The Geographic Origin of Romanian

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Abstract:

Romanian shares phonetic, morphological, derivational, lexical innovations with a narrow area of Western Lombard and Vivaro-Alpin Occitan. These many arguments suggest that Romanian comes from the dialectalized Latin spoken in this area.

Keywords: Romance languages, vulgar Latin, dialects, Lombard, Occitan, Romanian, lexic

The present research assumes that Romanian and other Romance languages developed from the locally spoken Latin:

- Latin spoken in northern Gaul > French

- Latin spoken in Spain > Spanish

- Latin spoken in Dacia (or Moesia) > Romanian.

This hypothesis further assumes that spoken Latin itself was, in the II-nd and III-rd centuries AD, uniform. Both notions are tacitly accepted by linguists. There are some arguments for an uniform Latin: inscriptions all over the Roman empire show good Latin and bad Latin, but no dialectalization; one should, therefore assume that the spoken Latin itself was quite uniform. Further, the historian Eutropius says that colonists came in Dacia "ex toto orbe romano" – and therefore they were wont to speak an uniform Vulgar Latin.

We will show in the following study that:

a) Romanian developed from an already dialectalized Vulgar Latin.

b) the borders of this area can be clearly determined.

Phonetic isoglosses

Scempiamento – reduction of double consonants, in Veneto, Lombard and Romanian.

There is a wide, but old, and fragmented, area of rhotacism of intervocalic –L-: in France, in the western Occitan area, at the border with Italy, and in northern Italy, western Lombardy and Canton Ticino.

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Rhotacism

The Rhotacism of intervocalic –L-

The rhotacism of **L+consonant** or **consonant+L** is common in all Italian dialects. The intervocalic rhotacism, the most typical feature of Romanian, exists, in Ligure, Alpine Lombard, XIII-nth century Lombard and Ladino.

a) Alpine Lombard and Lombard

It is typical for the Canton Ticino (intervocalic –L- > -R-)

Leventina *firè/*It. *filare, gora/gola, jarè/gelare, mer/* It. *miele, murin/* It. *molino, pèra/*It. *pala, püras/* It. *pulce, sar/salare, sarèscia/salice, scüra/scuola, surìu/solatio, uróc/* Lat. *ulucus,* It. *alloco, uriva/oliva, taura/tavol*a; Lugano *aura /* It. *aquila*

It is present not only in Alpine Lombard, It has existed in Western Lombard as well – in Milano, until the XIX-th century. For It. *voglio* we have *vŏri/ vori* in Branzi, Campodolcino, Cremona and Laghetto. We find it in Bonvesin de la Riva, (XIII cent.) *dore/duole, feronia/felonia, gora/*It. *gola, maritïoso/ malizioso, mere/*It. *miele, perigoro /* It. *pericolo, segáre /* It. *ségale, vïora / viola, vore/vuole, sorengo* (alone)

b) Ligure

Ligure (Airole, Ventimiglia, Soldano, Brigasco *aigüra < aquila*) Cf. Ventimigliese *angeru, buréu < boletus, curumbu/colomba, deriçia/delizia, fîra/filo, isura/isola, mar/male, méra/* It. *mela, sarà/salare, sarin < salino, sarmùira-salamoia, tera <tela, vera <vela, verin < veleno, vürà/volare, vurré < volere,* Rovegno *angəru/ angelo.* Airole, Olivetta, Rovegno *muriŋ, sora/*It. *suola,* Monaco *tora/*It. *tavola, vuruntá,* Albenga *isura/* It. *isola,* Pietra *fürmine, sarmuie.*

In the *Rime genovesi della fine del secolo XIII e del principio del XIV* Archivio Glottologico Italiano, vol. II, 1876. :

*angero/*Ital. *angelo, caror/calore, dor/dolore, gora/gola, lear/leale, mara/mala, maregno/ maligno, more/mola, morin/mulino, Nicheroso/Nicollo, perigoro/pericolo, quar/ quale, scora/scuola, sor/sole, sorea/*Lat. *solebat, sotir/sottile, strangorar, vorea/* Lat. *volebat, vorem/vogliamo, voruntae, tar/tale, zer/* It. *gelo*; and possibly *sar/sale* twice if our conjectural translation is right.

