

CONTACTS LINGUISTIQUES EN GRÈCE ANCIENNE

DIACHRONIE ET SYNCHRONIE

sous la direction d'Alcorac Alonso Déniz, Julián V. Méndez Dosuna,
Enrique Nieto Izquierdo et Gilles van Heems



CONTACTS LINGUISTIQUES EN GRÈCE ANCIENNE. DIACHRONIE ET SYNCHRONIE

LITTÉRATURE & LINGUISTIQUE // 5

Quinze spécialistes de langues anciennes abordent dans le présent volume des questions variées sur la phonologie, la morphologie, la syntaxe, le lexique, l'onomastique, et la diffusion de systèmes d'écriture dans des contextes d'interrelations linguistiques. Leurs contributions explorent, d'une part, les influences du grec ancien sur d'autres langues et *vice versa*, et, d'autre part, les mécanismes qui déterminent les relations entre les divers dialectes du grec ancien. Ces deux regards complémentaires élargissent le panorama des études sur les contacts linguistiques dans la Méditerranée antique, en ouvrant de nouveaux sentiers de recherche par rapport à deux phénomènes qui sont fondamentalement parallèles.

Fifteen scholars of ancient languages address in this volume different questions on the phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, onomastics, and the diffusion of writing systems in the context of linguistic contacts. Their contributions explore, on the one hand, the influences of Ancient Greek on other languages and vice versa, and, on the other hand, the mechanisms that govern the relations between the various dialects of Ancient Greek. These two complementary perspectives broaden the panorama of studies on linguistic contacts in the ancient Mediterranean and open new avenues of research concerning two phenomena that are fundamentally parallel.



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Analogue -εσσι datives in Sicilian Doric Borrowing, independent development, or both?

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The Aeolic dialects and many varieties of West Greek show the analogical extension of the dative plural marker -εσσι from s-stems (ἔπεσσι) to other athematic stems (ἄνδρεςσσι). Against the theoretical background provided by classic studies on the origin of -εσσι datives, this article focuses on the evidence from classical Sicily, where -εσσι datives are traditionally considered to be a Syracusan trait, imported from the dialect of Corinth. A review of the evidence shows that this idea has little factual basis apart from the use of -εσσι datives in the literary Doric of Epicharmus and Sophron. An analysis of the epigraphic attestations of -εσσι datives in their textual context instead allows for a different interpretation. The -εσσι datives, which spread as a remedy to morphological difficulties, may have been chosen to stylistically mark certain passages through a morphological feature endowed with a poetic pedigree. As in later Doric Koinai, -εσσι datives were instrumental to the creation of a high-register prose language.

Les dialectes éoliens et de nombreuses variétés du grec occidental montrent l'extension analogique du marqueur de datif pluriel -εσσι des thèmes en sifflante (ἔπεσσι) à d'autres athématiques (ἄνδρεςσσι). Dans le cadre des hypothèses sur l'origine des datifs en -εσσι proposées par les études classiques, cet article se concentre sur les données de la Sicile classique, où les datifs en -εσσι sont traditionnellement considérés comme un trait syracusain, importé du dialecte de Corinthe. Un examen des données montre que cette idée a peu de fondement réel, à l'exception de l'utilisation des datifs en -εσσι dans le dorien littéraire d'Épicharme et de Sophron. Une analyse des attestations épigraphiques des datifs en -εσσι dans leur contexte textuel permet au contraire une interprétation différente. Les datifs en -εσσι, qui se sont répandus comme remède à des difficultés morphologiques, ont pu être choisis pour souligner stylistiquement certains passages avec une caractéristique morphologique d'origine poétique. De la même manière que dans les koinai doriennes postérieures, les datifs en -εσσι ont joué un rôle déterminant dans la création d'une variété de prose au registre élevé.

1. Introduction

A much debated issue in Greek linguistics is the extension of the dative plural marker -εσσι from s-stems (ἔπεσσι) to other athematic stems.¹ The phenomenon is typical of the Aeolic group and prominently features in the Homeric epics, but analogical -εσσι datives (henceforth simply “-εσσι

1. I thank Julián V. Méndez Dosuna and Alcorac Alonso Déniz for their careful remarks and suggestions, which have much improved the paper. I alone am responsible for the main hypothesis offered here.

datives”) are also attested in various dialects of the West Greek group and in Pamphylian. The origin and diffusion of this trait has engaged scholars for almost two centuries. Based on their work, it is now possible to say that various factors are behind the spread of -εσσι to athematic stems:²

- analogy with the plural declension of thematic stems;³
- the speakers’ perception that -εσσι was an ending and that everything that preceded it was the “stem”;⁴
- the pressure of morphonological transparency, which led to the replacement of -σι, which often made the root opaque, with -εσσι;⁵
- some specific morphonological developments which led to the partial merger of the inflections of the εὐγενής and -εὐς stems in some dialects.⁶

Against this background, the present paper will focus on the -εσσι datives of the Doric dialect of Sicily, where they are attested from the classical age onwards. The core of the paper is concerned with the sociographic context of use of these forms. A case will be made for the interpretation of Sicilian -εσσι datives as marked elements that played a role in the style and register of the texts. The first part of the paper looks into the dialectal distribution of -εσσι datives in order to assess the supposed Corinthian origin of this trait in the Doric of Sicily.

2. Distribution in the Greek dialects

The extension of -εσσι to all athematic stems is accomplished only in Lesbian and Boeotian.⁷ In Thessalian -σι is preserved in some dental and -ντ- stems.⁸ In the West Greek group, -εσσι datives are attested in Delphian, Elean, Locrian, Cyrenaean, in the dialects of the Saronic Gulf, and in Sicilian Doric; they often compete with analogical 3rd-declension datives in -οις.⁹ In Delphian -εσσι is pervasive, but not extended to stems in -εὐς; original forms in -σι are also preserved. In Elean we have five occurrences. The first two are Θεσπιέσσιω (Minon, *I.dial. éléennes*, no. 15, ca 475 BC) and φυγάδεσσι (Minon, *I.dial. éléennes*, no. 30, before 324 BC).¹⁰ The third, Μαντινέσι (Minon, *I.dial. éléennes*, no. 22, ca 450-425 BC), shows a graphically degeminated ending.¹¹ The fourth (Πελλανέσι, l. 1, an ethnonym in -εὐς) and fifth forms (τρισοδικασστέρεσι, l. 1, from a compound *hapax* in -τήρ), both with degeminated endings, feature in a published bronze tablet from Olympia recording the decisions of three judges from Pellana (*ed. pr.* in Hallof 2021, ca 475-450 BC).¹²

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2. I acknowledge my debt towards the overviews in van Beek 2018; Cassio 2018 for the purposes of this brief introduction.
 3. Wackernagel 1903; followed by Wathelet 1970, p. 253; Morpurgo Davies 1976; García Ramón 1990.
 4. Bopp 1833; followed by Brugmann, Thumb 1913, p. 239; Buck 1905, p. 248, Lazzeroni 1988; Cassio 2018.
 5. Chantraine 1958, p. 204; García Ramón 1975, p. 84; Méndez Dosuna 1985, p. 481, n. 13. A detailed analysis according to stem class is provided in García Ramón 1990, pp. 138-141.
 6. The best discussion is in García Ramón 1990, pp. 148-149. See too Wathelet 1970, p. 260; Dobias, *Dialecte Cyrène*, p. 101; Cassio 2018, p. 193; del Barrio Vega 2021.
 7. See the table in García Ramón 1990, p. 135.
 8. García Ramón 1975, p. 83, n. 3, disposes of all instances of -σι as not authentically dialectal.
 9. Overview in Méndez Dosuna 1985, p. 481; García Ramón 1990, pp. 145-146.
 10. See García Ramón 1990, pp. 151-155.
 11. Analysis in García Ramón 1990, p. 151.
 12. I thank Sophie Minon for pointing this out to me. She includes these datives among the supradialectal common traits which characterise a “variété d’achéen faiblement éléisée” used as a “*koïna* diplomatique de registre élevé” (see Minon 2021, p. 145, for the datives and pp. 165-166 for the language of the text).

From West and East Locris we have only three forms: πάντεσιν (*IG IX*, 1², 3, no. 609, Naupactus, ca 500 BC), χρημάτεσσι, and Κεφαλλανέσσι (both in *IG IX*, 1², 5, no. 1909, 2nd c. BC). In Cyrenaean -εσσι probably spread only to -εύς stems, and attestations date to the 4th-2nd c. BC (e.g. Μελιβοέσσι and Μεγαρέσσι in *SEG IX*, no. 2, 330-326 BC).¹³ The evidence from Sicilian Doric, starting in the early 5th c., is discussed in § 4.

