

Forthcoming as: **Prag, J.R.W.** Provincia Sicilia: between Roman and local in the third century BC. In E. García Riaza (ed.), *De Fronteras a provincias. Interacción e integración en Occidente (ss.III-I aC)*, Palma de Mallorca: Ediciones Universitat de les Illes Balears.

Provincia Sicilia: between Roman and local in the third century BC¹

Videte nunc maiorum sapientiam, qui cum Siciliam tam opportunum subsidium belli atque pacis ad rem publicam adiunxissent, tanta cura Siculos tueri ac retinere voluerunt ut non modo eorum agris vectigal novum nullum imponerent, sed ne legem quidem venditionis decumarum neve vendundi aut tempus aut locum commutarent, ut certo tempore anni, ut ibidem in Sicilia, denique ut lege Hieronic venderent. Voluerunt eos in suis rebus ipsos interesse, eorumque animos non modo lege nova sed ne nomine quidem legis novo commoveri.

I would draw your attention to the wise action of our forefathers: having secured to our country, by the acquisition of Sicily, a valuable source of strength in peace and war, they were so earnestly resolute to secure and maintain the loyalty of its people, that they refrained not only from imposing any new tax upon Sicilian land, but even from altering either the conditions of sale of the right to collect the tithe or the time and place of such sale, so that the Sicilians should continue to sell these rights at a fixed time of year, locally in Sicily, and, finally, as provided by the laws of Hieron. They resolved that the Sicilians should manage their own affairs themselves, and should not be irritated either by a new law, or even by a new name for the old law.

Cic. *Verr.* 3.14 (transl. H.G. Greenwood, *Loeb*)

The island of Sicily, incorporated into the Roman empire as one of the first *provinciae* between 264 and 210 BC, provides one of the classic examples of the flexible approach to imperialism which is often considered to be so typical of the Roman Republic - the application of the so-called *lex Hieronica*, the pre-existing taxation system of Hieron II of Syracuse, as the primary system of taxation for Rome's first overseas province.² One can of course debate the extent to which Cicero's claim was strictly true, as well as the precise moment of adoption, and whether the system in some form extended beyond the kingdom of Syracuse prior to the Roman conquest.³ But it is impossible to deny the fundamentally local (and unique - see Cic. *Verr.* 3.12) nature of the system within the Republican empire, or the fact that Cicero was able to make the claim in 70 BC that it exemplified the *maiorum sapientia* and was done to secure the loyalty of the Sicilians no less than to secure revenue for Rome. The beginnings of Roman taxation in Sicily is a much-debated topic, and one to which I shall return in a forthcoming paper; in this paper I shall instead explore a variety of developments, at both smaller and larger scale, that similarly reflect the complex world of Republican imperialism in the third century BC.⁴

The early history of Roman presence in Sicily exemplifies the broader difficulties of writing the history of Republican provincialisation, and in turn illustrates why placing the emphasis upon interactions and processes of integration may be helpful – in contrast to a traditional tendency to focus upon wars and institutions, which in turn encourages a rather false and frequently teleological sense that there is some regular and coherent pattern to be extracted. A number of examples from the beginnings of Roman transmarine expansion, mostly of the period of the First Punic War, are explored in what follows. Several of them serve as an important reminder that the desire for a regular framework of imperial behaviour and 'provincialisation' is both a historian's pipe-dream and one of

¹ I am very grateful to Enrique García Riaza for his invitation to participate and his extremely generous hospitality. Some apology is due to the reader for the unifying degree of self-reference in what follows; this is a consequence of attempting to synthesise a number of themes that I have pursued individually in more detail elsewhere in recent years.

² A typical expression of this as a Roman ideological claim in Diod. Sic. 23.2.1, cf. *Ined. Vat.* 3.

³ See especially Pinzone 1999a.

⁴ On Sicilian taxation, besides Pinzone (prev. note) see in particular Carcopino 1914, Crawford 1985: 104, Gallo 1992, Serrati 2000, Naco del Hoyo 2003: 86-95 (with France 2007), Soraci 2003.

the perils of hindsight. The Roman empire was not born by accident, and the Romans were hardly primitive imperialists, but there is a sense in which the empire took shape through a series of ‘accidents’ of invention and adaptation.⁵ Integration and interaction are two-way (or multi-way) processes. They are also very dangerous terms if not used with due caution, since they carry the misleading implication of peaceful negotiation, on a journey towards some idealised cosmopolitan society.⁶

In 252 BC, the consul C. Aurelius Cotta was responsible for marking out a (pre-existing) road between the major cities of Panhormus and Agrigentum; we know this because of the existence of a milestone from the road.⁷ *Prima facie*, there is little reason to dispute the implications of the milestone: the only consul known to have been active in Sicily with this name is that of 252 (and cos. II in 248 BC); the lettering fits the third century BC; and the historical context makes sense, following shortly after the capture of Panhormus (254 BC) and the consolidation of the Roman position in central western Sicily, albeit still without control of the crucial western harbour of Lilybaeum. But, because there is no other provincial milestone attested for at least another hundred years, and because there are very few Roman milestones indeed from so early a date, many prefer to downdate the Sicilian stone to some time in the second century. An alternative approach would be to place the emphasis upon the complete absence of a provincial framework at this moment in time (there was after all not even a *praetor peregrinus* at this date, let alone any regular overseas provinces), and to note instead that milestones were being erected by Roman magistrates in central Italy at the same time, which suggests that such an action was entirely conceivable among Cotta’s contemporaries and that there was no inherent reason to behave differently in Sicily.⁸ One might also observe that Rome was encouraged into Sicily by the Oscan-speaking Mamertines (originally Campanian mercenaries) who appealed to *homophylia*, perhaps to be understood as a shared ‘Italic’ identity.⁹ The Mamertines were by no means the only such immigrants to the island, Sicily having experienced a considerable influx of Campanians, primarily in the form of mercenaries, since the later fifth century BC. In the course of the First Punic War, at the opposite end of the island, we find the Elymian city of Entella, itself previously occupied by Campanian mercenaries and now exhibiting a strong mix of Oscan and Greek names, honouring a Roman, Tiberius Claudius of Antium, with a wholly Greek decree of *proxenia* for his assistance in the city’s *sunoikismos*, while he was there in the role of *epimeletes* (presumably *praefectus oppidi / praesidii*, the unusual term reflecting the early date and fluidity therefore of formal translations and so a lack of clearly established institutional frameworks at this date).¹⁰ In other words, it is not clear that the Romans initially had it in mind to differentiate Sicily from Italy in their imperial activities; the Mamertines for one placed the emphasis upon the affinities rather than the differences in their dealings with Rome, and Messana’s seemingly arbitrary separation from the Italian peninsula was to be emphasised by Cicero at a later date.¹¹