Rime genovesi XXXVIII (c. xlv) v. 9: cevole e *sar* pestam asai.

XCIX *De non habendo in ore aliquot malum,* v. 36: e traito un gromo de *sar.*

And, of course, the ligurian word by excellence, *garie < galee* (tosc. *galere*):

ma se *garie* come avanti armemo (Zabata, p. 45)

caror "heat" has an exact equivalent in Arumanian *câroare* "heat", both from Lat. *calorem.*

Most of the words above have Romanian equivalents: *angero/înger, dor/dor, gora/gură, more/moară, Nicheroso/Nicoară, quar/care, vorem/vrem, vorea/vrea, tar/tare, zer/ger.*

The *Rime* have also other phonetic and lexical similarities with Romanian:

adormi/ Rom. *adormi,* It. *addormentarsi*; *ascosa/* Rom. *ascunsă,* It. *nascosta,*

asterne/ Rom *a aşterne.*

*avea/*Rom *avea,* It. *aveva*; *und/* Rom. *unde,* It. *dove*; *doi/* Rom. *doi,* It. *due*

voio/ Rom. *voi,* It. *voglio*; *stramua* / Rom. *a strămuta,* It. *spostare*

fortuna "storm" (Rom. *furtună*) existed in Old French as well.

moier/ Rom. *muiere,* It. *moglie*; *stare* with the meaning of "to live, dwell" typically Gallo-Italic.

In the *Prose genovesi* from the XIV-th century, (Archivio Glottologico vol. 8) we find:

angero, avangerio, apostori, deschonsorao, disipori, humera/umile, Herenna/Helena, mar/male, maroti/ammalati, miracori/miracoli, miria/miglia, Poro/ Paolo, quar/quale, varen/valgono, tora/tavola, ydore/idoli.

c)Ladino

It exists, but is rare in Ladino: *iarina/* It. *gallina, firare, mora/* It. *mola, őrə / olio, para/pala, sora/* It. *sola.*

Ampezzano : *chera/* It. *quella, fazoreto/* It. *fazzoletto, parota <palota* (small shovel), *parù /* It. *palude, pòresc < pollice, pöreš/* It. *pulce, purinéi <pollaio, sarà* (to salt) *sciara* (ladder); *scora/* It. *scuola, sora /*It. *suola, soróio/* It. *sole, serà <gelare, siara /*It. *segale, štera/* It. *stella, tera <tela vorea/* It. *voleva*; San Stefano Comelico *saroio/sole.*

Val Badia: *ares/*It. *ale* "wings" *chşra/* It. *quella, ćiandşra/* It. *candela, firanda* "spun yearn" *fira* "thread" *jerè/*It. *gelare* "to freeze", *Micurà /* It. *Nicolo, orentè/* It. *volontà, parora, pira/* It. *pila, niora/* Ampez. *nèola,* "cloud", *sarè/*It.*salare, sorşdl/* It. *sole, stşra/* It. *stella, turgher/* Gherdeina *tşurbl* (Fr. *trouble,* Rom. *tulbure <*turbulus*)

The verb *valere* "to be worth" is *varái, varé,* in San Linert, Calfosch, San Cascian, Corvara and Cortina d'Ampezzo. "to want" *volere,* is *orei, urai* in eight places, and *voré* in Cortina.

Spirantization of intervocalic –B-

Latin –B- becomes –β- and disappears:

febris > Rom. *fiori,* Occit. *fieure,* Franco-provensal; western Lomb. *feura*

But Fr. *fièvre*, Ital. *febbre.*

februarius > Rom. *făurar,* Ladin *feorer,* Provensal *feureir,* Lomb. *faurei,* Veneto *fauré,*

But Fr. *février,* Ital. *febbraio.*

This phenomenon is typical only for Occitan and Cisalpine Gaul – the Padan dialects.

