

CHAPTER 11

<ii> for /jj/

Single **j* between vowels was lost very early in Latin (possibly at the Proto-Italic stage). Consequently, the sound represented by consonantal <i> between vowels was actually geminate /jj/ from various sources (Weiss 2020: 67–8). I have not been able to find any epigraphical examples of <ii> prior to the first century BC, and Weiss' (2020: 68 fn. 64) statement that '[g]eminate spelling . . . is frequently encountered on inscriptions' seems exaggerated. A search for 'cuiius', one of his two examples, on the whole of the EDCS, finds 13 examples, as opposed to 793 for 'cuius'. The other is *maiioem* (CIL 2.1964.3.10): a search for 'maior' finds 12 examples, including derived names, beside 948 for 'maior'.¹

The same infrequency applies specifically to the dated inscriptions from the first to fourth centuries AD. I searched for selected forms either mentioned by the grammarians or which appear in the corpora: there are 7 instances of *Maiia* to 336 of *Maia* (encompassing the month, divine name, and personal names), 2 of *huiius* to 192 of *huius*, 6 of *Pompeiius* and *Pompeianus* to 914 of *Pompeius* and *Pompeianus*.²

The writers on language often discuss use of <ii>; from Velius Longus, and especially Terentianus Maurus, there are some hints that it might still be in use in the second century AD, but implying that the single spelling is standard. Others do not give the impression that it is much in use in their own time:

sciat etiam Ciceroni placuisse “aiio” “Maiiam”que geminata i scribere . . .

¹ 'Original texts' searches (27/04/2021).

² 'Original texts' searches, with a date range set to '1 to 400'. Strings searched for were: 'maiia', 'maia'; 'huiius', 'huius', 'pompeiiu' (3), 'pompeio' (0), 'pompeia' (3), 'pompeiu' (309), 'pompeio' (179), 'pompeia' (426). I avoided 'pompe(ii)' due to confusion with the city. Too many false positives appeared, primarily names, for a search for 'eiius' and 'eius' to be useful (27/04/2021).

He should know that even Cicero thought it good to write *aïio* and *Maiïa* with geminated *i* . . .³ (Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 1.4.11)

et in plerisque Cicero uidetur auditu emensus scriptionem, qui et ‘Aiiace<m>’ et ‘Maiïam’ per duo ‘i[i]’ scribenda existimauit . . . unde illud <quod> pressius et plenius sonet per duo ‘i’ scribi oportere existimat, sic et ‘Troï <i> am’ et siqua talia sunt. inde crescit ista geminatio et incipit per tria ‘i’ scribi ‘coiïicit’, ut prima syllaba sit ‘coi’, sequentes duae ‘ii’ ‘cit’ . . . at qui ‘Troïam’ et ‘Maiam’ per unum ‘i’ scribunt, negant onerandam pluribus litteris scriptionem, cum sonus ipse sufficiat.

And in many instances Cicero seems to have corrected spelling to match sound; he thought that *Aïax* and *Maiïa* should be written *Aïïax* and *Maiïa*, with two *is* . . . Hence he thinks that this more sustained and fuller sound ought to be written with two *is*, as in *Troïïa*, and words of this sort. From this idea arises the gemination, and *coiïicit* begins to be spelt with three ‘i’s, as though consisting of a first syllable ‘coi’, followed by the double ‘ii’ and then ‘cit’ . . . But those who write *Troïa* and *Maiïa* with a single ‘i’ say that writing ought not to be weighed down by too many letters, the sound itself being sufficient. (Velius Longus, *De orthographia* 5.1 = GL 7.54.16–55.4)

‘i’ geminum scribere nos iubent magistri . . .

Teachers order us to write *i* double . . . (Terentianus Maurus, *De litteris* 175 = GL 6.330.175)

uel gemella si locanda est, ut uidetur pluribus . . .