The milestone illustrates other phenomena that could be subsumed under the headings of integration and interaction, and which remind one that such processes are multi-directional. The stone may be inscribed in the alien language (for western Sicily) of Latin, but the spelling of the consul’s *cognomen*

⁵ See especially the comments of Crawford 1990 on the development of provincial empire; it should be stressed that this is not the same thing as the suggestion that Roman imperialism advanced by ‘a chapter of accidents’, or that the empire was acquired ‘in a fit of absent-mindedness’ (Cary and Scullard 1975³: 168 and 169).

⁶ See the aposite comments of Emmanuele Curti (2001: 24-5) on the sanitizing effects of the terms ‘negotiation’ or ‘debate’, frequently used in discussions of cultural interaction. On the shift away from ‘Romanization’ towards ideas of ‘integration, identity, continuity, and innovation’, and discussion of several recent volumes exploring this in the Republican West, see Hitchner 2009.

⁷ *ILLRP* 1277; Prag 2006a develops many of the points made below in more detail, and lists earlier bibliography.

⁸ On the *via Appia* (CIL I² 21 = *ILLRP* 448, c. 253 BC, from Posta di Mesa).

⁹ Polyb. 1.10.2, with most recently Russo 2010: 74-9.

¹⁰ On Campanians in Sicily, see Tagliamonte 1994. For Claudius honoured at Entella, Ampolo 2001: B1 (*SEG* 30.1120), with Corsaro 1982.

¹¹ For the general point about not presuming an original intention to create a province in Sicily see Crawford 1990; Cicero on Messana, Cic. *Ver.* 4.26, 5.160-170.

(nominative *Cottas*) strongly suggests a significant Greek influence, both in the precocious use of a double consonant in Latin and in the termination *-as*, which reflects Greek rather than Latin rules of declension. Even the letter forms themselves suggest that a local mason may have done the cutting. Latin may be symbolic of the conquering power, but the interactions at work go both ways. Such crossover is by no means unusual; other Sicilian Latin inscriptions of the Republican period (themselves strikingly few and far between) often reflect similar processes, and such developments are familiar from elsewhere in the Republican empire.¹² Vice versa, when Romans came to erect milestones some one hundred years later in other Greek-speaking parts of the Empire, they instead chose to include a Greek text.¹³ The victors could be integrated no less than the vanquished, as Horace famously observed.

The appeal by the Mamertines alluded to above belonged within a well-established discourse in Sicily and southern Italy of appeals to kinship and the language of Greeks versus barbarians.¹⁴ Rome, on entering Sicily, found itself caught up in a sequence of claims and counter-claims about invading barbarians, not dissimilar to that which would be repeated in mainland Greece at the end of the third century.¹⁵ This is nicely illustrated by the apparent speed with which, once Rome entered Sicily, several other Sicilian communities sought to improve their standing with Rome by means of kinship appeals. Rome was not necessarily the initiator in a process of interaction which becomes an important part of the 'imperial' integration of the Republican empire.¹⁶ The Elymian city of Segesta went over to Rome in 263 BC; this is most likely the moment when the city appealed to a shared Trojan kinship with Rome.¹⁷ Later evidence suggests that at some point the Sicilian city of Haluntium also inserted itself into the Trojan legend, although whether the First Punic War provided the context cannot be known.¹⁸ The Sikel town of Centuripae also surrendered in 263 BC, and we know from later evidence that a claim was made to kinship with Lanuvium, and thence most likely to Rome.¹⁹ The Centuripae claim has more in common with the Mamertine one, in that genealogical links were traditionally claimed between the Sikels and the Latins, reinforcing the idea already noted that Sicilians need not be distinct from Italians (although they certainly could be, as we shall see below).²⁰

These episodes are, like the milestone, commonly lowered in date to one of the other moments of Rome's (re)organisation of the province of Sicily, such as *c.*210 BC after the sack of Syracuse, or *c.*131 BC, at the end of the First Slave War.²¹ This process is part of a much deeper historiographical problem which affects study of Roman imperialism in the West and for which Polybius must shoulder much of the blame: both indirectly, for the simple reason that his account, inevitably hellenocentric, is the principal one to survive; but also directly, not least in Polybius's desire to redress what he saw as

¹² *ILLRP* 320 and *CIL* I² 2649 (+ fasc. ii.4, p.1096) from Halaesa and Agrigentum both employ Greek-style accusatives for the honorand; cf. Adams 2003: 650-1 (for Republican Latin inscriptions in Sicily, Prag 2007a: nn. 47, 67-9).

¹³ As for example *CIL* I².2977 and *SEG* 40.543 (*via Egnatia*, Macedonia) or *ILLRP* 455 (*via Aquillia*, Asia; full list of examples in French 1988: 505 plus *EA* 17 (1991), 53-4 and *AE* 1995.1464).

¹⁴ For the long-running discourse of the Punic barbarian in Sicily, see Prag 2010; for the kinship appeals discussed here, see in more detail Prag, forthcoming a.

¹⁵ For which see e.g. Champion 2000.

¹⁶ See especially Erskine 2001, on the role of kinship claims in exchange and interaction between Greeks and Romans. Erskine notes (224) that 'emphasis on Trojan ancestry reflects the Greek perspective, the Greek way of looking at the transaction. While it may be Greek in origin it is not, however, simply Greek; it is part of the exchange between Greeks and Romans, acknowledged also by the Romans.'

¹⁷ *D.S.* 23.5 and *Zonar.* 8.9 for the surrender to Rome in 263 BC. For kinship also *Cic. Ver.* 4.72, 5.83, 5.125; Battistoni 2009: 79-81, 96-7 and forthcoming.

¹⁸ *D.H.* 1.51.2, cf. *Verg. Aen.* 5.298-9.

¹⁹ *Cic. Ver.* 5.83 (cf. 2.163, *Diod. Sic.* 23.4); *AE* 1990.437 / *SEG* 42.837 with Manganaro 1963 and 2006 (and cf. *SEG* 26.1123 with Battistoni 2006).