An important point to note is that in prose inscriptions from the Peloponnese -εσσι is not only sporadic but also post-classical. The evidence amounts to πολίεσσι at Epidaurus (*IG IV*², 1, no. 74, ca 300-250 BC),¹⁴ ἄνδρεσιν at Stymphalus, Arcadia (*IG V*, 2, no. 357, before 234 BC, a decree in Doric Koïna), and the ambiguous Ἐπιτελίδεσ[σι] at Argos (*IG IV*, no. 569, a Hellenistic dedication; it could also be restored as Ἐπιτελιδε[ῦσι]).¹⁵ This meagre evidence speaks against the old theory that the -εσσι datives belong to an Aeolic substratum.¹⁶ On the contrary, they are partly a contact phenomenon (in those areas closer to Aeolic) and partly an independent development, triggered by morphological concerns in the first instance.¹⁷ I shall argue below that Sicilian -εσσι datives are an independent development prompted by morphological analogy.

3. Corinth and its colonies

Studies of the -εσσι datives in Sicilian Greek assume that they spread to Sicilian Greek via the dialect of Syracuse, which inherited them from Corinthian.¹⁸ This is a popular but problematic view.¹⁹ Due to the nature of the epigraphical data from this area, we simply have no evidence for 3rd-declension plural datives.²⁰ All known attestations of -εσσι datives from Corinthian colonies but one are post-classical. At Corcyra there are only two instances of ἀρμάτεσσι in *IG IX*, 1², 4, no. 798 (2nd c. BC), recording a donation and a decree on its administration: the text is in Doric, but notice the regular datives χρήμασιν (l. 10 and 45), τοῖς αἰρεθεῖσι (l. 59-60 and 74) and τοῖς ἐφ<αι>ρεθεῖσιν (l. 93), which – together with features such as εἰ (l. 17, 25, 29, 72, etc.) for Doric αἰ, τετάρτη (l. 1) for τετάρτη and ἀρχή (l. 84) for ἀρχά – point to some Koine influence.²¹ From Epidamnus there are only three participles in a decree from Magnesia on the Maeander (*I. Magnesia*, no. 46, 3rd c. BC) which may not fully reflect the local dialect of Epidamnus.²²

The oldest attestation is ἡερόεσσι[ι]ν, which occurs on face B (l. 6) of a late-5th c. text of debated nature from Apollonia in Illyria (*Greek Ritual Norms*, no. 40), recording a regulation of the cult of Asclepius sanctioned by the oracle of Dodona.²³ É. Lhôte has interpreted this dative as an epic

13. A doubtful case is Εὐεσπερίδεσσι (*SEG IX*, no. 76; cf. *IG Cyrenaica*, no. 017000), possibly more a dental stem than an -εύς stem: see Ruijgh 1958, p. 101; García Ramón 1990, pp. 150-151; Dobias, *Dialecte Cyrène*, p. 101.

14. Discussion in Nieto Izquierdo 2008, pp. 437-438; del Barrio Vega 2021, p. 163.

15. See Nieto Izquierdo 2008, p. 442.

16. For this hypothesis, see e.g. Buck 1905, pp. 249-250; Thumb, Kieckers 1932, p. 131; Wathelet 1970, p. 259 (North-West dialects); Lazzeroni 1988, p. 16. García Ramón 1975, pp. 115-116, considers the possibility of an Aeolic substratum (due to early contact) only for Elean.

17. See Méndez Dosuna 1985, p. 482; García Ramón 1990; Nieto Izquierdo 2008, p. 438.

18. See Buck 1905, p. 250; Curbera 1994, p. 94; more cautiously, Mimblera Olarte 2012a, p. 153, n. 85. None of these scholars provide a full list of attestations by chronological period.

19. As del Barrio Vega 2021, pp. 167 and 170-171, now correctly points out.

20. García Ramón 1975, p. 116 assumes that Corinthian developed the -εσσι datives prior to the colonisation period.

21. We read the inscription in an early 18th-c. copy: del Barrio Vega 2021, p. 164, considers the possibility that these -εσσι datives result from the wrong transcription of the original text.

22. Analysis in del Barrio Vega 2021, pp. 164-166; cf. Alonso Déniz 2022a, p. 446, n. 28.

23. *Ed. pr.* Cabanes 2013: cf. *SEG LXIII*, no. 408.

form “embedded” in the text to lend the oracular response a solemn tone, an opinion dismissed by Alonso Déniz 2022a, p. 446, who ascribes the dative to the local dialect of Apollonia.²⁴ It is worth recalling that we have no evidence to support the claim that -εσσι datives were widespread in the classical dialect of Corcyra. Moreover, it is far from improbable that some -εσσι datives – especially those characteristic of forms with a poetic pedigree, like ἠρώεσσι – may have been used for stylistic heightening.²⁵ The very same form, ἠρώεσσι, is found in two Sicilian texts where poetic influences may be detected, as argued in § 4.2. The use of some “poetic” elements should not be seen as proof that the dialect of these texts is not authentic, but simply as evidence that the combination of local and poetic traits was integral to the language of such oracular and sacred texts. To sum up, the evidence is too limited and late to justify the conclusion that -εσσι datives developed in the archaic dialect of Corinth before being transferred to its colonies, including Syracuse: there are no -εσσι datives in classical Syracusan, except for literary texts, as I will discuss below.²⁶

4. -εσσι datives in Sicily

As shown in *tab. 1*, in Sicilian prose inscriptions -εσσι datives are attested 23 times (no. 24 is doubtful) and always in areas where Doric was spoken.²⁷ Three further instances occur in Epicharmus and Sophron: the nouns ῥίνεσσι and γυναικάνδρεσσι (Epicharmus) and the participle τρηματιζόντεσσι (Sophron). Two attestations in Sophron (ἠρώνεσσι and καθαράτεσσι) are more problematic (see *infra* § 4.1).

The early Sicilian evidence allows for the following conclusions, which I shall use as the basis of my working hypothesis. First, analogical -εσσι appears to have been extended to a variety of athematic stems already in the earliest attestations, except for those in -εύς and those in -ι-, where -εσσι occurs only from the Hellenistic Age (in the Selinous *lex sacra* we still have -εῦσι: Τριτοπατρεῦσι, see below *tab. 2*). It seems unlikely that the primary purpose of -εσσι was to avoid undesirable phonetic changes which would lead to paradigmatic opacity.²⁸ Only the participle τρηματιζόντεσσι and the dental stems Εὐμενίδεσσι and ποτηρίδεσσι would be more transparent than the regular datives in -σι. The Sicilian evidence would rather support the view that the formal trigger behind the -εσσι forms was morphological analogy with the nominative plural (Εὐμενίδες > Εὐμενίδεσ-σι, etc.).

Secondly, the chronology of the first -εσσι datives does not allow us to reach any firm conclusion about the date of their introduction into Sicilian Greek. It may well be that they are old features in the Doric varieties of archaic Sicily. It is equally possible, however, that they arose during the classical period and hence that in these inscriptions we witness their first appearance.

Finally, the distribution of these early forms does not warrant the attribution of this trait to any dialectal subvariety – be it the dialect of a continental *metropolis* or the variety of the dialect that developed in Sicily. The early attestations in Syracusan are limited to Epicharmus and Sophron, while archaic and classical inscriptions from both Corinth and Syracuse have yielded no datives of any kind. The only possible attestation of an -εσσι dative at Syracuse, the form υἰέεσσι (no. 24 in

24. É. Lhôte’s interpretation featured in an old version of the *CIOD* record “SEG LXIII (2013) 408” (originally accessed 06/07/2021) which has now been replaced by a new version (dated 03/06/2020) where this interpretation is no longer present (https://dodonaonline.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/ciod_seg_2013_408.pdf [accessed 20/10/2023]).

25. See Buck 1905, p. 250.

26. *Pace* García Ramón 1975, p. 84: “il ne s’agisse (*sauf dans le cas des colonies corinthiennes*) que de formes isolées” (italics are mine).

27. Occurrences in stone epigrams are rare and late: *πραπίδεσσι* in *IG* XIV, no. 14 (bilingual inscription with a Greek epigram from Syracuse, Roman period) and *λαγόνεσσι* in *IG* XIV, no. 124 (Christian epigram, Syracuse).

28. Mimblera Olarte 2012a, p. 152.

tab. 1), is very problematic. *IG XIV*, no. 10 is an undated inscription from Syracuse which is lost: the edition in *IG XIV* depends on an earlier transcription.²⁹ Its Doric dialect suggests a date within the 1st c. AD, but it is impossible to ascertain whether it may be older and hence significant for the presence of -εσσι datives at Syracuse.

