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THE LANGUAGES OF ANCIENT SICILY

T R I B U L A T O (O.) (ed.) *Language and Linguistic Contact in Ancient Sicily.* Pp. xxvi + 422, fig., ills, maps. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Cased, £65, US$110. ISBN: 978-1-107-02931-6.

This book is an excellent contribution to the study of language in ancient Sicily. Its thirteen sections, rich in detail, combine to fashion a sort of state-of-the-question, offering good summaries of previous research, explaining current trends, cautiously arguing for some new claims and setting out future directions for study. The authors are sensitive to extra-linguistic factors, especially historical and literary issues, so the volume should be very useful not just for linguists but for anyone interested in ancient Sicily.

T.'s introduction, 'So many Sicilies', not only summarises and engages the other essays in the volume, but is itself a significant contribution in two parts: a wide-ranging overview of historical, archaeological and ethno-anthropological studies on ancient Sicily, and a guide to linguistic fields related to language contact (onomastics and ethno-linguistic analysis, literature and colonial environment, epigraphy and statistical analysis). The rest of the book falls into three sections (non-classical languages, Greek and Latin), each of which is divided between chapters that introduce the languages and those that use linguistic evidence to shed light on language contact in Sicily.

In the first section P. Poccetti, 'Language Relations in Sicily', examines linguistic evidence for the identity of the Sicani and Siceli but finds no clear trace of ethnic, cultural or social distinctions between them. The Sicani remain more mysterious, while the Siceli can be traced back to Italy in the second half of the second millennium, and something of their language can be gleaned from glosses of Doric comedy and the blended language of some Greek inscriptions. Poccetti reviews the most significant features these traces share with Sabellian, viewing the straits as a kind of cultural and linguistic crossroads and stressing that mercenary immigration played an important role in language contact.

S. Marchesini's 'The Elymian language' provides a concise sketch of the (apparently Indo-European) language attested in the inscriptions of western Sicily (Segesta, Eryx) in the archaic period. There is very little to go by: some incomplete private texts inscribed on vases and some coin legends. There appears to be an a-stem nominative in -*a* and dative in -*ai*, a verb εμι 'I am' (unless a loan); a dative plural in -*b* may appear in ΣΕΓΕΣΤΑΖΙΒ and ΕΡΙΚΑΖΙΒ, but the interpretation is contested. The alphabet is of Greek origin, probably borrowed from Selinous, but modified by Elymian speakers. Marchesini detects two different sociotypes in use (one employed for shorter texts by inscribers with limited competence, another for longer texts written by those with greater

ability), and two chronological phases. Onomastics show evidence of a multi-ethnic population.

M.G. Amadasi Guzzo, 'Phoenician and Punic in Sicily', describes with clarity Sicily's importance as the source of the very earliest attestations of a western tradition of Phoenician that surfaces here in multiple areas: phonology (loss of laryngeals, pharyngeals characteristic of Punic), morphology (tendency to a certain kind of dissimilation), the early adoption of a syntactic order and vocabulary common in later dedicatory formulae, and script (orthographic tendencies that later prevailed in Punic).

In 'Oscan in Sicily' J. Clackson examines the evidence for the history of Oscan before the Roman period. He suggests Oscan at Messana is a unique case of linguistic conservatism among Italian immigrants in Sicily and attempts to cast doubt on Lejeune's claim that the names on the Entella tablets are distinctively Oscan. The chapter is framed by a discussion of a remark in Plato's eighth letter that Greek will be extinguished from Sicily by *Opici*, a difficult term probably best interpreted as a later Greek reference to Oscan speakers. Clackson takes the letter as a forgery and considers it a projection back to the fourth century of a third century situation when Oscan mercenaries controlled Messana.

Non-Greek names are infrequent in archaic Greek inscriptions with the exception of *defixiones*. The curse text from Selinous lists twenty-three names, only five of which are Greek. The names were previously studied by O. Masson and then R. Arena, but G. Meiser, 'Traces of Language Contact in Sicilian Onomastics', takes issue with some of their identifications, particularly those labelled 'Sicel', and argues that several more of the non-Hellenic names are of Elymian origin than previously recognised. He further argues for the presence of an indigenous Elymian patronymic in -*aios* and notes the apparent uncertainty over its use (sometimes appearing as a patronymic adjective, sometimes in the genitive case), which seems to indicate 'language interference from an underlying Elymian model onto Greek' (p. 161).