Vowels

Lat accented –O- > -U-: Lat. *monte-* > Rom. *munte,* Piemont, Lombardy etc.

but Fr. *montagne*, Ital. *montagna.*

Comparing Romanian to Western Lombard (and, partially, Arpitan, Alpine Occitan) we find a cluster of isoglosses – phonetical, lexical, morphological – that may be explained as relicts of the first dialectalization of Latin.

We cannot explain otherwise the extinct dialect from Névache (Alpine Occitan)

French	Romanian	Névache	Toscan	meaning
ici	aici	eishi	qui	here
marais	baltă	pauto	pantano	swamp; mud
corneille	cioară	tsaurio	cornacchia	crow
geler	ger	dzarà	gelare	to freeze
bouche	gură	gouro	bocca	mouth
génisse	mânzat	manzo	*manzo*	heifer
soleil	soare	sourë / sorè	sole	sun
toile	teară	tièro	tela	cloth

Our seven words list is based on a 70 words long list quoting Henri Rostolland *Névache et la Vallée de la Clarée*, 1930. Both phonetically and lexically, this Occitan dialect is closer to Romanian than to either French or Italian. The Western Lombard area is the one with the most isoglosses with Romanian. Not far from Névache is Graviére / Gravera (franco-provensal). It has *gou a* – "mouth" and *pelh* "hair". All these features – common lexical innovations in respect to Latin and Romance,

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phonetical innovations (rhotacism of intervocalic –R-, spirantization of –B- degemination, and so on – all these suggest that Romanian came from the dialectal spoken Latin that already had these features.

> Most sound changes between Latin and Romanian exist in the western Lombard dialect and vivaro-alpin Occitan.
>
> All classical Histories of the Romanian language discuss the sound changes between Latin and Romanian in isolation. There is nothing specific Romanian in these sound changes.

Morphology

Rom. *am căutat,* Padan *am cercato* / Tosc. *abbiamo cercato,* Rom. *ei bat,* Padan *bato* / Tosc. *battono,* Rom. *doi, două* (m. f.) Occitan, Padan *doi, due* (m. f.) Tosc. *due* – and many other isoglosses – suggest a relationship between Romanian and Lombardo & Veneto.

Also, participles like Lombard *cazudho,* Rom. *căzut* / Tosc. *caduto*; Lomb. *vezudho,* Ven. *vezud,* Rom. *văzut* / Tosc. *visto* represent northern anomalies and may be old dialectal forms.

The gender of some words

As one can see, Romanian does share with Alpine Lombard common innovations.

In Romanian and in Lombard of Bormio, *la lum, la mel, la fel, la flor, invern, la sudor, la sal – lumină, miere, fiere, floare, iarnă, sudoare, sare,–* are feminine, while in Italian they are masculine.

Lat	word	Portug	Sp	Cat	Occ	French	Lomb	Rom	Tosc	Diagnostic
n	mel	m	f	f	m	m,	f	f	m	no dominant pattern,
n	fel	f	f	m	m	m	f	f	m	no dominant pattern,
m	flor-	f	f	f	f	f		f	m	Toscan is divergent.
n	hibernum	m	m	m	m	m		f	m	Lombard and Romanian are divergent.
m	sudor	m,	m	f	f	f	f	f	m,	no dominant pattern,
m	sal	m,	f	f	f	m,	f	f	m	no dominant pattern

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Prefixes

One can see that Romanian has most isoglosses with the Arpitan – Western Lombard area, more than with any other Romance area. Many of them – substrate words, prefixes etc. – are Romance, but not Latin: *a dezbrăca / desbrayer* v. Fr. *deshabiller,* It. *svestire* – show an early dialectalization. Many arguments suggest that Romanian comes from this *already* dialectalized Gallo-Latin from the Cisalpine Gaul: in the north (French, Occitan, Lombard, Veneto) one has a pervasive suffix *des-,* while Toscan has the other prefix, *ex-.*

If we reconstruct, from Romanian, early Lombard, Occitan and the earliest French a proto-Romance, we are able to say that

a) it represents the spoken Latin of northern Italy in the II-nd and III-rd centuries,

b) which already has words that do not exist in Classical Latin, or in Spanish, or in Toscan: *turbulus,* and even **tulburus* (Rom. *tulbure,* Lomb. Canzo, Bienate, Monza, Cozzo, Vigevano, Bereguardo, Montù Beccaria *tulbar, tulbru*). French has a different metathesis, *trouble,* while Toscan inherits the Class. Lat. *torbidus.*

Northern Italy, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna *stanco* "left-wards" Rom. *stâng* show that the meaning "left-wards" is as old as the meaning "tired".

