

though not illustrations (of which seventeen can be conveniently accessed online in the reissue of *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* (<http://irt.kcl.ac.uk/irt2009/>), an excellent resource which could itself be updated on the basis of this work). K. takes a sensibly conservative approach to the transcription and interpretation of the texts, and has little patience for the more creative suggestions of those who do not.

K. publishes sixty-nine ‘Latino-Punic’ texts from Tripolitania in all, as well as two ‘Graeco-Punic’ ones from Algeria, and one (probably) Greco-Phoenician example from Syria. Most are epitaphs, three are building inscriptions, one is a brickstamp. This relatively small group of texts emanating from élite contexts nonetheless provides a fascinating glimpse into everyday life in a region where for instance women erected not only mausolea but apparently in one case a *castrum* or fortified farm. It should be noted that K. provides first and foremost a linguistic commentary on the texts themselves and the development of the language that they reveal; there is still much scope for historical and cultural interpretation, for which this catalogue finally provides a solid foundation.

The catalogue is, however, only an appendix to the book under review. K. first provides an introduction to the inscriptions in their historical contexts, usefully summarizing earlier work on local cultural persistence in the region under Rome and discussing the identity of the authors of the inscriptions — Roman colonists (unlikely because the names are Libyan, and what little Latin there is in inland Tripolitania is poor quality), ‘Libyan tribesmen’ (as has been suggested in the past), or (as K. prefers) ‘Libyphoenician’ migrants from the coast? The bulk of the text is then devoted to the phonology and grammar of Late Punic as elucidated by the Latino-Punic texts (which crucially contain the vowels that Phoenician and Punic scripts traditionally omit), contemporary inscriptions in ‘Neo’-Punic script and, with due caution, the passages of transcribed Punic in Plautus’ *Poenulus*. K.’s stated goal is to demonstrate the extent to which Late Punic is a coherent system, not the vulgar and debased dialect of much scholarship on the subject, already half-drowned in Latin. This aim he accomplishes with some style: not only was there ‘a standard system for rendering Punic in Latin letters’ (7), but the Neo-Punic inscriptions too use systematic and explicable spellings which reflect not confusion, but a development in the language in which gutturals were lost in pronunciation, and their lexemes often recycled as vowel-letters in the written language. Speculation is clearly marked as such, as in discussions of possible Libyan substrate influence on the disappearance of gutturals in Late Punic (26–38: bilingual inscriptions suggest that unlike Tuareg, Libyan had no guttural phonemes) and the vowel shortening that occurs in both Punic and African Latin (103–4).

K. brings an enormous variety of ancient and modern languages to bear on his already polyglot topic (mostly rendered in their original scripts as well as in transcription; there is no strict policy with regard to translation into English). In this sense and others, the book is a treat: highly technical but also very readable, and often funny — not the least of the reasons to wholeheartedly recommend it to all those interested in Roman North Africa as well as, of course, Semitic linguistics.

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 doi:10.1017/S0075435814000628

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PRISCIEIN, GRAMMAIRE. *LIVRES XIV, XV, XVI – LES INVARIABLES* (Ed., trans. and comm. *Ars Grammatica*). Paris: J. Vrin, 2013. Pp. 330. ISBN 9782711625000. €19.00.

The French research group *Ars grammatica* (CNRS, UMR 8163 STL) owes its existence to a lamentable lacuna. While the main Greek grammatical texts have been translated into several modern languages, many of the Latin ones have never been translated at all. Priscian who lived in Constantinople towards the end of fifth century A.D., and whose grammar was one of the most important textbooks of the Middle Ages, thus lingered untranslated until Schönberger’s recent five-volume German edition (2008–2010). Thus, at the initiative of Marc Baratin, a group of French specialists in Latin grammar, history of linguistics and philology ventured forth to translate the *Ars Prisciani*, one of the richest but also most difficult Latin grammatical texts. In 2010, the *Ars grammatica* group released the first volume, a translation of Book 17, that constitutes part of the so-called ‘Priscian syntax’. A second volume has now appeared that offers translations of Books 14, 15 and 16, which feature Priscian’s examination of the invariable parts of speech

(preposition, adverb, interjection and conjunction). The volume consists of three parts: an introduction, the Latin text with translation and, finally, five indices.

