VENETIC Louderai – LITH. Laumė

The bronze situla from Cadore (upper Piave, Prov. Belluno) is inscribed (Ca4)
e...i.k.χo.l.tano.s.zoto lo.u.zera.i.kane.i.
eik Goltanos doto Louderai kanei
‘...G. gave (vel sim.) Libera(e)’ as Latin would put it.
Pellegrini-Prosdocimi Ling. Ven. I, 1967, 465–8, give us the basic text and
commentary.

'Ελευθερός as an epithet of Dionysos and Zeus. He compares (133) Lith. Laumė (v.
Fraenkel LEW 345) ~ laūmė, Latv. laūma1. These are related to Lith. liūdis, obso-
lete term for common people (LEW 360–1). Note here that iau is regularly from *eu.

Gāters (LEW 346) has a good account: *loudh-mē is nearly right. He should
have *lōudh-mā. Cf. on the vocalism and suffix my discussion KZ 96, 1982–3, 171–7.
I hope to have made clear there that *-mā requires zero-grade; therefore we assume
that *ou was generalized from the masculine. Note, for comparison, laūmė, Laima
‘luck, fate’ (LEW 333) < *laid-mē (: lēisti, Latv. laīst ‘lassen’).

Prosdocimi did not take account of this matter of vocalism in his footnote, which
is also inconsistent on the fate of *eu in Venetic. As he says correctly, we find teuta in
Ca13 and 24 (u. teuta []).

It is important to note that the European IE branches Baltic and Italic agree on
the feminine gender of this divine appellation. The Baltic -m- suffix is valuable be-
cause it indicates that we have here in *lēudh- an old verbal base attested from its
productive phase. The Italic alone would be ambiguous.

1 Note also, as noticed by our sadly departed J. Kazlauskas, Baltistica III (2), 1967, 243,
Prosdocimi’s contribution „Litewskie laūmė, łącińskie Libera“ to the 1966 vol. III of Acta Baltico-Slavica
in honour of J. Otrębski.