²⁰ As e.g. reported in *Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom.* 1.22, cf. Sammartano 1998 on Sikel origins; for possible early interactions and exploitation of the theme in relation to Rome, Zevi 1999.

²¹ See however Kienast 1984: 114 for a reading more in line with this account.

the imbalance created by his immediate predecessor Timaeus's obsession with all things Sicilian.²² For Polybius, the true *symploke* in Mediterranean history emerged after Rome's defeat of Carthage; with a single power in the West, the story could turn eastwards.²³ Maurice Holleaux's sustained attempt to deny significant interaction between East and West prior to the Second Macedonian War still casts a long shadow, and Polybius' influence has recently been demonstrated afresh in Arthur Eckstein's decision to give 200 BC and the moment when 'Rome Enters the Greek East' pride of place in the story of Republican expansion.²⁴ I do not for a moment wish to downplay the significance of any of this, but it is nonetheless true that the West in general receives short shrift, and a lack of good sources is an increasingly poor justification for the ready adoption of the highly selective meta-historical narrative which runs from Athens and Sparta, through Thebes, Macedon, and Alexander the Great, to the *diadochoi* and the Punic Wars, and the rise of Rome at the expense of the Hellenistic kingdoms.²⁵ The West is most commonly brought back into the picture as part of the Romanizing world of the Augustan empire, which in turn serves only to repeat the idea that this was a disconnected set of backwaters on the periphery of the ancient Mediterranean, of little relevance or significance. Of course, I exaggerate; but by how much?

Other Sicilian episodes could just as easily be placed in this mid-third-century context. The sanctuary of Astarte / Aphrodite / Venus of Eryx became a focal point for the final years of the First Punic War, with Hamilcar Barca besieged on the mountain right up until the final Carthaginian surrender.²⁶ Cicero and Diodorus both allude to the existence of a group of 17 loyal cities which Rome at some point made responsible for a garrison of 200 soldiers at the sanctuary, while also granting them the right to wear gold (clothes and/or jewellery) at the sanctuary. The only city which we can explicitly place in this group is Tyndaris which, after its initial attempt to join Rome was blocked by the Carthaginians, successfully transferred its allegiance to Rome in the later 250s BC.²⁷ There is no doubt that the sanctuary occupied an important place in Roman attempts to control the western part of the island (it had been a focus previously of Pyrrhus' abortive attempt to drive Carthage out of the island).²⁸ The sanctuary appears to have been the principal *locus* of the western half of Sicily's anomalous double quaestorship, and indeed may even have been the original reason for the posting of a quaestor to the island.²⁹ The goddess was 'imported' into Rome in the early stages of the Second Punic War (217 BC), when the Romans had been actively strengthening western Sicily against expected Carthaginian invasion.³⁰ The sanctuary continued to be a focal point for Roman attentions throughout the Republican period and into the early Empire.³¹

²² Polyb. 12.23.7: 'The fact, in my opinion, is that Timaeus was sure that if Timoleon, who had sought fame in a mere *oxybaphos*, as it were, Sicily, could be shown to be worthy of comparison with the most illustrious heroes, he himself, who treated only of Italy and Sicily, could claim comparison with writers whose works dealt with the whole world and with universal history.' (transl. Paton, *Loeb*).

²³ Polyb. 3.3.1: 'Next, after summing up the doings of the Romans and Carthaginians in Spain, Africa, and Sicily I shall shift the scene of my story definitely, as the scene of action shifted, to Greece and its neighbourhood' (transl. Paton, *Loeb*).

²⁴ Holleaux 1921; Eckstein 2006 (e.g. 5-6, arguing, however, that the explanation lies in a systemic crisis in interstate relations at this moment in the eastern Mediterranean) and 2008.

²⁵ As for example in Polyb. 1.2.

²⁶ Polyb. 1.55-59.

²⁷ Diod. Sic. 4.83.1, 4-7 and Cic. *Ver.* 5.124; Diod. Sic. 23.5, 23.18.5 on Tyndaris in the First Punic War.

²⁸ Plut. *Pyrrh.* 22.5-6 (and indeed already Hdt. 5.43 for Dorieus of Sparta in the sixth century BC). Kienast 1965 is the fullest examination of Roman interest in the Eryx sanctuary in this period.

²⁹ Cic. *Ver.* 2.22 for the quaestor '*qui Erycum montem obtinebat*'; the suggestion of a quaestor on Sicily from c.241 BC goes back at least to Mommsen 1887-1889, II, 563, 570-3, favoured e.g. by De Sanctis 1916: 196, Pinzone 2000: 859, cf. Brennan 2000: 139; contra Harris 1976, Dahlheim 1977: 30-35, and more cautiously Crawford 1990: 192.

³⁰ Livy 22.9.7-11, 22.10.10, 23.30.13-14, 23.31.9; also Ovid *Fasti* 4.872-6, 893-4; discussion of the episode in Erskine 2001: 198-205, who also argues that the garrison dates only from 217 BC (Kienast 1965 favours 241 BC for the initial involvement).

³¹ e.g. Tac. *Ann.* 4.43.4.

But, from the perspective of interactions and integration, besides the cult's interest at Rome and for Romans, it is the garrison that is of most interest here. Several inscriptions survive which attest to the existence of this garrison and to the presence of local Sicilians in the role of garrison commander, under the overall supervision of the Roman quaestor.³² Furthermore, the local Sicilian commander can be seen to employ the very Roman title of *tribunus militum*, and on one occasion the troops erect the inscription in Latin, rather than the usual Greek of the island in this period.³³ These inscriptions are not unique; another, from Halaesa, records the service on board ship by Sicilians from four different cities, under a Roman, Caninius Niger, and this does not look out of place in the world described by Cicero's accounts of naval actions by Sicilians under Verres' praetorship in 71 BC.³⁴ The processes of interaction and integration implied by this sort of military service are by no means restricted to Sicily, but are a key mode of integration in the West (whether more so than in the East is perhaps debatable). This is most obvious from our sources at the elite level - whether it be Balbus of Gades receiving citizenship for his service in the Sertorian wars (and ultimately attaining the consulship), Jugurtha learning Latin at Numantia, or enfranchised Gauls commanding units of Gallic cavalry (for both Caesar and Pompeius) – but the consequences must have extended much further down the social spectrum.³⁵ Neither is this an insular or localised process; Roman military activity provides a mechanism through which integration and interaction can take place on a Mediterranean-wide scale: Sicilians are attested accompanying Roman expeditions to Greece in 169, to Carthage in 147, to the Aegean in 100, and to Asia Minor in 70 BC.³⁶ In the opposite direction Bithynians, Thessalians, Numidians, Mauretians, and Italians are all attested on the island fighting alongside local levies in the Sicilian Slave Wars.³⁷ Foreigners fighting in the service of Rome could also end up settled on the island: in the Second Punic War the city of Morgantina was handed over to a group of *Hispani*, Spanish mercenaries who had assisted in the capture of Syracuse; they retained this identity, minting coinage in the name of the *Hispanorum*, but also erecting one of the earliest *macella* (second half of the second century BC) in the Roman west in the heart of the great Hellenistic agora of the city, a very visible example of the consequences of (in this case) deliberate attempts at integration.³⁸