Lexic

French	Arpitan (Francoprovensal) and Vivaro-alpine Occitan, Western Lombard	Romanian	Toscan (Italian)
champignons	buret	bureți	funghi
bouche	goura, goula	gură	bocca
cheveux	pelh	păr	capelli
deshabiller	desbraiar	a se dezbrăca	svestirsi
mal, mauvais	reo	rău	male
prêter	(imprumutare)	a împrumuta	prestare
***	dianaticus	zănatic	***
tramettre (Old Fr.)	tramettre (obsolete)	a trimite	mandare
voler	svolare	a zbura	volare

a) *campaneolus / boletus / fungus

fungus "mushroom" is the old classical Latin word, kept in Italian. French innovates and replaces it with *campaneolus > champignon

"mushroom" at some unknown date. A area in Provence and the Piemont has *bulet, bulé, buret, buré,* from Lat. *boletus,* which was specialized and got a wider meaning.

In the glosses **Hermeneumata Bernensia** we have

fungus id est omnis *boletus* – "*fungus*, that means any kind of *boletus*".

Such a gloss was possible only in an area where *fungus* disappeared, and had to be explained through *boletus*; this was possible only in the Alps – Grisons, Piemont and the east of Provence.

b) bouche / gură

lat. *bucca* has given fr. *bouche,* tosc. *bocca,* but in the Alps, both in vivaro-alpine Occitan and Arpitan (Francoprovensal, Romand) we have *goula, goura,* as in Romanian.

bucca is older and more widespread. It has traces in Romanian (a *îmbuca* – to take a mouthful; *bucă* – cheek; *bucate* – food). *Gula* "animal snout" in classical latin is an innovation – an early innovation, because we find it in Romanian, who separated very early from the Romania Magna; and a northern innovation, because it is found only in the Alps between Italy and France, in the Italian Piemont and the French Provence.

c) cheveux / păr

French and Toscan keep Lat. *capilli*, "head hair" as opposed to *pili* (fr. *poils*, ital. *pelo* "body hair"). It is unclear why *capilli* disappear from a small area in the Alps. Piemont *cavei,* Lomb. *caei*, Romansh *čavels* "hair" suggest they entered in homonymy with *cavalli* – "horses".

d)

e) malus / reus

malus "bad, evil" is the old, classical, widespread Latin word. *reus* "accused > wicked, evil" is a northern word. It may be old, if we can translate

St. Augustin *Sermones,* 180, *Ream* linguam non facit nisi *mens rea*

as "only a wicked mind makes an evil tongue".

If so, it is a northern word – Augustin lived, studied and wrote in Mediolanum, in the Cisalpine Gaul. It does not exist in the Latin spoken in Spain (*Glosas emilianenses* explain: *reus – culpauiles,* as do the *Reichenau glosses*) nor in France. It exists in Lombard, Veneto and Ladino – a Cisalpine Gaul old dialectalism.

f) praestare / *impromutuare

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Glossae Abba-pater Sangallensis 912, VII–VIII cent.: fenerat – mutuat – *inpromutat*

