

Murcia's article on the Mauri shows how geography influences the development of languages, in this case the sub-Saharan area versus the Mediterranean one. The fact that this is a relatively new field of study makes it necessary to present an overview of the linguistic panorama in North Africa.

The articles on the so-called 'Italic area' vary. S. Destephen's article is an overview of the coexistence of Greek and Latin in the province of Illyricum. Here the long span of time studied (from the first century to the sixth century AD) allows us to appreciate how administrative frontiers do not correspond to linguistic frontiers and how the appearance of Christianity modified the linguistic panorama. Here, the importance of using all the available evidence is clear; the number of inscriptions decreases over time, which gives the impression of a simplified linguistic context, while the literary sources point towards the opposite conclusion. P. Pocetti studies linguistic contacts from the point of view of personal names in relation to place names by comparing the epigraphic with the literary sources. G. Van Heems' article, meanwhile, focuses on a very specific topic; on the use of *f-* or *h-* in the Etruscan language as a way to strengthen the origin of the speaker.

Moving on towards southern Gaule, Bats focuses on the evidence left by the use of Greek and Etruscan as *linguae francae* in the Gulf of Lion, while A. Mullen focuses on the circumstances of the arrival of Greek in the area, possibly through the Italic groups that traded there, and discusses the overestimated role of Massalia in this process.

Schrijver's article, the last in the book, proposes experimentation in order to search for an origin of the Pre-Indo-European languages. The innovative theories of the article seem a suitable ending for a book that aims to open up new paths in the study of ancient languages.

*Contacts linguistiques* successfully tackles the problems of the study of ancient languages, such as the scarce and partial evidence, by proposing ways to deal with them through methodology and the use of all the available evidence.

ROSARIO ROVIRA GUARDIOLA  
The British Museum  
crovira@britishmuseum.org

GRASSI (G.F.) **Semitic Onomastics from Dura Europos: The Names in Greek Script and from Latin Epigraphs** (History of the Ancient Near East Monographs 12). Padua: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2012. Pp. 333. €80. 9788895672236.

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This is a most welcome addition to the reference literature on Near Eastern onomastics. It will be a useful tool in the study of the cultural and onomastic melting-pot of Dura Europos and of wider use in the study of other onomastic corpora in the region. There are works devoted to Nabataean, Palmyrene and Hatran Aramaic names (F. al-Khraysheh, A. Negev; J.K. Stark; S. Abbadi) but it has been more difficult to find the material from minor corpora (for example in early Syriac: H.J.W. Drijvers and J.F. Healey) and most difficult of all, at least for Semitists, has been the tracing of Semitic names in Greek (and Latin) transcription or adaptation. The main resource for this has been W. Wuthnow and, for papyri from Egypt, F. Preisigke and D. Foraboschi.

Grassi's book is a significant step forward. It arises from a thesis defended at Udine University in 2006: *L'onomastica delle epigrafi di Dura Europos*. It is, perhaps, surprising that it took six years to publish it, but it is an advantage that the publication is in English. An important article by Grassi appeared in 2007 in the journal *Kaskal* (4, 267–95), presenting a discussion of the typology of the names, Aramaic and Arabic elements, divine names incorporated in theophoric names, etc. The present volume is in effect the database on which that article was based.

It may be noted that the subtitle goes some way towards rectifying the misleading main title, which suggests that the book is only concerned with the Semitic names. In fact the 'Catalogue' (13–105) lists *all* the Dura names in Greek script, whether Semitic in origin or not, and this fact makes it even more useful. It is the subsequent *discussion* (107–272) which is focused on the Semitic names in Greek and Latin script: this is in what is called a 'Lexicon', though it is in fact a name-by-name analysis centred on the meaning of each name, a review of the different existing opinions and Semitic parallels. The discussions are excellent and important comparative material is covered, though perhaps not perfectly.

It is worth noting that the corpus of material which is closest in every sense to the Dura parchments and papyri is the so-called Middle

Euphrates archive published in the late 1990s (D. Feissel and J. Gascou, 'Documents d'archives romains inédits du moyen euphrate (IIIe s. après J.-C.). I. Les pétitions (P. Euphr. 1 à 5)', *Journal des Savants* (1995) 65–119; 'Documents d'archives romains inédits du moyen euphrate (IIIe s. après J.-C.). III. actes diverses et lettres (P. Euphr. 11 à 17)', *Journal des Savants* (2000) 157–208; D. Feissel, J. Gascou and J. Teixidor, 'Documents d'archives romains inédits du moyen euphrate (IIe s. après J.-C.). II. Les actes de vente-achat (P. Euphr. 6 à 10)', *Journal des Savants* (1997) 3–57). They are from the region of Dura and are similar to the Dura papyri in style and content. Their existence is noted by Grassi and they are sometimes, but not always, cited. For example, she discusses at 186 the name Δουσαριος at Dura without telling us that the name Δυσάριος (clearly related to the Nabataean divine name Dushara) appears in *P.Euphr.* 17 v. 29. At 125 we have discussion of Αβσαλμας, which has close parallels in early Syriac and which is an assimilated form of the name 'Abdšalma attested at Palmyra: but it also appears in *P.Euphr.* 8 v. 1, 9. I will want to annotate my copy of Grassi to include this highly relevant material systematically.

However, the credit side of the balance-sheet is considerable. It is through the alphabetic listing given by Grassi that I have been able to improve a reading in an early Syriac inscription set in mosaic, which I published in 2006 (J.F. Healey, 'A new Syriac mosaic inscription', *Journal of Semitic Studies* 51, 313–27). A personal name in that inscription is ambiguous: it is either BRSGD or BRSGR. I opted for BRSGD in my edition, but now see that Βαρσαγαρ can be defended on the

basis of a restoration of a Dura text. The spelling with {s} (not {š}) in this Syriac parallel undermines, however, Grassi's assumption that the Semitic form would be *bršgr*. In the same Syriac mosaic we also find the personal name *pp*', paralleled in Grassi by Παπα. In the case of both of these names, my discussion could have been improved by having access to Grassi's book.

The introduction (1–6) and a discussion of the transcription of Semitic names into Greek suffer slightly from poor English, though it is only rarely that the text becomes incomprehensible. I doubt that the non-Semitist would understand the statement at 4 about the root RDY or that at 10 about the root DKY. Both statements suggest that the author is immersed in comparative Semitics.

The claim in the introduction (6) that 'IGLS has never included Dura and Palmyra' is misleading. The first (very substantial) fascicule of J.-B. Yon's IGLS volume on Palmyra was published in 2012, admittedly long after Grassi's 2006 thesis was defended, though it was long foreseen (*Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie: Palmyre* (IGLS XVII, fascicule 1; BAH 195), Beirut).

This book makes a significant contribution to the study of the comparative onomastics of the Graeco-Roman Middle East. The names of this period in this region have always excited interest because of the fact that they reflect vividly the interaction of the Hellenistic and Semitic (and Iranian) cultural worlds in places like Palmyra and Dura. Grassi is much to be congratulated and thanked.

JOHN F. HEALEY

*University of Manchester*  
john.healey@manchester.ac.uk