In the remaining part of this discussion, I shall explore two particular examples of such processes at work in the very interactive and integrated world of the hellenistic western Mediterranean, the first primarily Sicilian, the second embracing the western Mediterranean basin.³⁹ Superficially, the first of these appears more inward-looking, the second more broadly outward-looking. In reality, the two are, I would suggest, both consequences of the same processes of interaction and integration, which owe much to the expansion of Roman imperialism, but cannot be understood properly either in isolation from the broader connectivity of the Hellenistic Mediterranean, or in subordination to Roman imperialism.

Notwithstanding the emphasis, thus far, upon interactions of all sorts having the potential to lead to integration, the Republican period arguably sees the formation for the first time of a truly Sicilian identity.⁴⁰ The formation of a Greek Sicilian identity, the Σικελιώται, in the fifth century is a reasonably well documented and discussed phenomenon – an identity however, which formed in contrast to native Sicilians, the Sikels (and Elymians and Sikans), as well as in competition with other

³² *CIL* X.7258, *IG* XIV.282, 355; in more detail, Prag 2007b, esp. 82-3.

³³ Prag 2007b: 84.

³⁴ *SEG* 37.760; on Sicilian naval activity under Rome, Prag 2007b and Pinzone 2004.

³⁵ *Cic. Balb.* 5-6; *Sall. BJ* 101.6; *Justin* 43.5.12 (Pompeius Trogus' uncle, under Pompeius Magnus), *Caes. BG* 4.11 (Piso Aquitanus, under Caesar).

³⁶ *Liv.* 43.12.9, cf. 44.20.6 (169/8 BC); *Cic. Verr.* 5.125 (147 BC); *SEG* 51.1092 A, 1. 11-12 (100 BC; Clinton 2001: 33 suggests that the individual named served on a Roman ship); *Cic. Verr.* 4.49 (70 BC).

³⁷ *Diod. Sic.* 36.5.4, 36.8.1, cf. Prag 2007b: 74 n.37.

³⁸ *Livy* 26.21.17; on the *macellum*, de Ruyt 1983: 109-114, 253-4, 280-2; for the coinage, Buttrey *et al.* 1989: 34-67; for the Hellenistic agora, Bell 1988.

³⁹ See now Purcell, forthcoming, for the view that 'Novel conditions of circulation made the extended Hellenistic world a new sort of cultural space', exploring the 'galvanizing' of the western Mediterranean in relation to the Mediterranean as a whole.

⁴⁰ For the following topic in more detail, see Prag 2009, revised and expanded in Prag forthcoming b.

Greeks outside Sicily.⁴¹ Writing in the second half of the first century BC, Diodorus Siculus, native of Agyrium in central Sicily, claimed that such distinctions had long since broken down:

ἀναμιγνύμενοι δ' ἀλλήλοις καὶ διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν καταπλεόντων Ἑλλήνων τὴν τε διάλεκτον αὐτῶν ἔμαθον καὶ ταῖς ἀγωγαῖς συντραφέντες τὸ τελευταῖον τὴν βάρβαρον διάλεκτον ἅμα καὶ τὴν προσηγορίαν ἠλλάξαντο, Σικελιώται προσαγορευθέντες.

All the inhabitants mingled with one another, and since the Greeks came to the island in great numbers, the natives learned their speech, and then, having been brought up in the Greek ways of life, they lost in the end their barbarian speech as well as their name, all of them being called Sikeliotes. (Diod. Sic. 5.6.5, trans. C. H. Oldfather, *Loeb*).

At one level, this is undoubtedly a Sicilian riposte to the fourth-century fear expressed in the eighth Platonic letter:

But should any of these consequences — likely as they are though lamentable — come to pass, hardly a trace of the Greek tongue will remain in all Sicily, since it will have been transformed into a province or dependency of Phoenicians or Opicians. Against this all the Greeks must with all zeal provide a remedy. (Plato, *Ep.* 8.353e)

But at the same time, this is demonstrably not mere wishful thinking on Diodorus Siculus' part. In the late third century BC a small, but significant series of gold (one issue) and silver (three issues) coins were minted bearing the ethnic ΣΙΚΕΛΙΩΤΑΝ, 'of the Sikeliotes'.⁴² The majority of the examples with a secure archaeological provenance come from the site of Morgantina, and, through their association with examples of the new denarius, can be dated to the middle phase of the Second Punic War, the period around the sack of Syracuse in 211 BC. Most plausibly, these coins are the product of the last attempt at Sicilian resistance, caught between Rome and Carthage during the Hannibalic War; and they may actually have been minted at Morgantina (which in turn provides a further possible explanation for the Roman decision to hand the city over to the *Hispani* in 210 BC).⁴³ Sicilian identity in this instance would seem to be born out of conflict (a phenomenon not wholly diverse from the moment in the later fifth century when attempts to promote Sikeliote unity were motivated by the need to resist Athenian invasion).

