CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

Introduction

This *Cambridge History of the Romance Languages* stands on the shoulders of giants. A glance at the list of bibliographical references in these volumes should suffice to give some idea of the enormous body of descriptive and interpretative literature on the history of the Romance languages, both from the point of view of their structural evolution (the focus of the first volume, published in 2011) and with regard to the contexts in which they have emerged as distinct 'languages', and gained or lost speakers and territory, and come into contact with other languages (the main focus of this volume). This profusion of scholarship, adopting a multiplicity of approaches (synchronic, diachronic, microscopic, macroscopic) has more than once provided material for major, indeed monumental, comparative-historical synopses (e.g., Meyer-Lübke (1890–1902), Lausberg (1956–62), or the massively detailed and indispensable encyclopaedic works such as Holtus, Metzeltin and Schmitt (1988–2001) and Ernst, Gleßgen, Schmitt and Schweickard (2003–08)).

Much of the finest scholarship in Romance linguistics has, naturally enough, been conducted in Romance languages, or in German (the native language of some of the major founding figures of the discipline). One of our aims is to reach out to linguists who are not Romance specialists, and who may not know these languages. While the histories of some of the better-known major Romance languages (Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese) have been treated in English, this work is certainly the first detailed comparative history of the Romance languages to appear in English.[1]

The aim of *The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages* is not to compete with or supersede the works mentioned above, but to complement them, by

1 There are, of course, some very useful smaller-scale works, such as Hall (1974), Elcock (1975), Harris (1978), Harris and Vincent (1988); also of interest is Posner and Green (1980–93).

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

presenting both to Romanists and to historical linguists at large the major and most exciting insights to emerge from the comparative-historical study of Romance. With this in mind, we have deliberately attempted in the presentation and discussion of the material of the two volumes to adopt a more inclusive approach which, while not alienating the traditional Romanist, bears in mind the practical limitations and needs of an interested non-specialist Romance readership (witness, for instance, the extensive translation of Romance and Latin examples), though in no case is this done at the expense of empirical and analytic detail.

It is our firm belief that the richly documented diachronic, diatopic, diastratic, diamesic and diaphasic variation exhibited by the Romance family offers an unparalleled wealth of linguistic data of interest not just to Romanists, but also to non-Romance-specialists. This perennially fertile and still under-utilized testing ground, we believe, has a central role to play in challenging linguistic orthodoxies and shaping and informing new ideas and perspectives about language change, structure and variation, and should therefore be at the forefront of linguistic research and accessible to the wider linguistic community.

The present work is not a 'history' of Romance languages in the traditional sense of a 'standard' reference manual ('vademecum') providing a comprehensive structural overview of individual 'languages' and/or traditional themes (e.g., 'Lexis', 'Vowels', 'Nominal Group', 'Tense, Aspect and Mood', 'Subordination', 'Substrate', 'Prehistory', etc.) on a chapter by chapter basis (cf., among others, Tagliavini (1972), Harris and Vincent (1988), Holtus, Metzeltin and Schmitt (1988–2001)), but, rather, is a collection of fresh and original reflections on what we deem to be the principal questions and issues in the comparative internal (Volume 1: Structures) and external (Volume 2: Contexts) histories of the Romance languages, informed by contemporary thinking in both Romance linguistics and general linguistic theory and organized according to novel chapter divisions, which reflect broader, overriding comparative concerns and themes (generally neglected or left untackled in standard works), rather than those which are narrowly focused on individual languages or developments. Inevitably, this will mean that certain aspects of the history of the Romance languages or individual members thereof – though admittedly very few, as a thorough reading of the following pages reveals – may not be exhaustively covered. Nevertheless, we are convinced that the merits of the individual chapter divisions adopted here far outweigh any potential lacunae (for which, in any event, there exist in virtually all cases other reliable treatments).

This work is organized around four key recurrent themes: *persistence*, *innovation, influences* and *institutions*. Thus, much of the first volume, dedicated to

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

thelinguistic 'Structures' of Romance, juxtaposes chapters or chapter sections dealing with issues of persistence on the one hand and innovation on the other in relation to the macroareas of phonology, morphology, morphosyntax, lexis, semantics and discourse-pragmatics. It goes without saying that the Romance languages are the modern continuers of Latin and therefore many aspects of structure persist from that language into Romance. It is not usual, however, for works on the Romance languages to concentrate on these factors of inheritance and continuity, since they – understandably – prefer to comment on what is new and different in Romance by comparison with Latin. By contrast, we believe that it is an important and original aspect of the present work that it accords persistence in Romance (and hence inheritance from Latin) a focus in its own right rather than treating it simply as the background to the study of the changes. At the same time, we devote considerable space to the patterns of innovation (including loss) that have taken place in the evolution of Romance.