One of the many merits of the volume's introduction is the meticulous way in which the editors identify, analyse and discuss the many intellectual challenges Priscian's text poses the reader. The greatest difficulty we face, however, is not only to overcome these challenges, but first to detect them. Priscian's text demands readers well versed in the intellectual, linguistic, grammatical and historical world the author inhabits; moreover, his contributions to specific intellectual discourses are not always overt, but frequently elusive, and are not always distinct from one another, but often overlap.

The editors distinguish between two traditions of analysing and cataloguing the invariable parts of speech: one approach based on the lexical aspects of the components of speech, another based on their morpho-semantic aspects, and they argue that Priscian follows the latter. As for Priscian's sources, both Greek (Apollonius Dyscolus, Heliodorus) and Latin (Flavius Caper, Nonius Marcellus), the editors list not only grammarians explicitly quoted by the author, but also those he uses without direct attribution, and they acknowledge the difficulties of examining sources of which we only have indirect or partial knowledge.

The editors also analyse Priscian's priorities when defining the invariable parts of speech. So, in his definition of 'adverb' and 'preposition', Priscian considers morpho-phonological aspects: that is, prosodic issues that arise when these parts of speech are used in processes of word composition and word derivation. In his definition of 'conjunction', the author considers semantic as well as syntactic aspects, depending on whether he regards conjunction as part of a simple or a complex sentence. The editors note that throughout Latin is the object of both Priscian's grammatical analysis and of a comparison with Greek, whenever Priscian wants to show how the former differs from the latter. Greek, however, plays a larger rôle in Book 14 than in Books 15 and 16.

The examples with which Priscian illustrates his analysis highlight the problematic nature of the language he examines. On the one hand, as the editors show, Priscian deals with a closed linguistic body consisting of quotations from poets and prose writers; on the other hand, he explains several of his points with confected examples, supplying Latin quotations for which he is the only authority.

Priscian's examination of the invariable words has enjoyed a significant critical fortune; although, more often than not, later grammarians have borrowed elements from it tacitly. The editors showcase in detail how elements of Priscian's work have been borrowed by Evrard de Bethune, John of Garland, Petrus Helias and Thomas of Erfurt as well as modern grammarians.

In the second part of the volume, the Latin text and its French translation are presented side-by-side, both annotated. The editors adopt M. Hertz's text of the *Ars Prisciani* (GL 2–3) for their translation, but differ from it occasionally. A complete list explaining these deviations can be found at the end of the volume's introduction. Footnotes to the Latin text record textual variants, identify authors and works cited by Priscian, and provide links to other grammarians or other passages in the *Ars Prisciani*. Footnotes to the French text explain points of Priscian's grammatical conceptual framework and provide comparisons with material from other grammarians, both ancient and modern.

The third part of the volume consists of five indices. Index 1 provides a list of authors, both Latin and Greek, cited by Priscian. Indices 2 and 3 gather together Latin and Greek words analysed by Priscian: index 2 lists these words; index 3 recapitulates them and adds the synonyms and quotations with which Priscian explains and illustrates them. Indices 4 and 5 are also complementary: index 4 lists words from Priscian's own vocabulary; index 5 lists French words referring to grammatical concepts present in the text of Priscian, as well as in the footnotes. One can only admire the editors' hard and diligent work in selecting and collecting this material.

This volume deserves to become a reference work for research on Priscian as well as the history of linguistics in line with a volume previously produced by three members of the same research group: M. Baratin, B. Colombat and L. Holtz, *Priscien. Transmission et refondation de la grammaire de l'antiquité aux modernes* (2009). Personally, I am looking forward to the editors' next volume, devoted to Book 18 of the *Ars Prisciani*, which will complete the translation of Priscian's syntax.

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doi:10.1017/S007543581400063X

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