However, it is clear that neither the coinage, nor Diodorus, tell the whole story; a rather different picture emerges from the epigraphic evidence. It is a commonplace to observe that Sicily was never a unified political entity in antiquity, and in support of this one can observe that official documents in the name of the Σικελιώται, other than these coins, are lacking in our evidence (leaving aside the exaggerated claim of Dionysius I to be ἄρχων Σικελίας, flatteringly accepted by the Athenians).⁴⁴ Private documents, specifically funerary inscriptions suggest however that at the level of personal identification the situation was rather different. While four individuals are attested in Attica in the fifth/fourth century BC describing themselves as Σικελιώται, over a dozen individuals are subsequently attested with the ethnic Σικελός (often as part of a double ethnic), both in Attica and elsewhere.⁴⁵ There is, needless to say, a clear moment when Sicily was 'politically unified', namely as *provincia Siciliae* – the island appears as an early Roman example of a provincial personification on

⁴¹ See Antonaccio 2001.

⁴² Sjöqvist 1960, with Buttrey *et al.* 1989: 31-4 and *Giessener Münzenhandlung*, München 64 (11 October 1993), n. 18.

⁴³ On the coinage's provenance, besides the previous note, see also Bell 2000: 246 (on the monogram, which may be resolved as *M(organi)T(ina)*), and Burnett 1995: 396 (in favour of Syracuse on grounds of style), modified in Burnett 2000: 112-13 (agnosticism in light of metallurgical analysis of the coins). App. *Sik.* 3 offers another suggestion of a contemporary demonstration of Sicilian unity.

⁴⁴ The general thesis convincingly established by Musti 1962. On Dionysius in *IG II/III*² 18, 103, and 105, see Musti 1962: 453 n. 13 and e.g. Lewis 1994: 136-8.

⁴⁵ *IG I*³ 1369bis; *IG II/III*² 10287, 10288; *SEG* 44.198 for the Σικελιώται. *IG II/III*² 10289, 10291, 10292, 10293; Helly 1983: 360-1 n. 51; *IG VII* 1416, l. 40; *IG VII* 1420, ll. 46, 56, 62; *Iscr. Cos* II, EF 805; *SEG* 51.1092 A, l. 11-12; *ICUR* 2585; *IGUR* II 794; Bosnakis 2008: 127-8 no.207; *I.Eph.* 2223 for the Σικελοί (for which see also *PSI VI* 626, *recto*, col. I, ll. 9-12). More detailed examination of all these in Prag 2009 and esp. Prag forthcoming b.

denarii of c. 71 BC – and individuals calling themselves *Siculi* in a similar double ethnic formulation (listing city and island) turn up in Latin texts and inscriptions also, as early as Plautus.⁴⁶ Cicero repeatedly refers to the Sicilians as a coherent group in the context of their relations with Rome, and on occasion in a semi-formal or even formalised context: the cities of Sicily petitioned the Roman Senate *in communibus* during Verres' governorship (*Verr.* 2.103, 146); a *conventus Siculorum* seems to have been a fixture at Rome (*Verr.* 4.138, *Att.* 10.12.2); and the *commune Siciliae* was responsible for erecting statues in Verres' honour at Rome (under duress, of course; *Verr.* 2.154; cf. 114, 145, 168).⁴⁷ Although the idea is on occasion disputed, rejection of Cicero's evidence for the existence of a provincial council appears arbitrary and unwarranted; the inscription erected in honour of the Augustan legate, C. Plautius Rufus at Auximum by the *civitates Siciliae* presumably attests to the same body.⁴⁸

Cicero's *Verrines* illustrate several contexts in which a Sicilian identity could be meaningful (over and above the more normal civic identity of the Greco-Roman Mediterranean): in legal matters (e.g. *Verr.* 2.31-2 on the so-called *lex Rupilia*; cf. *Verr.* 2.152, *qui ex Sicilia testes sunt, sive togatum sive Siculum*); in taxation (e.g. Sthenius of Thermae honoured in his home town *de meritis in ... Siculos universos* (*Verr.* 2.112) for his efforts at Rome in resisting a proposal in 73 BC to alter the tithe system in favour of Roman *publicani*); or general relations with Roman authority, most obviously the governor (e.g. the exchange at *Verr.* 2.72, with Verres' remark '*Ad me, inquit, si tibi idoneus videor qui de homine Siculo ac Graeculo iudicem*'). Military activity, of the sort briefly alluded to earlier, under the umbrella of Roman command, provides a further obvious context for such identity formation.⁴⁹ Sicilian military service takes on many forms, and in almost all of these a Sicilian identity is likely to have been as prominent as any other:⁵⁰ as allies fighting alongside the Romans in the First Punic War; as recruits to a 'Roman' army in Sicily; in service on board ship under Roman command; contributing ships to Roman-commanded fleets; serving on garrison duty within Sicily itself.⁵¹ Furthermore, individual Sicilians usually commanded these troops.⁵²

In other words, Roman imperial rule has the potential to act as a major stimulus towards the formation of an island-wide identity. Unsurprisingly, evidence of a 'Sicilian' identity is very hard to find in material local to the island (other than the coinage already noted, produced in the face of invasion). But the presence of Roman officials and other Romans and Italians, in particular *negotiatores*, presumably encourages the sort of distinctions highlighted in the *Verrines*, in much the same period as the construction of 'Italy' under Rome was itself taking place.⁵³ However, the presence of individuals asserting their Sicilian-ness across the wider Mediterranean, while undoubtedly furthered by Roman imperial activity – negatively as well as positively, as implied by the Roman appeal at the Olympics

⁴⁶ The coin is *RRC* 401/1, on which see Prag 2007c; on the personification, Ostrowski 1990: 48, 70, 203. In Latin: Plaut. *Men.* 1069, *Rud.* 49, cf. *Capt.* 887-8; *CIL* VI 20105, 25351, cf. *CIL* XI 915, XII 178.

⁴⁷ On these statues, see now Berrendonner 2007: 217-18.

⁴⁸ *ILS* 926 = *CIL* IX 5834. The best discussion of the evidence for the *commune Siciliae* remains Sartori 1981: esp 402-3.

⁴⁹ cf. Prag 2007b: 98-99.

⁵⁰ Compare epigraphic evidence for Aetolians (*AE* 1996.900) or Achaeans (*SEG* 15.254) describing themselves as such in the service of Rome.

