NCT, in Italian *Teoria della Conciliazione*)²¹ 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)words²².

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 place name (and in the perception of its meaning starting from different roots – pertaining to different languages – similar and aligned in their semantics).

My Indo-European reconstruction of *Imola* takes into account also the analysis of hydro-geo-morphology of the territory and the evaluation of data from Historical Topography, Historical Geography, and Landscape Archaeology of that area, with the examination of the semantic developments linked to the root(s) involved in the naming of the place. In Zavaroni's proposal the discretion (or arbitrariness) moments in the *iudicium* 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 place name *Imola* (**yem-* / **jem-* & **am-* [**me-*]), reside also in two facts: **1)** the pre-nasalization, 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

²¹ Cf., e.g., Perono Cacciafoco, F., (2014), cit., pp. 79-98.

²² Cf., e.g., Perono Cacciafoco, F., (2013a), pp. 7-25; Perono Cacciafoco, F., (2013b), pp. 91-107.

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 place name. 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' < √**h2amh3-*, '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*²³. The possibility of mutual linguistic contacts and interexchange in that specific area of Emilia-Romagna 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.

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²³ Cf. Pokorny, J., cit., p. 35.

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