It is methodologically flawed to use the attestations of -εσσι in inscriptions from the Syracusan sub-colony of Acrae as evidence that the trait was typical of Corinthian and Syracusan since we are dealing with the same form, Παίδεσσι, always featuring in the formula Παίδεσσι καὶ Ἄννα in inscriptions not earlier than the 1st c. BC. Nothing certain can be inferred on the classical Syracusan

	Form	City	Inscription	Date	Typology
Classical period					
1.	Εὐμενίδεσ(σ)ι	Selinous	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> II, no. 18	early 5th c. BC	<i>lex sacra</i>
2.	ἠρώεσσι	Selinous	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> II, no. 18	early 5th c. BC	<i>lex sacra</i>
3.	ποτηρίδεσσι	Selinous	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> II, no. 18	early 5th c. BC	<i>lex sacra</i>
4.	ἄνδρεσ(σ)ι	Gela	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 134.b	475-450 BC	<i>defixio</i>
5.	γυνάικεσσι	Gela	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 134.b	475-450 BC	<i>defixio</i>
Hellenistic period					
6.	ἱπέεσσι	Entella	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 205	254-241 BC?	decree
7.	γενετόρεσσι	Nakone	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 206	254-241 BC?	decree
8.	ἄνδρεσσι	Entella	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 207	254-241 BC?	decree
9.	συνοικιζάντεσσι	Camarina (found at the Asclepieion at Cos)	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 117	242 BC	decree
10.	πολίεσσι				
11.	παναγυρίεσσι				
12.	παναγυρίεσσι	Gela (found at the Asclepieion at Cos)	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 118	242 BC	decree
13.	περιαγγελλόντεσσι				
14.	Τιτάνεσσι	Lilybaeum	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 80.IIa	late 3rd c. BC	<i>defixio</i>
15.	[ἐ]μβασίεσσιν (?)	Camarina	Dubois, <i>BE</i> , 1990, no. 859 (cf. <i>SEG XLII</i> , no. 1462).	4th-3rd c. BC	contract
16.	παθόντεσσι	Halaesa	<i>SEG LIX</i> , no. 1100	1st c. BC?	decree
Late Hellenistic/Early Roman period					
17.	Παίδεσσι	Acrae	<i>SEG XLII</i> , no. 825	1st c. BC-1st c. AD	dedication
18.	[Παίδε]σσι	Acrae	<i>SEG XLII</i> , no. 828	1st c. BC-1st c. AD	dedication
19.	Παίδεσσι	Acrae	<i>SEG XLII</i> , no. 829	1st c. BC-1st c. AD	dedication
20.	Παίδεσσι	Acrae	<i>SEG XLII</i> , no. 830	1st c. BC-1st c. AD	dedication
21.	Παίδεσσι	Acrae	<i>SEG XLII</i> , no. 832	1st c. BC-1st c. AD	dedication
22.	Παίδεσσι	Acrae	<i>SEG XLII</i> , no. 836	1st c. BC-1st c. AD	dedication
23.	Παίδε[σσι]	Acrae	<i>SEG XLII</i> , no. 833	45 AD	dedication
Uncertain					
24.	υῖεσσι (?)	Syracuse	<i>IG XIV</i> , no. 10	Date unknown	dedication

Tab. 1 – -εσσι datives in Sicilian prose inscriptions by date.

29. See Sgarlata 1993, p. 130, with commentary on p. 172; Dimartino 2005, p. 94. The record in *I.Sicily*, no. 000830 is still incomplete.

dialect from this kind of evidence. The same applies to the Hellenistic inscriptions of Akragas and Gela, which were occupied by Syracuse during the 5th c. BC: it is far from certain that their use of -εσσι datives (no. 9-13 in *tab. 1*) depends on their adoption of the “authentic” Syracusan dialect rather than on the spread of this morphological trait to vast parts of the island – the latter scenario seems more probable.

The hypothesis that -εσσι may have spread to Sicilian Greek from the dialect of Megara Hyblaea is also weak.³⁰ While there are three attestations in the *lex sacra* from Selinous, there are no other attestations at either Selinous or her *metropolis* Megara Hyblaea. There are no datives in classical inscriptions from continental Megaris, nor could their early appearance be proven on the basis of later attestations.³¹ The only certain fact is that already in the 5th c. BC -εσσι datives were used in more than one Doric-speaking *polis* of Sicily.³²

Before turning to the analysis of each dative in context, let us cast a glance (*tab. 2*) at the evidence for -σι datives in classical and post-classical Sicilian inscriptions (the latter include only inscriptions dated to before the end of the 1st c. BC).³³

	Form	City	Inscription	Date	Typology
Classical period					
1.	πᾶσι	Selinous?	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> II, no. 30	5th c. BC	<i>defixio</i>
2.	Τριτοπατρεῶσι	Selinous	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> II, no. 18	early 5th c. BC	<i>lex sacra</i>
Dubious attestations in this period					
3.	<ΕΡΟΙΣΙΘΕΟΙ> (= (h)ἔροθ{ι}σι?, see discussion below)	Megara Hyblaea	Arena, <i>Iscrizioni</i> I ² , no. 78	mid-7th c.	dedicatory graffito on vase
4.	πᾶσι, or part of the personal name Πασάρατος	Megara Hyblaea	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 20	early 6th c. BC	<i>lex sacra</i>
5.	κυ<ί>άσι (= καὶ νιάσι?) or ΚΥΤΑΣ (personal name)	Camarina	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 118	ca 450 BC	<i>defixio</i>
Post-classical					
6.	πᾶσι	Syracuse	<i>IG</i> XIV, no. 2	269-215 BC	honorific
7.	πᾶσι	Nakone	<i>I.dial. Sicile</i> I, no. 206	250-241 BC?	decree
8.	πᾶσι	Apollonia (San Fratello)	<i>IG</i> XIV, no. 359	2nd c. BC	dedication/honorific
9.	πᾶσι	Halaesa	<i>IG</i> XIV, no. 353	200-100 BC	dedication/honorific
10.	δρι<σ>ί or δρίε<σ>ι or δρίει? (see <i>infra</i> n. 42)	Acræ	<i>IG</i> XIV, no. 217	200-100 BC	cadastral
11.	πᾶσι	Akragas	<i>SEG</i> XXXVII, no. 757	2nd-1st c. BC	honorific
12.	πᾶσι	Tauromenium	Arangio Ruiz, Olivieri 1925, no. 13 <i>passim</i>	70-36 BC	accounts

Tab. 2 – -σι datives in Sicilian prose inscriptions by date.

30. Capano 2020, p. 129.

31. See del Barrio Vega 2021, p. 163.

32. Del Barrio Vega 2021, p. 171, proposes to consider the influence of Gela.

33. Later attestations, which are lexically more varied (e.g. δαίμοσι in an epitaph from Catania, *I.Mus. Catania*, no. 65, 1st-2nd c. AD, entirely written in Ionic, or πένησι in a Jewish epitaph from Agrigentum, *SEG* XLIII, no. 618, 4th-5th c. AD), are of little use because of the clear influence of Koine or poetic language in the inscriptions of Roman Sicily. Occurrences in undated (usually late) inscriptions are here excluded.

At present there are only two secure attestations of -σι datives in archaic inscriptions: no. 1 and 2. Both are probably from Selinous, though the provenance of the 5th-c. *defixio* (*I.dial. Sicile* II, no. 30) in which $\pi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ is attested has been disputed by L. Bettarini on account of its letter forms.³⁴ Τριτοπατρῆσι, attested in the *lex sacra* from Selinous which also contains the -εσσι datives Εὐμενίδεσσι, ἠρώεσσι and ποτηρίδεσσι, shows that around the beginning of the 5th c. the extension of -εσσι to all athematic stems had not yet been accomplished. The dative plural $\pi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ is also routinely employed in Hellenistic inscriptions in Doric Koïna from Syracuse, Halaesa and Acrae, as well as in later texts. S. Mimblera Olarte, who assumes that in classical Sicilian Doric -εσσι must have been pervasive, explains the preservation of $\pi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ through the fact that high-frequency words resist analogical change ($\pi\hat{\alpha}\varsigma$ is no. 2 in the list of the one hundred most frequent words of the *TLG* corpus).³⁵ This may well be true, but it is telling that two frequent words such as ἀνήρ (no. 42 in the *TLG*) and γυνή (no. 80 in the *TLG*) do take analogical -εσσι in Sicilian Greek.