⁵¹ First Punic War, e.g. Polyb. 1.40; Roman levies of Sicilians in Sicily, Liv. 23.25.10, 27.8.14-16, 35.2.7-9, 35.23.3-9, etc.; service on board ship under the Romans e.g. Liv. 43.12.9, *SEG* 37.760; contribution of ships, e.g. Cic. *Verr.* 5.49-59, 86; garrison duty, Cic. *Verr.* 5.87, 133. Curiously, there is no evidence for Sicilian veterans in the Imperial period (noted already by Forni 1953: 73, cf. Manganaro 1988: 40-42), and only the most speculative of evidence for a *legio siciliensis* in the Civil Wars (the unresolved abbreviation *Sici* or *Sicil* in *AE* 1988.396 and *CIL* IX 1625, see Patterson 1988: 179-80) – this is a Hellenistic / Republican period phenomenon.

⁵² Sicilian commanders, e.g. Cic. *Verr.* 3.186, 5.82-4, 137; *IG* XIV 282, 355; on Republican auxiliary commanders in general, Prag forthcoming d.

⁵³ Note esp. *CIL* I² 612 = *ILLRP* 320 (*Italicei | L. Cornelium Scip[i]one[m] | honoris causa*), from Halaesa, probably 193 BC, possibly the earliest example of this sort of text set up by the *Italici* (discussed also above). On *negotiatores* inscriptions in Sicily, Amela Valverde 2006. On the construction of 'Italy' Harris 2007 with earlier bibliography. For presence of Italians in Sicily, Frascchetti 1981, Pinzone 1999b, Torelli 2008.

of 208 BC for Sicilians to return to the island – should, I think, also be seen as part of the wider interactions (‘connectivity’) of the Hellenistic period in the Mediterranean.⁵⁴ It is to this wider context of Hellenistic connectivity (i.e. the interactions of the mid-Republican period), considered through the particular lens of the phenomenon of the epigraphic ‘habit’, that I turn in my final paragraphs.⁵⁵

Although, relative to many parts of the Greek world, Sicily displays a somewhat limited ‘epigraphic habit’, patterns can be traced in that practice, both quantitatively and qualitatively.⁵⁶ After an apparent collapse in lapidary epigraphic practice in the first half of the fourth century BC, Greek epigraphy in particular shows a steady and substantial growth in quantity and range throughout the Hellenistic period, to be joined and then overtaken by Latin epigraphy in the first two centuries AD. It would be tempting to assume that this epigraphic flourishing was a product of ‘Romanisation’, since as a phenomenon it is essentially contemporary with the beginnings of Roman control of the island. But, other than the chronological coincidence, it is difficult to explain how Rome could directly influence a fundamentally Hellenistic phenomenon.⁵⁷ The epigraphic output of the third century should be put alongside, e.g., Hieron II of Syracuse’s efforts in competitive euergetism, Sicilian presence at the Olympics, or the building of the monumental theatre and altar at Syracuse; that of the second century no less belongs in the context of a vibrant *polis*-based society.⁵⁸ Although smaller in quantity, in content it stands comparison with the epigraphic culture of the Hellenistic east.⁵⁹

How then should one try to explain the rise of a Sicilian epigraphic habit contemporary to the arrival of Rome? A comparative study of Italian epigraphic practice serves to remind us that Latin epigraphy was itself in its infancy in this period, and by no means the dominant epigraphic culture on the peninsula before the later second century BC: Oscan and Etruscan are much more plentiful for most of the Hellenistic period.⁶⁰ Both Latin in Italy and Greek in Sicily can in fact be seen as part of a much wider pattern. All across the western Mediterranean, epigraphic culture seems to have taken on new life from the fourth or third century BC. This seems to hold true whether the individual language has a previous history of epigraphic practice or not, as the examples of Latin and Greek already suggest. Thus, less well-attested languages such as Gallo-Greek, or Celtiberian seem to develop a written form first in this period, which in turn manifests itself in public documents.⁶¹ But at the same time, those languages in which epigraphic practices were previously well established (such as Etruscan, Oscan, or Punic) also seem to demonstrate both a quantitative increase in epigraphic practice and a diversification in types of epigraphy, in particular the practice of public epigraphy.⁶² Traditionally, such development has often been associated directly with Roman expansion, as a form of Romanisation. However, as has already been observed in many individual cases, the chronology often makes it very difficult to imagine how such practice could take off simultaneously with – or even in some cases before – the very first Roman military presence in a region and still be a direct

⁵⁴ Liv. 27.35.3-4; see e.g. Manganaro 1964, 1999, and 2000 for Sicilian-Mediterranean interactions, principally in the Hellenistic period.

⁵⁵ For a fuller discussion of this particular phenomenon in relation to the western Mediterranean in the Hellenistic period, see Prag forthcoming c.

⁵⁶ Prag 2002.

⁵⁷ Prag 2003 and 2007b suggest several more indirect mechanisms by which Roman rule stimulated civic life on the island within an existing Hellenistic framework, of which the epigraphic habit is merely one facet.

⁵⁸ On Hieron II, see e.g. Campagna 2004, Portale 2004, Lehmler 2005; on later Hellenistic Sicily more generally Wilson 2000, Campagna 2006, as well as Manganaro 1964 and 1980. On the Sicilian epigraphy of the period, Prag 2007a; specifically collecting the Hieronian texts, Dimartino 2006.

⁵⁹ On which e.g. Ma 2000, and especially the overview at 95-6.

⁶⁰ For Latin, Solin 1999, Panciera 1995. For Etruscan and Oscan, Colonna 1999 and esp. Berrendonner 2002 (note also the forthcoming *Imagines Italicae* (London, Institute of Classical Studies)).

⁶¹ For overviews of Gallo-Greek compare Lambert 1997 and Bats 2003; on Celtiberian see e.g. the papers in Beltràn Lloris 1995a.