Structural persistence and innovation within Romance cannot of course be studied in isolation from the influences and institutions with which the Romance languages and their speakers have variously come into contact at different periods in their history. For this reason, the authors of individual chapters in Volume I were encouraged to consider, as far as possible, structural persistence and innovation in relation to these influences and institutions and the extent to which they may have helped in arresting or delaying them on the one hand and shaping or accelerating them on the other. It is, however, in this second volume, dedicated to the 'Contexts' in which the Romance languages have evolved, that the central role assumed by *influences* and *institutions* is investigated, as well as their bearing on questions of persistence and innovation (cf. Bachmann's discussion of the Romance creoles). It is well known that the Romance languages have been subject in varying degrees to the effects of outside influences. In addition to contact and borrowing (e.g., from Germanic, Arabic, Slavonic) and substrate effects (e.g., from Celtic), there is also the all-important role of Latin as a learnèd language of culture and education existing side by side and interacting with the evolving languages, as well as the role of contact and borrowing between Romance languages. When speaking of institutions, we have in mind both the role of institutions in the sense of specific organizations (the Church, academies, governments, etc.) in the creation of 'standard' languages and the prescription of norms of correctness, and also the language as an institution in society involved, among other things, in education, government policy, and cultural and literary movements.

Consequently, the focus throughout the two volumes is on an integration of the internal and external perspectives on the history of the Romance

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

languages, in part achieved through a multiauthor format which brings together the best of recent scholarship in the two traditions, and in part through careful editorial intervention and cross-referencing across chapters and volumes. *In particular, all cross-references have been introduced by the editors, and are not to be attributed to the authors*. Where the editors have added notes to individual chapters, these are indicated as such and followed by the initials MM, JCS or AL. Furthermore, all citations in languages other than English have been translated by the authors or the editors. However, as editors we have been keen to impose as few constraints on our contributors as possible in order to create an opportunity for international scholars of stature and intellectual vision to reflect on the principles and areas that have been influential in a particular subarea, and to reassess the situation.

It is necessary here to mention, albeit briefly, the rationale behind a number of our decisions in representing, and referring to, Latin. It is customary (though in no way a universally accepted practice) in many works on Latin and Romance to cite Latin forms in small capitals. Although we recognize that there are, of course, no linguistic grounds for this choice of typographic representation, inasmuch as Latin forms could just as legitimately appear in lower-case italics on a par with any other language, we have chosen to follow here the (more or less) established convention of employing small capitals for cited examples. While it is true that the ancient Romans did not use small capitals to represent their language, it is equally true that they did not use lower-case italics. However, we believe that the conventional practice of placing Latin forms in small capitals has the typographical advantage, especially in a work like ours, where reference to Latin forms is legion, of allowing immediate and efficient recognition of the two diachronic poles of our investigation, Latin (small capitals) and Romance (lower-case italics). Where we do depart, however, from current conventional practice is in our representation of the classical Latin high back vowel/glide [w], which is today usually represented as 'v' in syllable onsets (e.g., **V**IVO 'I live') and U in all other positions (e.g., HAB**U**IT 'he had') or, according to another school of thought, as '*V*' when it appears in upper case and '*u*' when in lower case (e.g., ***Vu****o* 'I live'). By contrast, we have preferred to adopt U (lower case) / U (upper case) in all positions (hence, **U**IUO and HABUIT) which makes the value of the grapheme more transparent in the discussion of Latin (morpho)phonology.[2] One further departure from current typographical conventions concerns

2 For a detailed discussion of Latin orthographic practices, see Wallace (2011).

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

our decision to cite all non-attested forms, whether reconstructed for Latin or any other language (but in all cases preceded by a single asterisk) in phonetic transcription (e.g., *voˈlere 'to want' replacing classical UELLE), and not in small capitals (e.g., *UOLERE), as is frequently the case in other works.