A dative $\pi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ may also be attested in the fragment of a sacred law from Megara Hyblaea (no. 4), the first two lines of which are read as Πασαράτῳ ἡάδε (“these are the sacrifices of Pasaratos”) in M.T. Manni Piraino’s *ed. pr.* and by both L. Dubois and Arena.³⁶ However, M. Guarducci proposed reading $\pi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ ἀρὰ τῷ θεῷ ἡάδε “this is the imprecation of the god for all”.³⁷ As noted by M. Guarducci, M.T. Manni Piraino’s interpretation overlooks the distribution of word-division, signaled by two vertical points.³⁸ They clearly mark out the group <APA> as well as <TO>: if Πασαράτῳ were the correct reading here, we would have a personal name fragmented into three units by word-dividers which, however, in the remaining lines are always placed at word-end. Because the stone was slightly cut on its right side, the restoration of *theta* at the end of l. 1 and of *epsilon* at the beginning of l. 2 (the inscription is *boustrophedon*) is possible. If M. Guarducci is right, we would have evidence here that $\pi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ was the preferred form also in archaic Megara Hyblaea (at any rate, as A. Alonso Déniz pointed out to me, the personal name Πασάρατος would also exhibit the regular dative plural in its first member).

This may lend some weight to another possible attestation of a -σι dative from Megara Hyblaea, the partly restored form (h)ἔρῳ{ι}σι in the dedicatory graffito on a proto-Corinthian *olpe* dated to the mid-7th c. BC (no. 3 in *tab. 2*). This too is M. Guarducci’s interpretation of the first part of a fragmentary sequence that reads <EPOISITHEOI>.³⁹ The main problem with this interpretation is the stray *iota*, which cannot be part of the stem of ἥρωϝ: a spelling mistake may perhaps be assumed. Other restorations have been proposed (ἀμφοτέροισι, ὑπέροισι, ἱεροῖσι).⁴⁰

No. 5 is also problematic. The reading $\kappa\upsilon\langle\iota\rangle\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota$, suggested by A. Olivieri in the *ed. pr.* (Arena, *Iscrizioni* IP², no. 129) is not accepted by L. Dubois (*I.dial. Sicile* I, no. 118), who prefers reading the personal name KYTAΣ.⁴¹ This would match the four preceding words, which are all names in the nominative case (though feminine: L. Dubois speculates whether KYTAΣ may be a mistake for

34. See Bettarini 2005 for the proposal of a different provenance, based on letter forms.

35. Mimblera Olarte 2012a, p. 144. She adds that also in other areas where -εσσι is attested πάντεσσι is avoided: this is not quite correct, since we find πάντεσσι in Delphi, Boeotia, Thessaly, and Lesbos.

36. See Manni Piraino 1975, p. 141, with pl. XXX A.

37. Guarducci 1986-1988, p. 15; followed by Lupu 2005, p. 342. L. Dubois (*I.dial. Sicile* II, p. 37), who attributes this reading only to E. Lupu, rejects it on account of the word order (“Je ne crois rien de cette lecture car pour une telle traduction on attendrait que le groupe ἀρὰ ἡάδε fût placé en tête”).

38. See M. Guarducci’s drawing and the better photo in *LSAG*², pl. 77, no. 6.

39. Guarducci 1964-1965, p. 474. She considers the graffito to be in the local dialect (see *contra* Manni Piraino 1975, p. 139).

40. See Gallavotti 1975-1976, p. 89; Arena, *Iscrizioni* IP², no. 78.

41. The dative form $\upsilon\acute{\iota}\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ is attested in Homer and later mostly in hexametric poetry. The common athematic form is $\upsilon\acute{\iota}\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\iota$.

ΣΚΥΤΑ). The interpretation “X, Y, Z for (their) sons” is not syntactically impossible, but the spelling $\kappa\upsilon\langle\acute{\iota}\rangle\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ instead of the expected $\chi\upsilon\langle\acute{\iota}\rangle\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota$ also speaks against it.

Scanty and problematic as the evidence presented here may be, on balance it seems possible that in early Sicilian Doric some -σι datives were still in use. As evidenced by no. 6-12, some forms also survived in post-classical Sicilian Greek (see also *infra* § 5).⁴²

4.1. -εσσι datives in the fragments of Epicharmus and Sophron

Let us now turn to the spread of -εσσι datives in the Doric dialect of Sicily. I will first examine their attestations in the language of Epicharmus and Sophron, which lend a literary dimension to a seemingly only dialectological question:

γυναικάνδρεσσι ποθεινοί

longed-for by woman-men (or: women and men) (Epich., frg. 224 K.-A.; from an unidentified play [personal transl.])

πρᾶτον μὲν αἰ κ' ἔσθοντ' ἴδοις νιν, ἀποθάνοις· / βρέμει μὲν ὁ φάρυγξ ἔνδοθ', ἀραβεῖ δ' ἄ γνάθος, /
ψοφεῖ δ' ὁ γομφίος, τέτριγε δ' ὁ κυνόδων, / σίζει δὲ ταῖς ῥίνεσσι, κινεῖ δ' οὔατα.

First of all, should you see him eat, you would die. His throat thunders inside, his jaw gnashes, his molar cracks, his canine tooth creaks, he hisses from his nostrils, and waggles his ears (Epich., frg. 18 K.-A. [personal transl.]).

γυναικάνδρεσσι of frg. 224, from an unidentified play, probably identifies effeminate men (determinative compound) or men and women together (a dvandva compound). The extant two words of the fragment correspond to the second hemistich after the “feminine” caesura of a dactylic hexameter.⁴³ Whatever the original metre may have been, the combination between lexical choice and rhythm makes it likely that this was one of the lines in which Epicharmus imitated epic or lyric poetry. The -εσσι dative thus gestures towards poetic style, even if one assumes that it was a common feature in Epicharmus’ Sicilian dialect.⁴⁴

A similar interpretation may also be possible for ῥίνεσσι in frg. 18. The lines, pronounced by an unknown character, describe the monstrous way in which Heracles eats.⁴⁵ The fragment is in iambic trimeters and features three verbs of noise which occur in Homer (βρέμω, ἀραβέω, τρίζω) and are later used mostly in poetic texts. The verb βρέμω is attested in poetry and high-register prose.⁴⁶ ἀραβέω too belongs to poetic texts, starting from the pseudo-Hesiodic *Scutum*. σίζει in l. 4 may be a hint at *Od.*, IX, 394 (where σίζ(ε) is used to refer to Polyphemus’ “sizzling” blinded eye). Another

42. A note may be useful on no. 10. This is a list of individuals assigned market stalls (other interpretations suggest plots of land or public spaces) which are defined through landmarks such as water tanks (ποτὶ φρητίοις) or other plots/stalls. The syntagm $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \delta\omicron\rho\iota\langle\sigma\rangle\lambda\ \text{Κακκαρικοῖς}$ (*IG*) indicates one of such landmarks. The head noun here is $\delta\omicron\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma$ ‘corpse’, and this would be the only occurrence of its dative plural, which we would expect to be $\delta\omicron\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\sigma\iota$. In fact, the stone has $\delta\omicron\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\iota$ and the singular reading is retained in Pugliese Carratelli 1956, p. 153, followed by Dubois (*I.dial. Sicile* I, no. 219) and Manganaro 2004, p. 117. This would be at odds with the adjective Κακκαρικοῖς (*IG*) *vel* Κακκαβικοῖς (Pugliese Carratelli 1956), which is in the plural: G. Manganaro’s translation “nel boschetto delle pernici” does not register the syntactic problem. Perhaps $\delta\omicron\rho\acute{\iota}\omicron\iota$ should be corrected into $\delta\omicron\rho\acute{\iota}\epsilon\langle\sigma\rangle\iota$.

43. See K.-A., *ad loc.*, Rodríguez-Noriega Guillén 2012, p. 78. The dactylic rhythm with ποθεινός at the end of the line, though not Homeric (as ποθεινός is never attested in Homer), is employed in Callinus (frg. 1, 16) and in Pi., *I.*, 5, 7 ($\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega\upsilon\omicron\nu\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\alpha}\acute{\epsilon}\theta\lambda\omicron\iota\sigma\iota\ \text{ποθεινόν}$).

44. See too the analysis of del Barrio Vega 2021, pp. 169-170.

45. That the description refers to Heracles is confirmed by the *testimonium*, Ath., X, 411a-b (concerning Ἡρακλῆς ἀδηφάγος).

46. As a possibly technical term it is used in Hippocr., *De affectionibus interioribus*, VI, 16 (said of the abdomen).

term that may evoke Polyphemus is φάρυγξ (l. 1; cf. *Od.*, IX, 373; E., *Cyc.*, 215, 356, 410 and 592). More hypothetical epic hints may be ἔνδοθ(ι), which is markedly poetic, and the hexametric rhythm of the sequence ταῖς ῥίνεσσι, κινεῖ. This is the oldest attestation of the dative of ῥίς in Greek, which is later usually found in the morphologically regular form ῥισί.⁴⁷ In conclusion, perhaps ῥίνεσσι was employed to bestow an epic flavour to this description of Heracles.