O. Simkin, 'Coins and Language in Ancient Sicily', shows how important careful attention to coins can be for casting light on linguistic, social and political complexities. Unlike Elymian or Phoenician, there are no coin legends in Sicanian or Sicel, but Simkin finds valuable substrate ('Sicanian') toponymns and discusses two phonological and derivational difficulties in Sicel: *Dankle/Zancle* (cf. Lat. *falx*, *fancla*, *daculum*) and *litra* (Lat. *libra*). The latter came to Sicily via the mainland 'either as an inherited Proto-Italic form or as a later loan from a mainland Italic language' (p. 173).

In Section 2 S. Mimbrera contributes two detailed chapters, the first of which describes the Ionic and Doric of Sicilian Greek as attested to the end of the fifth century B.C. Sicilian Ionic was gradually supplanted by Doric as political upheavals led to population movements. By the fourth century the older dialects were replaced by a koine, which Mimbrera carefully describes in her second chapter and which, she argues, is best understood as a more or less uniform Sicilian Doric koine, a base of Sicilian Doric with an addition of Attic-Ionic koine.

In an engaging chapter, 'Intimations of Koine in Sicilian Doric', A.C. Cassio considers the issue of Sicilian Doric borrowings in koine by studying the glosses of Doric comedy and mime in the Antiatticist. His nuanced investigation finds that every instance of agreement between Sicilian Doric and koine seems to have its own explanation and that ascribing borrowings to a colloquial stratum is often an oversimplification of a far more complex history.

In a chapter certain to stimulate discussion A. Willi, 'We Speak Peloponnesian', argues that *Doris mitior* forms were the basis of Theocritan Doric and that the *severior* forms were a patina added to the most conspicuous lexemes and categories. Willi suggests Theocritus added this patina to the back vowels (front vowels show a *mitior* treatment) because he

considered the *severior* forms pre-eminent, and he used them to distinguish his writing from koine (p. 273), where the closing of back vowels was more advanced than that of the front vowels.

The third and final section features two longer chapters on Latin. T.'s '*Siculi bilingues*?' covers inscriptions in Republican and Augustan Sicily. T. delivers a complex and not easily summarised picture of a topic whose investigation is hampered by a lack of evidence and material, limited publication, controversial statistics, and complications of typology and epigraphic culture. Earlier conclusions based merely on geographical or chronological factors or perceived class distinctions are misleading and are put into question by newer methods that take into account these difficulties. While there is evidence of Greek/Roman/Punic trilingualism, she suggests Romans were bilingual but Greeks were not, and that Latin remained a minority language.

K. Korhonen, 'Sicily in the Roman Imperial Period' (Augustus to A.D. 535), explores 'several centuries of fairly stable bilingualism in Sicily' (p. 367) under three categories: economy and demography, political and military life and social order, religion and literary culture. Both Greek and Latin enjoyed prestige and neither were a clear marker of social status. In early Imperial times the prestige of literary culture and religion insured there was a sizeable and well-connected Greek community. Latin was maintained in the extensive Roman colonies, in administrative and religious communities and by the land-owning class. In late Imperial times the proportion of Latin speakers probably grew through immigration, especially from Africa.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO HOMER

This volume is offered as 'a critical and literary introduction to Homer, not a scholarly one'; its purpose is to fill a perceived gap in Homeric studies, for 'few attempt to grapple with the inexplicable surplus pleasure we gain from reading the poems' (p. ix). This assertion is questionable, but it does frame clearly the criterion by which the book is to be judged, namely, its ability to offer a compelling entrée into a foundational work of Western literature.

A preface establishes methodological points of reference. Marx, New Critical formalism, deconstruction, *Who Killed Homer?* and the oral tradition are name-checked in the process of identifying the locus of the analysis here at the level of wordplay (Lacan also emerges as a significant touchstone, e.g. pp. 29 and 52). Humour, and generally the ways in which 'characters lose control of the language' (p. xi), are to reveal tensions between the epics and the culture that produced them. A further introductory chapter suggests that the key to characterisation in the *Iliad* is the manner in which 'the desires of separate characters infiltrate the desires of others' (p. 1). In practice, such infiltration is revealed in ambiguities of syntax and word choice; thus, for example, Calchas' reluctance to name the *andra* responsible for the plague in Book 1 is said to draw attention to the overlapping desires of Agamemnon and Achilles (pp. 19–22).