

CHAPTER 5

<o> for /u:/

The diphthong /ou/ became /o:/ and then /u:/ by the third century BC (see pp. 39–40). On the use of <o> in place of <u> in *poplicos* > *pūblicus* and words derived from it, see Chapter 17. It is possible that *iodicauerunt* (Kropp 11.1.1/26) in a curse tablet from Carthage, in the second century AD, for *iūdicāuērunt* < **ioudik-* is an old-fashioned spelling representing the mid-point of the change (at any rate, no other explanation springs to mind). Since we have long /u:/ in the first syllable, this spelling cannot be explained by confusion of /o:/ and /u/. At least in legal texts, derivatives of *iūs* were particularly favoured for this (Decorte 2015: 160–2), although use of <o> for /u:/ rather than <ou> was never common, even in the archaic period.