Sophron is a different case from Epicharmus since he wrote his mimes in prose. Only one of the possible three attestations of -εσσι datives in his works is unproblematic. This is the participle τρηματιζόντεσσι of frg. 124 K.-A., seemingly a description of an after-dinner party:

δειπνήσας ὠστίζεται τοῖς τρηματιζόντεσσι
after dinner he jostles with the dice-players (personal transl.)

The extension of -εσσι to participles is already a Homeric feature, later imitated only by Pindar among the classical poets. Prosodically, the last four syllables of the participle τρηματιζόντεσσι find a parallel in the placing of the participle σπυδόντεσσι at line-end in *Il.*, XVII, 745. The issue of whether Sophron's prose uses poetic rhythms is an open one. E. Norden, recalling Aristotle's judgment of Sophron as an author blending prose and poetry (*Arist.*, *Po.*, 1447b, 10), positively identified Sophron's prose as "ein sicheres Beispiel solcher nach Kola gegliederten rhythmischen Rede".⁴⁸ J.H. Hordern, although in principle open to the idea that "we should expect to find similar passages [i.e. anapaestic and dactylic rhythms] in Sophron", remains sceptical about Sophron's use of prose rhythm.⁴⁹ The issue, indeed, would need to be explored afresh and this fragment is too short to allow for any clear-cut conclusions. τρηματιζῶ is not a poetic verb (it is only attested here), while ὠστίζομαι is mostly used in comedy. Perhaps the occurrence of two -ίζω formations within three words may have a stylistic motivation (imitation of a given register?), and maybe a potentially epic-sounding participle (τρηματιζόντεσσι) was used to provide a contrast with the prosaic context, but this remains speculative.

The other two attestations of -εσσι datives in Sophron are highly suspicious on the textual level. I will discuss them only briefly because their testimony is almost useless for the purposes of the present investigation. The first dative is ἠρώνεσσι, attributed to Sophron by Priscian in a likewise suspicious statement concerning the Syracusan pedigree of the metaplasm ἦρων for ἦρος:

[...] *Syracusis enim ἦρων pro ἦρος dicunt. sic Sophron παρ' ἠρώνεσσι non ἦρωσι dixit.*
[...] In Syracuse they use ἦρων instead of ἦρος. Hence Sophron used παρ' ἠρώνεσσι, not ἦρωσι (Priscian., *Inst.*, 6, 70; cf. *Sophr.*, frg. 151 K.-A. [personal transl.]).

The recharacterised accusative ἦρωνα (for ἦρων) is attested once in a 3rd-c. BC inscription from the Cos Asclepieion (*IG* XII, 4, 1, no. 72, l. 23) and, based on this, we also have ἠρωνος and ἠρωνι showing the extension of -v to other cases of the singular declension (the forms are attested from the 1st c. AD).⁵⁰ However, except for Priscian's testimony, there is no independent evidence that the extension of -v concerned the plural. It is also problematic that the dative plural ἠρώνεσσι occurs much earlier than the singular forms from which the analogy is supposed to have spread. In conclusion, it is impossible to tell whether the ἠρώνεσσι that Priscian attributes to Sophron is authentic, and to define its context of occurrence more closely.

The second dubious instance is the dental-stem dative καθαρμάτεσσι in a textually corrupt invocation (possibly to Hecate) preserved in Plutarch with no attribution. Restoring some of the

47. ῥίνεσσι and its compounds are later used by Oppianus (*C.*, I, 477 and IV, 357).

48. Norden 1898, p. 46.

49. Hordern 2004, p. 15.

50. On these recharacterised forms of ἦρος, see Alonso Déniz 2022b.

corrupt forms so that they could comply with Doric, U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff ascribed the fragment to Sophron:⁵¹

αἶτε κα ἀπ' ἀγχόνας αἴζασα αἶτε κα λεχοῦν διακναίσασα αἶτε κ' ἄν νεκρὸς μολοῦσα πεφυρμένα ἐσέλθης, αἶτε κα ἐκ τριόδων καθαρμάτεσσιν ἐπισπωμένα τῷ παλαμναίῳ συμπλεχθῆς.

Whether you come hastening from a hanging, or from grinding to death a woman giving birth, or coming from ranging about corpses, or whether you have been engaged with a murderer, or drawing him to you from the crossroads by means of the blood he had cleansed from himself (Plu., *De superstitione*, 10, p. 170 B; cf. Sophr., frg. **8 K.-A. [transl. Hordern 2004, p. 49]).

The quotation is problematic and replete with textual problems.⁵² However, one element that has not been noted so far is that the prose of this fragment is characterised by rhetorical figures and assonances: the four anaphoric αἶτε κα; the rhyming participles αἴζασα and διακναίσασα; the rhyming participles πεφυρμένα and ἐπισπωμένα; the rhyming subjunctives ἐσέλθης and συμπλεχθῆς. Was καθαρμάτεσσιν perhaps integral to the construction of a certain sound effect?

Based on the literary evidence reviewed in this section, as a tentative conclusion I wish to suggest that -εσσι – whether it was already widespread in Syracusan (as assumed, e.g., by Willi 2008, p. 129) or not – entered the written register when a certain heightening was required, in some cases through overt epic allusions. We shall now turn to the inscriptions to see whether the use of -εσσι datives can be thought to be conditioned by the register and style of the text in which they appear, and hence to be a choice dependent on a sociostylistic register.

4.2. The -εσσι datives of Sicilian classical inscriptions reconsidered: the *lex sacra* of Selinous

The earliest -εσσι datives from Sicilian inscriptions come from the *lex sacra* of Selinous, a complex text that details the rite to be performed to purify murderers.⁵³ The three datives occur in col. A of the text and are written with the ending -εσι, which is due to the inscriber's practice of simplifying double consonants (see too περιρ(ρ)άναντες of l. 12-13):⁵⁴

7 τῶν ἡιαρῶν ἡα θυσία πρὸ Φοτυτ(τ)ῖδων καὶ τὰς ἐχεχῆρίας πένπ[τῶι]
 φέτει ἡδιπερ ἡόκα ἡα Ὀλῦνπιὰς ποτεῖε. τῶι Διὶ: τῶι Εὐμενεῖ θύ[ε]γ [καὶ]
 ταῖς: Εὐμενίδεσ(σ)ι: τέλεον, καὶ τῶι Διὶ: τῶι Μιλιχίῳι τῶι: ἐν Μύσρῳ: τέλεον: τοῖς Τρ-
 10 ιτοπατρεῦσι · τοῖς · μιαιοῖς ἡόσπερ τοῖς ἡἔρδεσ(σ)ι φοῖνον ἡυπολῆει-
 ψας · δι' ὀρόφῳ· καὶ τᾶν μοιρᾶν · τᾶν ἐνάταν · κατακα-
 ἰεν · μίαν. θυόντῳ θύμα: καὶ καταγιζόντῳ ἡοῖς ἡοσία. καὶ περιρ(ρ)ά-
 ναντες καταλινάντῳ: κῆπειτα: τοῖς κ<α>θαροῖς: τέλεον θυόντῳ: μελίκρατα ἡυπο-
 λείβῳν · καὶ τράπεζαν καὶ κλῖναν κῆνβαλέτῳ καθαρὸν ἡἔμα καὶ στεφά-
 15 νῳς ἐλαίας καὶ μελίκρατα ἐν καιναῖς ποτερίδε[σ(σ)]ι καὶ: πλάσματα καὶ κρᾶ κάπ-
 αρζάμενοι κατακαάντῳ καὶ καταλινάντῳ τὰς ποτερίδας ἐνθέντες.

51. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1912, p. 336; Hordern 2004, pp. 144-145.

52. See the apparatus in Sophr., frg. **8 K.-A.; Hordern 2004.

53. Though usually dated to the decade before 450 BC, the text is probably earlier (beginning of the 5th c.). See Dimartino 2015.

54. Only col. A, from l. 7 onwards, uses interpuncts (two dots or a simple dot). They do not mark only individual sentences, but smaller units, apparently following a logical – rather than syntactic or lexical – rationale. See Jameson, Jordan, Kotansky 1993, p. 47.

The sacrifice of offerings before the Kotytia and the truce on the fifth year (i.e. every four years) when the Olympiad also takes place; sacrifice to Zeus Eumenes an animal and to the Eumenides an adult animal and to Zeus Milichios in (the sanctuary?) of Myskos an adult animal; to the (10) Polluted Tritopatreis as to the heroes, having poured wine through the roof, of the nine portions burn one; those to whom it is religiously permitted are to sacrifice an animal and perform the consecration (burning); having sprinkled around (with water?), let them anoint (the altar?), and immediately sacrifice an adult animal to the Pure Tritopatreis; pouring down honey-and-milk-mixture, a table is set out and a couch and let them throw over a pure cloth and wreaths (15) and honey-and-milk-mixture in new cups and cakes and meat. Having made first-offerings, they are to burn them and perform an anointment, having put the cups on (the altar?) (*I.dial. Sicile* II, no. 18; cf. *Greek Ritual Norms*, no. 13, col. A, l. 7-16 [transl. *Greek Ritual Norms*]).