Finally, although we do not wish to enter here into a discussion of the value or the appropriateness of such labels as 'vulgar', 'late', 'spoken', 'literary' and many others in relation to Latin (for which we refer the reader to the chapters by Varvaro, Banniard, and Wright (chapter 3)), we are keen to point out that we do not consider Latin a monolithic variety, uniquely to be identified with the prescriptive norm passed down to us in the high literary and rhetorical models of the classical era. Rather, we take Latin, like any other natural language that has existed, to be a rich and varied polymorphous linguistic system which was subject, on both the diachronic and synchronic axes, to the same kinds of diatopic, diastratic, diamesic and diaphasic variation as its modern Romance descendants. We therefore deliberately avoid capitalized epithets in such syntagms as 'Vulgar Latin' or 'Late Latin', which unreasonably suggest an ill-founded linguistic and psychological demarcation between one supposed language, Classical Latin on the one hand, and an autonomous derivative, 'Vulgar Latin' or 'Late Latin', on the other. Rather, in the same way that linguists regularly append descriptive labels like 'modern', 'spoken', 'popular', 'dialectal', 'journalistic', 'literary', 'Latin-American' and such like to the modern Romance languages to refer to a particular 'variety' of that language (e.g., '(spoken) Barcelona Catalan', 'popular French', 'journalistic Italian', 'literary Romanian', 'Latin-American Spanish'; see Wright chapter 3, this volume, for further discussion), we have left it to the discretion of individual authors to indicate and identify, where necessary, the particular register, style or variety of Latin intended by means of an appropriate non-capitalized epithet or periphrasis, be it 'vulgar Latin', 'spoken Latin' or 'the Latin of North-West Africa'.

To conclude, we should like to remember here Suzanne Fleischman (1948–2000), József Herman (1924–2005) and Arnulf Stefenelli (1938–2002). The first-named died on the very day on which we wrote to her proposing that she might contribute to this work; the second before being able to complete the chapter we had invited him to write for this volume; the third shortly after contributing the chapter on 'Lexical Stability' to Volume I. They are sorely missed, but their legacy to Romance Linguistics lives on. We dedicate to them the present volume of the *Cambridge History of the Romance Languages*.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

1

Latin and the making of the Romance languages[1]

ALBERTO VARVARO

1. Latin: origins, characteristics and areal diffusion

Today the Romance languages are spoken over much of Europe (Iberian Peninsula, France, southern Belgium, western Switzerland, Italy and Romania), central and southern Latin America and Quebec, as well as in the former French, Portuguese and Spanish colonies of many parts of Africa and, to a lesser extent, Asia, where they enjoy official language status and function as the recognized languages of culture (see Andreose and Renzi, and Jones and Pountain, this volume, chapters 8 and 10). Their origins lie in a variety of Indo-European that was spoken from about the eighth century BC in a small area of the lower Tiber valley around Rome and the Alban hills. Although flanked to the north of the Tiber by Etruscan, a non-Indo-European language stretching as far as the southern bank of the River Arno, Latin was not isolated: to the north-east, east and south of the Latin-speaking area the closely related Oscan dialects were spoken, stretching as far as Campania and Lucania to the south, the Adriatic to the east and the territories of the closely related Umbrian-speaking tribes to the north. Other languages spoken to the north included the Indo-European varieties Picenian, along the Adriatic coast, and Celtic over an area stretching from Senigallia to the Alps (apart from the Indo-European varieties Venetic and Raetic to the east and north respectively), and a non-Indo-European tongue, Ligurian, spoken along the upper Tyrrhenian coast. Linguistic variation was just as great in the southern part of the peninsula, where, in the modern-day region of Puglia, Messapic, an Indo-European language, was

1 The ideas contained in the following pages were first developed for a lecture course I gave a number of years ago at the University of California, Berkeley, at the invitation of Yakov Malkiel – to whose memory I dedicate this chapter – and were written up for the first time during the summer of 2009. I would like to thank my friend and colleague Adam Ledgeway who saved me from a number of errors; all remaining errors are of course my own responsibility.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

spoken, as well as Greek along the coasts following the early Greek colonizations, most notably at Taranto, which reached as far as the southern point of Calabria.[2]

The distribution of languages sketched above must not, however, be understood as a series of compact linguistic areas in which one relatively standardized language acted as a roof language for a number of local variants. Rather, the peninsula was made up of a patchwork of small tribes without any form of political, cultural (except in the archaeological sense of the word) or linguistic unity. Diatopic linguistic diversity then must have been enormous, as is still often the case today in poorly developed and sparsely populated areas of the world.

