

*Becoming Roman, Writing Latin? Literacy and Epigraphy in the Roman West*. Edited by ALISON E. COOLEY. Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series no. 48. Portsmouth, RI 2002. ISBN 1-887829-48-2. 192 pp. USD 69.50.

*Becoming Roman, Writing Latin?*, the proceedings of seminar in Glasgow in 2001, is, in effect, an excellent volume, not just a 'collection of papers'. It is a treasure for anyone interested in two aspects of the Roman world: literacy and bilingualism. Some of the papers explore areas left uncharted by William Harris' seminal *Ancient Literacy* (1989). In the contributions which touch upon bilingualism, this is not the 'standard' bilingualism of the ancient world, with Greek and Latin as protagonists. On the contrary, in the contexts discussed in this volume, Latin was used alongside an indigenous language. The discussion circles around the concept of cultural identity, but never lands on it – as Greg Woolf puts it in his Afterword, one might try to "move 'cultural identity' away from the centre of discussion" (p. 187), and replace it with concepts referring to more specific identities.

Despite the emphasis on 'other' bilingualisms, in the beginning there are Greek and Latin – but with Punic, Oscan, and Elymian. Jonathan R.W. Prag's "Epigraphy by numbers: Latin and the epigraphic culture in Sicily" (pp. 15–31) is an interesting attempt to apply a statistical method to Sicilian epigraphy. The most important contribution of this paper, however, is the excellent introductory discussion on the concepts of epigraphic habit and epigraphic culture in the Sicilian context. Prag then proceeds to discuss the statistics of inscriptions published in the most important publications. In his comments, Prag rightly stresses the short life span of Latin epigraphy on the island.

From the statistical point of view, there are not many *lacunae* in Prag's bibliography (p. 20). The most notable concern Syracuse, which is why the numbers for the city are significantly smaller than the actual number of published inscriptions. Paolo Orsi's richly channelled publishing activity has not received all the attention it deserves, and important publications by G. Agnello, S. L. Agnello and A. Ferrua are not listed. Still, Syracuse with its ca. 1400 inscriptions is a statistical anomaly in Sicily. Furthermore, Prag almost entirely omits the inscriptions of Lipara, of which there are ca. 900. (The statistics for Catania have also changed after the 2004 publication of *Le iscrizioni del Museo civico di Catania*, by the present author.)

Andrew Burnett's "Latin on coins of the western empire" (pp. 33–40) throws interesting light on language use in the local coinages in Sicily, Africa and Spain. In Sicily, there are some quite extraordinary cases of a language switch in a coin legend. In a similar way, in some Spanish coinages, bilingual Latin-Iberian legends are attested from ca. 100 BC on. Finally, in all areas, the local coinages were 'Romanized', before coming to an end altogether. With Jonathan Edmondson's paper (pp. 41–60), we move to Lusitania, where the birth of epigraphic cultures is analysed. Edmondson underlines some distinctive characteristics of the epigraphic culture in the region, such as the statues of warriors and of wild boars and bulls, with Latin inscriptions incised on the warriors' tunics and on the animals' flanks. Ralph Häussler (pp. 61–76) discusses the transition from local epigraphic cultures, often using indigenous languages, to a more standard Latin imperial culture. He notes a shift of perspective in local epigraphies towards 'higher' forms of political organization.

Before the discussion of the northwestern provinces, the focus returns briefly to Pompeii, where Alison E. Cooley discusses the survival of Oscan (pp. 77–86). Oscan epigraphy played a part in the city in the period preceding the colony of Sulla, and was "clearly a sophisticated practice". Even though, in the colony, Oscan epigraphy was almost entirely superseded by Latin, there are some instances of Oscan even from the last period of Pompeii. Cooley rightly points out that there is no reason to suppose that all Oscan inscriptions would have been destroyed at a certain point, as has been suggested. Using Joshua Fishman's classic terminology, she suggests a transition from "diglossia without bilingualism" immediately after colonization to "diglossia with bilingualism ... during the Augustan period, or at least by the time of the eruption". Not being a specialist in the history of Pompeii, I still think that the "diglossia without bilingualism" situation, if it ever was there, must have been a short-lived one.

Ton Derks and Nico Roymans' paper (pp. 87–134) presents a type of support which not too many epigraphists may be familiar with, namely seal-boxes from the Rhine delta, especially from the *civitas Batavorum*. These seal-boxes are now "generally accepted as having been containers for wax imprints used to seal a range of items, and written documents in particular". The context here is mostly military, but not exclusively so. The seal-boxes are certainly thought-provoking material in the context of literacy. The catalogue of them, however, is longish – maybe a form of web-based publication could have been used?

The last three papers, by Jonathan H. C. Williams (135–149), William S. Hanson and Richard Conolly (151–164), and Roger S. O. Tomlin (165–179) deal with the less monumental, but the more interesting, epigraphy of Roman Britain. Hanson and Conolly's research on the distribution of *stili* in British rural sites continues to explore the prerequisites for literacy, and forms a noteworthy parallel to Derks and Roymans' paper. The same theme continues in Tomlin's excellent discussion on curse tablets or 'judicial prayers', as the author calls them.

Greg Woolf's afterword, "How the Latin West was won" (pp. 181–188), sums up the discussion. He makes some remarks worthy of consideration, such as "Latin was never as administratively or culturally central to Rome as Greek was to Hellenistic Empires" (p. 181). However, though some situations discussed in the volume support this statement, some may point in the opposite direction. Woolf stresses the need to analyze literacy more accurately, with the aid of concepts such as "military literacy", "monumental literacy", "commercial literacy", etc. The key to the emergence of the Latin West were the numerous innovations and transformations in writing practices.

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*Supplementa Italica. Imagines. Supplementi fotografici ai volumi italiani del CIL. Latium Vetus I (CIL, XIV; Eph. Epigr., VII e IX). Latium Vetus praeter Ostiam.* Di MARIA GRAZIA GRANINO CECERE. Presentazione di ANNA MARIA REGGIANI. Edizioni Quasar, Roma 2005. ISBN 88-7140-283-9. 860 pp., ca. 2000 ill. USD 555.

This is a grand work on a grand scale which will be of inestimable service to students of Latium vetus, that is the area to the east and south of Rome and including places such as Lanuvium, Tusculum, Praeneste and Tibur, and its epigraphical monuments. It is also very