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The pre-Roman elements of the Sardinian lexicon

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II

Linguistic data

The collection of Sardinian lexical data presented and discussed in § 3 – 7, on which the discussion in other chapters is based, uses as its point of departure Wagner’s *Dizionario etimologico sardo* (DES), the most complete etymological resource on the Sardinian lexicon. The material from the DES is complemented with material from other sources, most notably AIS, Paulis (1992), and Puddu (2023). Included are those Sardinian words that have been proposed to be of pre-Roman origin, or that lack a convincing inherited origin. For each lemma, the likelihood of a substrate origin will be discussed along the criteria discussed in § 2.1.1, as well as on the basis of its proposed cognates outside Sardinia (cf. § 2.1.2.2). Detailed attention will be given to dialectal variation, which can provide us with valuable information about the original form, meaning, and distribution of a word.

As a living language, Sardinian exhibits a large degree of dialectal variation, which is well-documented. The forms documented for specific localities in AIS, DES, Paulis (1992) provide a wealth of information about a word family’s distribution, as well as interdialectal correspondences that allow us to reconstruct its original form. However, this dialectal variation does not manifest itself as simple regular phonological correspondences between forms with identical meanings attested in different places. Rather, we can observe slight differences in meaning from area to area, or even from town to town, as well as various local and irregular deformations of words as a result of their semantic connotations. Since the study into Sardinian linguistic (pre)history at hand is based predominantly on lexical data, it is crucial to present these data in an accurate and insightful manner. Every lemma in chapters § 3 – 7 is therefore provided with a map showing the locations of all relevant forms attested across the Sardinian local dialects.

Especially when dealing with irregular correspondences between dialects, evaluating possible etymologies requires a significant amount of knowledge about the speakers’ lived reality; i.e. a *Wörter und Sachen* approach. For instance, the semantic connection between some species of plant and its use in traditional medicine may be fully transparent to a native speaker, but harder to understand from the perspective of a linguist’s armchair. Such context-specific connotations have been explored in detail by Wagner (1921) on daily life in rural Sardinia, and by Paulis (1992) for Sardinian plant names. I have followed the Paulis’ (1992) and Puddu’s (2023) example to include the scientific name of plants and animals wherever possible, to avoid any confusion.