Or if a double spelling is to be used here, as many think . . . (Terentianus Maurus, *De litteris* 623 = GL 6.343.623)

sic enim scribi per geminam litteram metri ratione desiderat, si quidem potestatem tuetur duplicis consonantis.

It (i.e. *i*) ought to be written with the letter doubled for metrical reasons, if one had an eye on its ability to act as a double consonant. (Diomedes, *Ars grammatica*, GL 1.428.10–19)

sibi autem ipsa subiungitur in his, ut ‘aïio, Troïïa, G<r>aïïus, Aïïax’.

It [i.e. *i*] is joined to itself in these words, as in *aïio*, *Troïïa*, *Graïïus*, *Aïïax*. (Marius Victorinus, *Ars grammatica* 4.102 = GL 6.24.21–22)

aut in *i* litteram solam loco consonantis positam, quam nonnulli geminant, ut *aïo te Aeacida, Romanus uincere posse* . . .

³ The fifth–sixth century AD grammarian Priscian claims that Caesar also prescribed the double <ii> spelling (*Institutiones grammaticae*, GL 2.14.13).

Old-fashioned Spellings

But with regard to the letter *i* placed in a consonantal position, which some people double, as in *aiō te Aeacida, Romanus uincere posse . . .* (Donatus, *Ars grammatica maior* 1.3, p. 606.4–6 = GL 4.368.27–369.2)

Use of <ii> to represent intervocalic /jj/ is very uncommon in the corpora; for example in the Caecilius Jucundus tablets, in which the genre and location of the texts mean that *eius*, *Pompeius*, *Pompeianus*, and the month *Maia* appear frequently, there are 31 instances of <i> and none of <ii>, and in the Isola Sacra inscriptions, 29 instances of <i> in the words *cuius*, *eius*, *huius*, and in the names *Cocceius*, *Manteiane*, *Maiorice*, *Septeius* and *Tonneius*, but none of <ii>. Generally, therefore, I did not count instances of <i>. Where <ii> is used, this may be one of the times when an old-fashioned spelling corresponds to a spelling produced by a writer with lower education, since words like *eius* really did contain a double /jj/, which might be spelt <ii> simply by a writer who closely produced what they pronounced.

The Vindolanda tablets have a single example of <ii> in *Cocceiō* (Tab. Vindol. 645). Either old-fashioned or substandard spelling is possible: the writer uses old-fashioned <ss> in *fussá*, but also has substandard features in *Vindolande* for *Vindolandae* ‘at Vindolanda’ and *resscribere* for *rescribere* ‘to write back’. He writes the name *Maior* without <ii>. There are 4 instances in the curse tablets, across 3 different texts. *Pompeius* appears in the undated Kropp 1.3.1/1 from Maruvium, *eius* in Kropp 3.11/1, fourth century AD, from Britain, and *huius* and *eius* in Kropp 11.2.1/36 from Africa, perhaps the third century AD.

The brief text of Kropp 1.3.1/1 shows no other substandard or old-fashioned features. In the case of Kropp 3.11/1 a substandard spelling seems most likely: there are a number of others in the text, most notably, since they suggest particular attention to representing glides, *puer* for *puer* [puwer] and *puella* for *puella* [puwella]: this is not part of the old-fashioned spelling tradition. There are also straightforward mistakes such as omitted and transposed letters. So I do not think that *eius* here should be taken as an old-fashioned spelling. The same could be true for 11.2.1/36, although the writer here produces several spellings which presumably do not reflect his or her speech (initial <h> in *hac*, *hora*, *hoc* despite hypercorrect *haera*; final <m> in *omn]ium*, *omnium* twice,

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caelum, terram, Veram, de]tinentem, sempiternum, amorem, neminem, alium, quem, consummatum despite *immobile* for *immōbilem*; double <ll> in *nulli* despite *coliga* for *colligā*), so the likelihood of its being old-fashioned is higher; no other old-fashioned spellings are found, however.