⁶² See esp. the comments of Berrendonner 2002 on the shift in Oscan and Etruscan (ahead of Latin, as e.g. on pp. 841-2); overview of Punic material in Amadasi Guzzo 1995.

consequence of ‘Romanisation’.⁶³ Placed in the broader context, such developments appear at least partly autonomous of Roman culture, which was itself experiencing a similar transformation, and so should be viewed as part of a broader phenomenon of exchange and interaction in the Hellenistic Mediterranean.⁶⁴

Moving away from Sicily, one particular example of this development and the difficulties of assessing it may be seen in discussion of the phenomenon of the *tessera hospitalis* in the Spanish context.⁶⁵ Because the greatest concentration of such material is found in the Iberian peninsula, and because the Celtiberian examples all appear to post-date the Roman conquest – in contrast to the few Latin examples from Italy, some of which seem to precede the Celtiberian material⁶⁶ – a very similar debate regarding directions of influence is found as in relation to other regions and epigraphic cultures in this period. Explanatory hypotheses for the development range from the existence of an indigenous Celtiberian practice, to the complete rejection of any indigenous origin, alongside finely nuanced attempts to find a middle ground.⁶⁷

Although the existence of similar material beyond Spain/Italy, and across a broader range of time, is frequently acknowledged, such material is frequently subordinated to a focus upon the historical developments of the Iberian peninsula and specific problems internal to the Iberian material.⁶⁸ However, it is possible to argue that enough aspects of the practices associated with *hospitium* and *tesserae hospitales* are attested at other moments and in other places such that the Celtiberian examples should not necessarily be prioritised for any other reason than their numerical preponderance (although that fact itself undoubtedly requires explanation). Ivory and bronze *tesserae*, of similar form but in diverse languages, are occasionally found elsewhere: Etruscan examples from Rome and Carthage in the Archaic period; Greek examples from Sicily and southern Gaul in the Hellenistic period.⁶⁹ An Athenian text of the 370s BC appears to imply a very similar practice in use to facilitate relations between Athens and the king of Sidon, since the actions described there can only be understood through the employment of something like a *tessera hospitalis*.⁷⁰ Literary texts across a broad range in time and space, both Greek and Latin, reflect the same practice or something very

⁶³ Specifically in the case of the Iberian peninsula, see the comments of De Hoz 1995 and Beltràn Lloris 1995b: 174, ‘la aparición de las primeras inscripciones indígenas se produce, por lo tanto, apenas una generación tras la conquista, lapso excesivamente corto para atribuir esta primera floración epigráfica exclusivamente a la influencia romana.’

⁶⁴ In this vein, De Hoz (2006) has recently argued that the epigraphy of the Iberian peninsula in this period has a distinctively ‘Hellenistic’ appearance.

⁶⁵ The Spanish material has been surveyed recently in Abascal 2003: 249 tab. 1 (28 Celtiberian examples, 8 Celtiberian written in Latin letters, 8 Latin); in Díaz Ariño 2008: 56-8 (c. 50 Celtiberian *tesserae* written in ‘paleohispanic’ or Latin alphabet, alongside 9 Latin examples); and Balbín Chamorro 2006: 149-92 (45 examples).

⁶⁶ e.g. *CIL* I² 23, 828, 1764.

⁶⁷ Respectively (illustrative examples only) Ramos Loscertales 1942 (indigenous); Dopico 1989 (non-indigenous); Beltràn Lloris 2004 (suggesting an indigenous tradition of *hospitium*, which in turn adopted a specifically Latin practice of using bronze *tesserae*).

⁶⁸ I (over)simplify, deliberately, and leave aside e.g. detailed consideration of specific *formulae* in the various *tesserae*, or the transition from *tesserae* to *tabulae* and the appearance of *patrocinium*; useful recent overviews of the problem in Díaz Ariño 2008: 56-8; Balbín Chamorro 2006: 13-15, 44-7; Abascal 2003: 247-57; cf. Beltràn Lloris 2004: 35-6, De Hoz 1999.

⁶⁹ *IG* XIV 2432 (excellent photographs in Barruol 1969: pl. VIII, with pp. 372-3; also Guarducci 1967-78: II, 582-3 with fig. 183), recording links between one of the Alpine peoples and another community; *IG* XIV 279 from Lilybaeum in Sicily, containing mixed Punic and Greek nomenclature (see Di Stefano 1984: no. 153 and fig. 70). Neither can be more closely dated than the later Hellenistic. Etruscan *tessera* on ivory from S. Omobono (Rome), Pallottino 1979; Etruscan *tessera* from a sixth-century burial in Carthage, Rix 1991: *Af.* 3.1, with photographs in Peruzzi 1970: I, tav. i-ii, discussion Prag 2006b: 8 (NB *Puinel* is an Etruscan personal name, not an ethnic). Ve 221 is sometimes cited as a possible Oscan example on ivory.

⁷⁰ *Syll.*³ 185, ll.18-25, discussed in Gauthier 1972: 81-2.

similar.⁷¹ Many of the general elements, such as the symbol of clasped right hands, likewise find a broader Mediterranean context – in other words, viewed from outside the Iberian examples look like one manifestation of a pan-Mediterranean phenomenon.⁷²

Given the existence of wider evidence for *hospitium* practices in the ancient Mediterranean, a focus upon the question of whether Iberian *hospitium* reflects specifically indigenous customs or the adoption of Roman practices risks missing the point. An alternative strategy in this debate has been to examine the hypothesis that the use of bronze in particular (both in the *tesserae* and in other inscriptions) is a distinctively Roman practice in origin, taken up in the Iberian peninsula.⁷³ However, an emphasis upon bronze as a primarily Roman practice in this period seems no less open to question than other assumptions about directions of influence or choices in the prioritisation of cultural developments within a rather wider world.⁷⁴ Both Javier De Hoz and Paolo Poccetti observe the earlier use, especially in the Greek-speaking world, of metal as an epigraphic support.⁷⁵ Poccetti in turn observes a general expansion in the use of bronze among many Italic peoples (in particular in central and southern Italy, as well as amongst the Etruscans) from the third century onwards (note that Italy is the focus of Poccetti's study). Poccetti also observes that Latin epigraphic practice appears to be much slower to adopt another Mediterranean practice, that of lead *defixiones*, in contrast to other Italic peoples (Poccetti suggests Oscan mediation for the specific adoption by the Romans, while also noting a broader fourth-century climate for epigraphy on metal in the western Mediterranean, which extends to the Iberian coast); interestingly, as De Hoz observes, it is the use of lead that is best attested in the Iberian peninsula through the same period, seemingly under Greek, Etruscan, and perhaps Punic, influence.⁷⁶ Once again it is therefore the period around the third century BC which seems to be the key moment for the diffusion of epigraphic practice – and once again, it is by no means a development restricted to Rome or to Latin epigraphy (or to the Iberian peninsula), and Rome's own place in that expansion can hardly be considered in isolation.⁷⁷ Notwithstanding this broader picture, there remains a temptation to channel, e.g., the use of bronze in Celtiberian inscriptions, through a primarily Roman filter.⁷⁸

In other words, both the *tesserae hospitales* and the use of bronze could be argued to represent aspects of a much broader set of developments in epigraphic culture across a much broader region, in multiple languages. Specifically in relation to the spread of bronze *tesserae hospitales*, there may be

⁷¹ Especially Plaut. *Poen.* 1047-52 (significantly based upon a Greek text and with a Punic context, reproduced for a Latin audience), but also *Cist.* 503; see the wide range of material collected in Lécrivain 1900: 297-9, and Gauthier 1972: ch. 2 *passim* and esp. 65-7 (on Plato *Symp.* 191d, 193a and Aristotle *Meteor.* 360a 25-6 for use of the σύμβολον as a metaphor or simile, in a way which presumes the idea of a specific object, split in two, with the intention of being able to be reunited for recognition purposes).