Εὐμενίδεσ(σ)ι and ἠρώεσ(σ)ι occur in the same long sentence, which contains provisions for the sacrifices to be made to the most important gods of the Selinuntine pantheon. A certain solemnity is achieved through the opening τῷ Διὶ τῷ Εὐμενεῖ, which is reminiscent of the hymnodic style, and the repetition of divine names and their titles. Some rhythmic effects may also be part of the solemnity of these lines. Εὐμενίδεσσι – interestingly isolated between two punctuation marks in the text – makes up a perfect *adonius*, while the whole Εὐμενίδεσσι τέλεον corresponds to a *hemiepes* assuming that the -εο- of τέλεον was pronounced as one syllable. Similarly, the dative ἠρώεσσι occurs in a sequence that happens to coincide with the collocation of ἠρώεσσιν in the last two feet of epic hexameters.⁵⁵ ἠρώεσσι also occurs in the Petelia Orphic leaf (Pugliese Carratelli 2001, no. I, A, l. 1), in the Dodona text from Apollonia (*Greek Ritual Norms*, no. 40), and in a few stone epigrams, while the standard form ἠρώσσι is rarer in poetic texts (Pindar, Aeschylus, Aristophanes).

This is not to say that the *lex sacra* is a piece of *Kunstprosa*, nor that, in exploring its style, we should apply the same rules applied to imperial prose, with its careful selection of admissible and forbidden rhythmic *cola* (including the rule that a *colon* must end with a long syllable).⁵⁶ More simply, I suggest that the -εσσι allomorph – which perhaps had already started spreading in 5th-c. Sicilian Doric under the pressure of morphological analogy, as posited in § 4) – was selected also because of the “poetic ring” that it had.⁵⁷ This would not be out of context in a sacred text that spells out a series of prescriptions for “a recurrent cycle of sacrificial rituals” (Carbon, Peels in *Greek Ritual Norms*, no. 13) which must have been actually performed.⁵⁸ The performative aspect of the ritual thus may have influenced some of the linguistic choices of the text: Εὐμενίδεσσι and ἠρώεσσι, gesturing towards poetic style, could serve to heighten the section devoted to the ritual and its deities.⁵⁹

Let us consider a parallel from the same text, the ἀθανάτοισιν in l. 13 of col. B:

ἡόκα τῷ ἐλαστέρωι χρῆ<ζ>εῖ θύεν, θύεν ἡόσπερ τοῖς *vacat*
ἀθανάτοισιν. σφραζέτω δ' ἐς γᾶν. *vacat*

Whenever one needs to sacrifice to the elasteros, sacrifice as to the immortals. But one shall slaughter down towards the earth (*I.dial. Sicile* II, no. 18; cf. *Greek Ritual Norms*, no. 13, col. B, l. 12-13 [transl. *Greek Ritual Norms*]).

55. Cf. *Il.*, II, 483 and 579, XVI, 144 = XIX, 391 and XXIII, 645. Homer never uses ἠρώσσι.
56. For rhythm in early Greek prose, see the classic Norden 1898, pp. 41-50, and the more cautious approach of Dover 1997, pp. 165-177. Metrical or quasi-metrical sequences may not always be deliberate, and the quantitative or qualitative tests performed on such sequences to determine their non-randomness encounter several problems, which are discussed by Vatri 2019, pp. 183-184. For post-classical prose, see Hutchinson 2018, pp. 5-32.
57. Del Barrio Vega 2021, p. 168, advances a similar hypothesis.
58. As Vatri 2019, p. 178, notes: “metrical patterns are more likely to have been intentionally sought in texts that were meant to be recited to an audience rather than read privately (whether silently or aloud)”. For a loose parallel, see the case of the hexametric Orphic leaves, where the insertion of lyric sequences is integral to the performative nature of the text, as argued by Ferrari 2011, pp. 211-215.
59. That this did not happen for Τριτοπατρεῖσιν does not mean that the Tritopatreis are “less important” entities in the text, undeserving of stylistic marking. The regular dative Τριτοπατρεῖσιν owes to the fact that at this chronological stage the analogical extension of -εσσι has not spread to vocalic stems yet. In other dialects too vocalic stems admit of -εσσι datives more slowly (if at all): see *supra* § 2; García Ramón 1990, p. 135.

-οισι is not the normal dative plural ending of thematic stems in the majority of Doric dialects.⁶⁰ Mimbrrera Olarte 2012a, p. 137, dismisses it as a Megarian trait of the Selinuntine dialect, but this is unlikely since we have no other instances of “long” datives in the texts from Selinous.⁶¹ On the contrary, here too the “long” dative is a marked choice, which accompanies a lexeme endowed with a poetic pedigree. ἀθανάτοισι also occurs in a sequence (θύειν ὥσπερ τοῖς ἀθανάτοισι) which may evoke the rhythm of the second half of a hexametric line.

A similar usage of an -οισι dative occurs in a judicial *defixio* from Lilybaeum dated to the 3rd c. BC where, moreover, we find another -εσσι dative, Τιτάνεσσι:

καταδέω Ζωπυρίωνα τᾶς Μυμβυρ παρὰ Φερσε-
φόναι καὶ παρὰ Τιτάνεσσι καταχθονίοις καὶ παρ’ ἄ-
π[ε]υχομένοισι νεκροῖς· vac. <καταδέω δέ νιν> {ἐξ τοῦς ἀτελέστους} καὶ παρ-
ἄ [ἰ]αρίαις Δάματρος <καὶ> παρ’ ἀπευχομέ[ν]α[ἰ]σιν· vacat

I bind down Zopyrion son of Mymbyr before Persephone and before (the) underground Titans and before (the) abominating (male) dead. <And I bind him down> also before (the) priestesses of Demeter and before (the) abominating (sc. female dead) (*SEG* XLVII, no. 1442; text after Jordan 1997; cf. *SEG* XLIX, no. 1301, part A, l. 1-4; judicial *defixio* from Lilybaeum [transl. Jordan 1997, p. 396]).

Τιτάνεσσι, used in the opening malediction, is the only mention of Titans – rarely found outside cosmogonic poetry – in a *defixio*.⁶² Their unique occurrence here, together with Persephone, in the specific form Τιτάνεσσι that is paralleled by the Ionic Τιτήνεσσι of Hesiodic poetry (*Hes.*, *Th.*, 650, 674 and 882), seems to be due to the search for a certain stylistic effect. Jordan 1997, p. 393, finds these “formulaic phrases [...] compatible with dactylic poetry, which may well have been their origin”.⁶³ Dactylic “pseudo-hexametric tesseræ” could be the sequence -εσσι καταχθονίοις (which corresponds to a “masculine” *hemiepes*) and the last clause of the malediction formula, καὶ παρ’ ἀπευχομένοισι νεκροῖς which, with νε.κροῖς syllabification, would correspond to the hexametric part preceding the hephthemimeral caesura: also note that <καὶ> παρ’ ἀπευχομέναισιν of l. 4 corresponds to a “feminine” *hemiepes*.⁶⁴ The poetic flavour of the invocation of chthonic deities in this *defixio* could be part of the “professional” skills of the author who, if coinciding with the person who materially incised the neat layout of the text, was certainly an expert and not an amateur *defigens*.⁶⁵

60. According to Buck 1955, p. 88, “long” datives of this kind are only attested in Cretan and archaic Argive. Nieto Izquierdo 2008, pp. 423-425, notices how the three -οισι datives from Argos and the one instance from Mycenae are also the most ancient datives attested for Argive and concludes that this must have been the only form in use in the 6th c. BC.

61. She also mentions the -οισι datives of the Lilybaeum *defixiones* (see here below) which, far from being authentic traits of Megarian (and why should they be? The texts date from the late 3rd c. BC), are more probably influenced by poetic diction.

62. See Brugnone in Bechtold, Brugnone 1997, p. 120.

63. The same interpretation in del Barrio Vega 2021, p. 168.

64. καταχθόνιος is not a frequent word in archaic and classical texts, but it already occurs in Homer (*Il.*, IX, 457) as an epithet of Zeus in the context of Amyntor’s curse against Phoenix, where Persephone is also mentioned.