The success of Latin is a direct, if not immediate, consequence of the gradual expansion of Roman political rule. Thanks to the power of its political institutions, the might of its armies and its resolute tenacity, Rome succeeded in imposing its *imperium* over the entire peninsula and beyond, coming in time to dominate the Mediterranean and almost all of north-eastern Europe. Linguistic Latinization was only impeded in the East, where Greek, thanks to its greater cultural prestige, remained dominant. However, linguistic Latinization in the West was not the result of any deliberate linguistic policy. Quite the contrary. Permission to use Latin was initially granted to non-citizens of Rome only as an exceptional, much sought-after privilege. Rather, it was the prestige of the city and the superiority of its culture that led non-Romans, beginning with the upper classes, to adopt Latin.

In the course of the first centuries of the Middle Ages there emerged in this vast area, by then almost completely and homogeneously Latinized, a number of Romance vernaculars that had evolved from Latin, which continued to be employed as the language of culture and writing. From about the beginning of the tenth century AD, these lower varieties began to be used also in writing, giving rise to their own literary traditions which most probably continue an earlier oral tradition. Gradually the written Romance varieties underwent various forms of standardization, eventually yielding the Romance languages that we today associate with important literary cultures: Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan (and also Occitan in the Middle Ages), French, Italian and Romanian. Their subsequent expansion following the geographical explorations of the late Middle Ages and, in particular, the discovery of America, represents a complex historical process outside the scope of the present chapter (for which, see Jones and Pountain, this volume, chapter 10), which will only be able to

2 For the linguistic situation in pre-Roman Italy, see Prosdocimi (1978).

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

consider the intricate problems involved in the making of the Romance languages.

How then should this extraordinary episode in the making of the Romance languages be best understood and explained? Although richly documented, unlike many other similar episodes that must have occurred, this does not make it any easier to understand. Indeed, on this point Malkiel (1978:28) wrote: 'the working hypotheses proposed, in the course of almost two centuries of speculation and detailed research, on the differentiation of the Romance languages are historical conjectures, sometimes extremely original and sophisticated [. . .] but still just isolated hypotheses and not theories in the strong sense of the term traditionally attributed to it by logicians and mathematicians, as well as, more recently, by linguists accustomed, as they are, to abstract inquiry [. . .] and not in the weak sense of the term as it is usually employed in everyday spoken language.'

Today, as in the past, it is still very common to divide the process into two successive stages: the completion of Latinization of the Western Empire followed by fragmentation into the many Romance vernaculars, alleged to have begun, to borrow Wartburg's terminology, in 'a restricted area' from within 'the compact area' (Wartburg 1950:1f.). In my opinion, it must have involved a unique and very complex dynamic process, which was not necessarily unidirectional.

2. The making of the Empire

As a direct consequence of the gradual establishment of Rome as an imperial power, Latin first began to spread across the Italian peninsula and then beyond to the western Mediterranean, and finally also to the eastern Mediterranean and the rest of the European continent. For our purposes, it is important to have a precise understanding of the chronology of the developments involved in this lengthy process of expansion. The final stage in the Roman conquest of the Italian peninsula came to an end some time before 264 BC with the end of the war against Tarentum (modern Taranto) and King Pyrrhus of Epirus (280–275 BC). This brought about a complex structural network of very diverse bilateral relations between Rome and the individual local communities, which remained partially, but often largely, autonomous. However, from 338 BC numerous colonies of Roman or Latin citizens began to spring up at strategic points across the peninsula. Following the first Punic War (264–241 BC), Sardinia and most of Sicily also fell under Roman rule and the first provinces

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

directly governed by Roman officials were established. This provincial system was subsequently extended to all new territorial gains.