⁷² Knippschild 2004: esp. 299-302 puts this material in relation to Persian practice; Knippschild 2002: esp. 29, 40 links this material to wider Mediterranean practice; Herman 1987: 63-5 offers a distinctly hellenocentric perspective instead. Messineo 1983 focuses on the four examples mentioned above (my n.69) and takes them to be representative of 'un'antica consuetudine pan-mediterranea' (p.4).

⁷³ See in particular the very rich explorations of De Hoz 1999 and Beltrán Lloris 2004, together with the more Italo-centric and wide-ranging survey of Poccetti 1999.

⁷⁴ Note the introductory remarks of Mayer and Velaza 1989: 667-8.

⁷⁵ De Hoz 1999: 438-9; Poccetti 1999: esp. 555-6. For early Hellenistic examples (first half of the third century BC), clearly illustrative of a well-developed practice which can hardly be attributed to Roman influence (although the reverse might be true), note purely *exempli gratia* the Entella tablets from Sicily (Ampolo 2001) and the Locri archive from Magna Graecia (De Franciscis 1972).

⁷⁶ Poccetti 1999: 555 (cf. Berrendonner 2002: 841-2 on Oscan use of epigraphy in public construction preceding that in Latin); De Hoz 1999: 442-8. The most obvious examples of texts on lead from the Iberian coast are the commercial documents from Ampurias and Pech Maho in Greek and Etruscan (e.g. Gailledrat and Solier (2004) 438-9, with further references).

⁷⁷ Cf. now Mullen 2008 on Italic (rather than Roman) influences on Gallo-Greek from the third-century BC.

⁷⁸ Thus, even in the excellent discussion of De Hoz (which goes far beyond what this paper attempts), while allowing that the use of writing may precede the Roman conquest it is by the second century a 'Roman' model that drives much of the *epigraphic* practice in the region (1999: 456-62); it is rather as if once the Romans arrive, the rest is forgotten.

considerable value in revisiting Philippe Gauthier's suggestion that levels of literacy are a key consideration in the use of such *symbola* or *tesserae*.⁷⁹ It is Gauthier's hypothesis that the increasing spread of literacy renders physical and visual tokens of this sort increasingly redundant (whence their apparent disappearance from mainland Greek culture in course of the fourth century), with letters on papyrus and similarly ephemeral documents taking their place. Such a hypothesis would in fact tie in rather nicely with the rise in the phenomenon of the *tessera* in the western Mediterranean at the same period in which a broad range of epigraphic practice begins to expand in the region - and so, one assumes, the first real steps forward in the spread of public literacy in the region.⁸⁰ The fact that the use of *tesserae* declines again as we move into the high Empire would also fit with Gauthier's hypothesis, in turn reflecting the moment when literacy arguably took a greater hold across the western Empire. The exact relationship between the spread of epigraphic culture, and more specific elements such as the use of bronze (or other metals) or specific practices such as recording *hospitium* still need to be teased apart, and some of the answers will of course be contingent upon local factors, but the wider context is, I suggest, at least as important, and answers of a more systemic nature also need to be sought. Military conquest is only one part of that process.

It would be naïve to argue that Roman imperialism (and, for that matter, Carthaginian imperialism) was not a crucial factor in this wider set of developments. There is, however, no necessary reason to assume that the Roman centre has any direct relevance to many western Mediterranean interactions – although it may well serve as a catalyst in some cases. The point is rather that neither the one development (increasing connectivity and interaction across the Hellenistic Mediterranean) nor the other (Roman imperialism) can stand by itself as either proxy or explanation for the changes taking place at local, regional, and supra-regional levels in this period. Arguments about whether trade and migration precede or follow imperial expansion reveal the same set of problems: exemplified in the case of third-century Sicily by the need to understand the extent to which trade patterns reflected in amphorae distribution precede Roman military involvement on the island, or to what extent earlier Campanian presence on the island should be seen as continuous with later Romano-Italic migration (put bluntly, to what extent was the First Punic war economically motivated?).⁸¹ On the other side of Italy, but hardly to be considered in isolation, the Adriatic in the third century BC presents very similar problems of interpretation. All of the examples touched on above (taxation, road-building, diplomacy, religion, military organisation, expressions of identity, and the use and public display of writing) are different reflections of processes of interaction and integration, and all of them are driven partly by imperialism (both decisions and actions of the imperial power and responses to that by those being incorporated into the orbit of the hegemonial power) and partly by a host of other considerations, not only local but extending the length and breadth of the Mediterranean and beyond. They can only be teased apart and identified with due attention to the local, but they can only be understood when placed alongside similar (or diverse) developments in other locales, and so placed in context. One benefit of focusing upon integration and interaction may be that it reduces the overriding focus upon 'imperialism' *per se*. Republican imperialism was itself a highly varied and fluid phenomenon, very different from the established and centralised structures of the High Empire, and we should perhaps be wary of assuming that it defines discussions of this sort, rather than the other way around.

⁷⁹ Compare the powerful remarks of Woolf 1994.

⁸⁰ De Hoz 1999: 456 for the penetration of writing ahead of epigraphy among Celtiberians. Cf. Harris 1989: esp. 174-5 suggesting the major transition in literacy in the Roman world begins around 100 BC, although perhaps later in the western provinces (267ff).

⁸¹ See recently Perkins 2007 on the Monreale survey in this context ; on amphorae, the wine trade, and the place of Sicily, see Tchernia 1986: 49-51, Vandermersch 2001, Olcese 2004, Bechtold 2007. For Sicily and Campania, note the earlier remarks of Frederiksen 1981: 274-275, and on migration most recently Pinzone 1999b.

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