65. See Brugnone in Bechtold, Brugnone 1997, pp. 115 and 118. Poetic influence is also obvious in the opening formula consisting of four hexameters and invoking chthonic demons (δαίμονες [δέμονες] οἱ κατὰ γῆν καὶ δαίμονες οἵτινες ἔστε κτλ.) of several 3rd-c. AD *defixiones* which then develop into prose (Audollent, *Defixiones*, no. 22, 25, 26, 28, and 30-35, all from Amathous, Cyprus; more *defixiones* with the same formula are registered by Jordan 1985, p. 193; a variation on the formula occurs in text no. 52 of Jordan 2001, p. 17). The formula is likely to depend on the same magical poem, probably circulating on papyrus, and shows various Homeric expressions: see Drew-Bear 1972, pp. 87-95, for a commentary.

A similar hexametric *tessera* (καταχθονίοισι θεοῖσι) is inserted in a slightly later (late 3rd-early 2nd c. BC) *defixio* from Lilybaeum which curses a series of individuals by appealing to the chthonic gods:

καταδίδημι παρὰ καταχθονίοισι θεοῖσι
τὰν πρᾶξιν τὰν Απιθαμβ.αλ ποτὶ Νυμήριον
καὶ Δαμ[έ]αν, ὅπως [μ]ὴ δύναται ἀντία
λέγειν

I bind down before the chthonic gods the legal action of Apithamb.al against Numerius and Dameas, lest he be able to speak in opposition, lest he be able to speak in opposition to any legal action or to hate (*SEG XLVII*, no. 1443; text after Jordan 1997; cf. *SEG XLIX*, no. 1302, side A, l. 1-3; judicial *defixio* from Lilybaeum [transl. Jordan 1997, p. 390]).

The hypothesis that a stylistic effect lies behind the use of -εσσι datives in the Selinous *lex sacra* now needs to be tested against the third attestation, ποτηρίδεσσι, partly restored at l. 15. This form is trickier because it identifies a common object in a sentence which does not conjure up any poetic images (though note that the feminine ποτηρίς is a *hapax*, one of the several striking forms of this text).⁶⁶ However, just like the initial sentence which we have analysed, l. 14-16 have a central role in the description of the ritual. These lines refer to the preparations for the entertainment of supernatural guests (*theoxenia*), which are likely to have been performed during a public ritual. According to Jameson, Jordan, Kotansky 1993, p. 68, the reference to new cups (ἐν καιναῖς ποτηρίδεσσι), though “consistent with the general practice of using clean and special clothing”, has a special significance in this passage “because the rite for the pure (καθαροί) Tritopatores follows on those for the impure (μυαροί) Tritopatores”. The choice of the -εσσι dative could therefore be integral to a wish to underline the importance of this passage and confer a certain “grandeur” to it.

4.3. The -εσσι datives of Sicilian classical inscriptions reconsidered: the Gela *defixio*

This speculative analysis of the Selinuntine text may receive further support from a closer consideration of the datives ἄνδρεςσι and γυναῖκεςσι which occur in a *defixio* from Gela (*I.dial. Sicile* I, no. 134.b). The text, which I shall approach following the interpretation of Wilson, Favi 2017, contains an imprecation by a certain Apellis against the rivals of one Eunikos, who is either Apellis’ lover or a close friend. Here I will focus only on two passages of the text in lines 1 and 11-14:

l. 1 εὐχά. Ἄπελλις ἐπὶ φιλότατι τᾷ Εὐνίῳ.
l. 11 μεδέεν’ Εὐνίῳ σπευδαί-
[τερο]ν γενέσθαι, μέτ’ ἄνδρες(σ)ι μέτε γυναῖκεςσι· ὅς οὐτὸς βόλιμος τὸς τῆ-
[νὸν ? ἐπ]ο(ι)δ(ι) αἰ τίμαν ἐρύσαιντο. Εὐνίῳ ἀεὶ νίκαν παντε<ι> PMOAY...ἐπ-
[ι φιλ]ότατι τᾷ Εὐνίῳ γάρφω.

Evil prayer: Apellis, for love of Eunikos [...]. May none be taken more seriously than Eunikos either among men or women. As this lead (*sc.* does), so may the spells against those men draw away their honour. For Eunikos may there be victory always [...]. I write on the lead for love of Eunikos (*I.dial. Sicile* I, no. 134.b; cf. *SEG LVII*, no. 905.b; text here slightly adapted following Wilson, Favi 2017; *defixio* from Gela [transl. slightly adapted from Csapo, Wilson 2020, pp. 347-348]).

66. See Dubois 1999, pp. 343-346; Jameson, Jordan, Kotansky 1993, pp. 48-49, for the language.

At l. 12 the sequence μήτ' ἄνδρες(σ)ι μήτε γυναίκεσσι is used to express the author's wish that nobody may be more successful (σπευδαιότερον) than Eunikos. In *Od.*, XIII, 308 the same mention of men and women, in the genitive, is equally preceded by a middle-passive infinitive (μηδέ τω ἐκφάσθαι μήτ' ἀνδρῶν μήτε γυναικῶν, “do not tell anyone, either man or woman, etc.”).⁶⁷ The choice of an -εσσι dative may attempt to introduce some form of heightening in an expression with anaphora of μήτε that is not very common: there is only one parallel in the accusative (μήτ' ἄνδρα μήτε γυναίκα, followed by μήτε παῖδα μήτε κόραν) in a decree from Delphi, dated to 425-375 BC (*F.Delphes* III, 1, no. 194, col. i, l. 11), though the positive ἀνδράσι καὶ γυναιξί is attested a few times in prose texts.⁶⁸

It may be objected that register heightening is unexpected in a *defixio*. The structure, *mise en page*, topic and language, however, identify this text as unique.⁶⁹ The lexicon in particular abounds in seemingly recherché choices (e.g. the *hapax* ἀπρακτία, l. 5). The very first word, εὐχά (if the reading is correct), does not have its usual meaning, ‘prayer’, but refers to the *defixio* itself. This understanding of εὐχή finds some parallels in tragedy, while in *defixiones* it occurs in a long 4th-c. AD text from Cos, probably written by a professional.⁷⁰

The optative ἐρύσαιντο of l. 13, referring to the “drawing away” of the honour of Eunikos’ opponents, is another remarkable choice.⁷¹ ἐρύω is a very common verb in the Homeric epics, but otherwise scarcely attested in prose.⁷² It is usually employed to refer to a physical act of drawing something or someone out or away, while in the Gela *defixio* it would have a metaphorical meaning. This extraordinary usage may be accompanied by a quasi-hexametric clausula, the sequence of a dactyl and a spondee in (τί)μαν ἐρύσαιντο. Both elements may be proof that the ending of this text was characterised by an increasingly grander register. To return to the datives μήτ' ἄνδρες(σ)ι μήτε γυναίκεσσι, if viewed within the overall linguistic context of the *defixio*, they look like marked choices, which were consciously employed in an expression that hinted at epic language.

5. A look at Hellenistic texts

The above analysis has attempted to prove a connection between the use of the early -εσσι datives from Sicily and the intention to stylistically mark certain textual passages where the lexicon, morphological choices and perhaps prosody are also noteworthy. -εσσι datives are also attested in Hellenistic Sicilian inscriptions and it would therefore be useful to extend the analysis proposed for the classical evidence to later texts. Here I shall offer some preliminary observations in preparation for a full study of the evidence.

The Hellenistic and early Roman evidence (no. 6-23 in *tab. I*) testifies to the full spread of analogical -εσσι to athematic stems, which now include vocalic stems (ἰπέεσσι, πολίεσσι, παναγυρίεσσι) and participles (συνουκιζάντεσσι, περιωγγελλόντεσσι, παθόντεσσι). Studies of the Sicilian Doric Koine

67. ἄνδρεςσι may be a simple spelling mistake, with the omission of the geminate, or a (conscious?) compromise between the regular form ἀνδράσι and the analogical ἀνδρεςσι: see also del Barrio Vega 2021, p. 168. The prosody of γυναίκεσσι would not allow its insertion in the hexameter, a likely reason for the absence of this form from all poetic texts except Sappho (frg. 96, 6-7). Interestingly, it is also not the preferred form in Aeolic inscriptions: see the datives γύναιξι καὶ παίδεσσι κόραις in *JG* XII, 2, no. 68 (Mytilene, 2nd c. AD). I thank Julián V. Méndez Dosuna for this reference.

68. See too ἀνδρεςσι καὶ γυναιξί in *Pi.*, *P.*, V, 64.

69. These will be explored in a paper in preparation.

70. See *LSJ*, s.v. εὐχή 3: ‘prayer for evil’, *SEG* XL, no. 1291 (εὐχή κατακλητικὴ κατὰ Ἑρμῖα). The alternative reading Τύχα, suggested by Jordan 2007, p. 344, is now rejected by Wilson, Favi 2017.