The dates for the establishment of the different provinces, about which we often only have approximate information, are the following: Sicily in 242 BC, Sardinia and Corsica in 227 BC, Hither and Further Spain in 197 BC, Macedonia in 148 BC (in turn followed by other eastern provinces), Africa (roughly coinciding with present-day Tunisia) following the Third Punic War (149–146 BC), Narbonese Gaul in 121 BC, Cisalpine Gaul by 89 BC, Numidia in 46 BC, the Three Gauls (Aquitania, Gallia Lugdunensis and Gallia Belgica) between 16 and 13 BC, and Noricum and Raetia after 15 BC. Pannonia was elevated to the status of province in AD 9–10, Mauretania in AD 42, Britannia in AD 43, Upper and Lower Germania in AD 90, and finally Dacia in AD 107. It was not until Diocletian that the provincial system was overhauled (AD 297) to include the Italian peninsula, establishing 101 different administrative divisions smaller in size than the original provinces.

The Roman Empire was predominantly governed, even in the provinces, through a system of indirect rule similar to that used centuries later by the British in India. Because in general 'the Romans fought the battles of the settled and normally pacific populations of Italy against the more roving and predatory ones, or the alien Celtic nomads' (Cary and Scullard 1975:103), they systematically found support in the upper classes of the populations which they appeared to protect. Given the prestige enjoyed by the Romans, they had no need to impose their culture and language: instead it was the subjugated populations, beginning with the upper classes, who sought to conform to the cultural and linguistic habits and practices of their rulers in order to obtain (reduced) Latin or full Roman citizenship, adapting both lifestyle and language in the process.

This system of governance, which afforded the indigenous population a not inconsiderable number of powers, whilst leaving the Romans in charge of foreign policy (to use modern terminology), the army and tax collection (albeit through intermediaries), ensured that contact between the indigenous populations and Romans was not uniform across society. The legions, which were originally recruited exclusively from Roman citizens and allies and, later, in the imperial period, by Italic peoples more generally, weighed heavily upon the Empire, their soldiers entering into all sorts of relations with all cross-sections of the local population. However, the presence of the army was concentrated in the border areas of the Empire and in a few unruly pockets within the interior. It is quite wrong to imagine that the presence of soldiers was generalized across the Empire or even comparable to the deployment of armies in the modern period.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-80073-0 - The Cambridge History of the Romance Languages: Volume II: Contexts
Edited by Martin Maiden, John Charles Smith and Adam Ledgeway
Excerpt
More information

We must not underestimate, however, the early emergence in Rome of a very entrepreneurial and well-developed merchant class, which often turned up in future provinces well before they were absorbed into the Empire. In this way, they prepared the ground for a sort of peaceful infiltration which, at the same time as disseminating some of the most typical goods and wares of Roman life, provided individuals from outside the Empire with some knowledge of Latin.

Nonetheless, a large part of the population of the Empire only had limited and indirect contact with the citizens of Rome proper. The cities are themselves a characteristic phenomenon of the Roman world and therefore often of recent foundation, replicating a single common model with strictly regimented political structures. Outside the cities, in the first two centuries of the Empire, peasants generally enjoyed contacts with the local market, in part controlled by Romans, and with the gentry made up of Romanized members of the indigenous population, the senatorial class or sometimes officials of the imperial tax system. Opportunities and reasons to learn Latin were therefore rather limited. Without doubt, the spread of eastern religions during the imperial period, and especially of Christianity, had a huge impact, including at a linguistic level. These religions, including Christianity, penetrated Greek (or at any rate eastern) circles and the Greek language, whereas their dissemination in the West was progressively coupled with the use of Latin. The persistence of Christian missionaries, who fought to eliminate paganism from some of the most remote areas of the western countryside, must have contributed greatly to the ultimate loss of most of the pre-Roman languages (cf. §4) and the generalization of the use of Latin.

3. The Schuchardt–Gröber hypothesis

A hypothesis particularly popular among Romance linguists, and for that reason also discussed here, is that advanced in 1866 by Hugo Schuchardt, who claimed that the different dates of Romanization of the individual provinces corresponded to different types of Latin exported to these same areas, whose characteristics were subsequently to surface in the Romance languages. Schuchardt was well aware of the linguistic complexity of the ancient world and of the diachronic, diatopic and diastratic variation which must have been present in the Roman Empire, even if he did observe that 'uneducated Latin [. . .] effectively always appears [. . .] on the monuments of all areas as one and the same language' (p. 92), perceptively concluding that 'in the later period, at least, uneducated spelling was quite conservative' (p. 93). In

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org