71. See Wilson, Favi 2017, p. 140; Csapo, Wilson 2020, p. 348.

72. An exception is *F.Delphes* III, 1, no. 294, col. ii, l. 12, an early 4th-c. law where the expression τὸν ἀδικηθέντα φερυσάτω can be translated as “let him draw the culprit [into court]”.

approach -εσσι datives as a Syracusan feature that spread to the Greek of the rest of the island because of Syracuse's prestige.⁷³ However, as pointed out in § 4, none of the eleven secure forms from the Hellenistic Age come from Syracuse, and attestations crop up in places as different as Entella, Camarina, Gela and Halaesa. The later attestations are limited to the formulaic inscriptions addressed to Anna and the Paidēs from Acrae, a self-defined and very standardised set of texts. It is probable that – whatever their origin – these datives became established in the Doric dialect of central-western Sicily prior to the rise of Syracusan power.

Even at this later stage the -εσσι datives may not necessarily have been the only morphological variant available to speakers. If this is correct, the regular -σι datives attested in post-classical inscriptions (*tab.* 2) should not necessarily – or at least not always – be dismissed as “Koine features” of no relevance for the development of Sicilian Greek as a whole. Out of the eleven Hellenistic attestations of -εσσι datives, one (in the Lilybaeum *defixio* which we have already discussed, no. 14) is influenced by poetic language; another (in a contract from Camarina, no. 15) is a very problematic reading; and the remaining nine are all found in official decrees in Doric Koine with a few Koine intrusions. These are all honorary and celebrative decrees, whose language is often marked by stylistic heightening.

One case is particularly telling: the Entella decree *I.dial. Sicile* I, no. 205 commemorating Entella's *symmachia* with Gela/Phintias (no. 6 in *tab.* 1). The decree consists of one very long sentence, written in formal and lofty-sounding prose. Here I shall focus on l. 5-16, which contain the causal clause explaining the motivations of the honorary decree for the citizens of Gela (the decision of the city occurs from l. 16 onwards):

5 ἐπειδὴ οἱ Γελῶιοι ὄκα τε τὸ
 πρότερον τὰν πόλιν ταύταν ὠ-
 κέομες πολέμου κατασταθέν-
 τος ποτὶ Καρχαδονίους ἐβοαθή-
 ησαν τᾷ πόλει τᾷ ἀμᾷ ἰππέεσ-
 10 σι καὶ πεζοῖς ἐνόρκιοί τε ἐγένον-
 το καὶ συνεβάλοντο συμμαχίαν,
 ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ νῦν ἐξ οὗ τὰμ πό-
 λιν οἰκέομες ἐς τὸ ἐμφανὲς ποι-
 οῦντι ὅτι μέμνανται τὰς φιλίας
 15 καὶ εὐνοίας τὰς ποτὶ ἀμέ, δεδό-
 χθαι ἀναθέμειν εἰς χάλκωμα

Since the Geloans, when previously inhabiting this city, on the occasion of a war against the Carthaginians, came to the aid of our city with knights and foot soldiers, and were faithful to the oath and entered into a military alliance [with us], and similarly even now, since we began to inhabit the city, they make it clear that they are mindful of their friendship and goodwill towards us, let us approve (inscribing it) into a bronze plate (*I.dial. Sicile* I, no. 205, l. 5-15; Decree from Entella [personal transl.]).

The -εσσι dative (l. 9-10) occurs in the long causal clause placed at the beginning: the expression ἰππέεσσι καὶ πεζοῖς ἐνόρκιοί τε ἐγένοντο recalls how the Geloans came to Entella's rescue. That ἰππέεσσι may be a marked form is suggested, in my opinion, by the fact that it occurs in a phrase where the use of postpositive τε seems to be integral to the creation of a hexametric clausula (-οῖ τ(ε) ἐγένοντο), which finds several parallels in Homer.⁷⁴ In conclusion, it may be that -εσσι datives gradually acquired the status of markers of high-register formal language and came to be employed

73. Mimbrela Olarte 2012b, p. 233.

74. Cf. *Il.*, III, 84: μάχης ἀνεῶ τ' ἐγένοντο; *Il.*, XXIV, 790: ὀμηγερέες τ' ἐγένοντο#, a formulaic line-end.

in passages characterised by a solemn or grandiloquent flavour. In passing, it may be noted that the formulaic expression Παίδεσσι καὶ Ἄννα of the Acrae dedications perhaps feature an -εσσι dative not merely because this was a prestigious element, but also to create a rhythmic effect (the sequence -εσσι καὶ Ἄννα fills in a hexametric clausula again).

6. Conclusions

At present we have no evidence to claim that the -εσσι datives were imported into Sicily from a particular dialect of continental Greece (see *supra* § 4). Given the gradual appearance of this allomorph in a variety of Greek dialects, it is likely that in Sicilian Doric it originated independently out of morphological analogy.⁷⁵ The earliest Sicilian evidence (*tab. 1*) dates to the beginning of the 5th c. BC and comes from three different Doric areas (Selinous, Gela, and Syracuse – the latter only represented in literary texts). The scanty attestations of regular -σι datives in archaic and classical documents (*tab. 2*), though most of them πᾶσι, may evidence a situation in which the -εσσι datives were an “option” for Sicilian speakers of the classical period but not the only available dative formation for athematic stems: this would also be confirmed by the occurrence of Τριτοπατρεῖσι in the *lex sacra* side by side with three -εσσι datives.

At the same time, as argued in §§ 4.2 and 4.3, some -εσσι datives in written documents may represent borrowings from poetic diction, selected to confer a poetic ring to certain passages. This is not to say that the -εσσι datives in Sicilian texts are true Aeolisms (and hence that they are the result of dialect contact), but more simply that literary practice may have affected the material insertion of certain -εσσι forms in specific parts of a given text. Speakers would not mark out an -εσσι dative as “strange” or “artificial”, because analogy made them morphologically transparent. Yet, at an initial stage, their early usage in Sicilian texts may have been encouraged by considerations pertaining to register and style.

This special flavour of -εσσι datives may have continued in the Hellenistic Age, especially in those texts employing other high-register features, at least judging from the type of text where they occur. This does not rule out that -εσσι datives may have spread to more informal registers, but we simply have no evidence for this: all the post-classical occurrences of -εσσι are in honorifics, decrees and dedications (Τιτάνεσσι of the Lilybaeum *defixio* is likely to be influenced by poetry, as argued in § 4.2).⁷⁶ The line of interpretation proposed here should be extended to other dialectal areas and consider the interplay between -εσσι and -οις, another analogical ending which arose because of morphological concerns. -οις, however, is much more sporadic than -εσσι: a distribution which may be due precisely to the literary pedigree of -εσσι and its higher status.⁷⁷

It is not by chance that -εσσι was singled out as a marker of literary and epigraphic Doric prose. This artificial and dialectally mixed language contains other features that, taken together, do not belong to any real Doric variety and which must have been selected because of their literary appeal, probably through the influence of choral lyric.⁷⁸ One of them is the feminine participle ending -οισα which, far from being an ancient Doric trait, is an Aeolism which came to be associated with poetry

75. The same interpretation in del Barrio Vega 2021, p. 169.

76. Del Barrio Vega 2021, p. 169, concludes that at this stage these datives must have been a typical feature of Sicilian Doric.

77. I owe this suggestion to Sophie Minon. See also Minon 2018, p. 20.

78. For this analysis, against others that see in this dialectal mixture a real local variety, see Cassio 1989, p. 142; Minon 2018, pp. 7-9 (specifically on pseudo-Pythagoric prose).

in “Doric” (Alcman, Pindar, Theocritus) and as such was exported into the language of Doric prose (Archytas, Archimedes).⁷⁹

These concluding notes suggest what direction research should take in the future. We need to study the role of -εσσι in the construction of literary and official prose languages in Doric (Koinai) in competition with Attic and Ionic. Together with comprehensive and up-to-date lists of dialectal attestations, the context of use of each dative must be assessed with an eye to elements such as style and heightening, poetic allusions, and prosodic effects.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of editions and of works of reference for alphabetic Greek epigraphy are those of the list of the AIEGL published online: GrEpiAbbr, version January 2022, <https://www.aiegl.org/grepiabbr.html> (accessed 06/07/2023) and abbreviations of ancient authors and works of the *Diccionario griego-español*, <http://dge.cchs.csic.es/1st/1st4.htm> (accessed 06/07/2023).

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79. Cassio 1989, p. 148, n. 34, includes -οισα among the “forme palesemente artificiali” imported into the text of the Pythagoreans at a later stage, whereas Minon 2018, p. 7, interprets them as authentic features of poetic origin which characterised the literary Koina of Pythagoric writings.

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