Reichenau glosses, VIII cent.: mutuare *impruntare*

We have here, in two old glosses, the Romanian meaning "to lend"; *emprunter* exists in French as well, but it means only "to borrow". Fr. *prêter*, Ital. *prestare* are older and continue Lat. *praesto.*
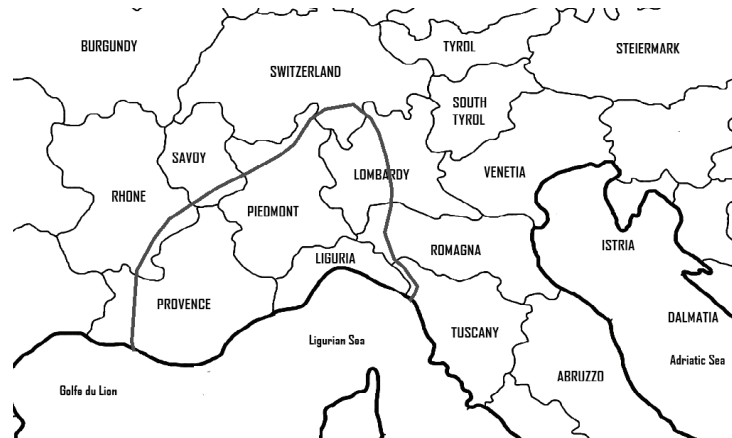
The area of origin of Romanian.

Lexical, derivational (prefixes) phonetical and morphological isoglosses.

g) dianaticus / zănatic

Attested in Maxim of Torino:

dianaticus rom. *zănatec*:

Cum maturius vigilaveris et videris saucium vino rusticum, scire debes quoniam, sicut dicunt, aut Dianaticus aut aruspex est; insanum enim numen insanum solet habere pontificem: talis enim sacerdos parat se vino ad plagas Deæ suæ, ut dum est ebrius, pœnam suam miser iste non sentiat.

"When you see a drunken peasant, you must know that he is a *Dianaticus* or haruspex".

This hapax also is found in the area we speak about, – Torino is a city in the Piemont – only there *and* in Romanian

h) volare / exvolare – Northern Italy has *svolare, svorare, zbolare* "to fly"

Rom. *şi* Old Fr. *si* "and" are northern phenomena, absent in Classical Latin and Italian. Occ. *aquest, aquel,* Catal. *aquest*, Rom. *acest* belong to a central zone, surrounded by Sp. *este,* Fr. *ce, cet,* Tosc. *questo*, *quello.*

Also, Rom. *unde,* Occit. *ont,* Lomb. *ont /* Tosc. *dove,* Fr. *où* < Lat. *ubi*; Fr. Occit. *trembler,* Rom. *a tremura /* Tosc. *tremere.* In both cases, the northern forms are dialectal innovations, while Toscan keeps the Class. Latin form.

Other northern words:

Lat. *tremulare,* Rom. *a tremura,* Fr. *trembler*; but. It. *tremare* from. Lat. *tremere*

Piem. Lomb. Romagna *meliga* "Panicum miliaceum", Rom. *mămăligă* "polenta"

Fr. *chatouiller,* Old Fr. *catiliare,* Provens. *gatilha*, North. Italy *gatiglio* etc. Rom. *a gîdila.*

Substrate words

Some substrate words, Rom. *baligă* "manure" Lombard Ticino *belegot* "manure" belong probably to the Alpine substrate, and connect Romanian to the Northern Italy, Rom. *molid < molizi* (Picea abies) may be related to Arpitan *mélèze* (Larix decidua), as *zîmbru* Pinus cembra, Romansh *tsondra.*

All these data – lexical and morphological innovations – suggest that Romanian comes from a Latin dialect spoken north of the line La Spezia – Rimini, and the archaisms it shares with the South of Italy are not diagnostic. We suggest Romanian comes from a western dialect of the Cisalpine Gaul.

The rhotacism of intervocalic –L- exists in Arpitan Occitan and Western Lombard. This is an isogloss spreading across dialects. Because it exists also in Ladino and Romanian, it may be a relict of an older dialectal splitting. The division Occitan / Lombard is later.

Conclusions

We suggest that Romanian comes from a Latin already dialectalized spoken in the Alpes Maritimae, Alpes Poeninae and in the West of the Gallia Cisalpina, – western Lombardy and Liguria. Usually, the linguists point out the very visible parallelisms between Romanian and the Southern Italian dialects. We should not be misled by this obvious resemblances: the Southern Italian dialects are archaic and conservative, while French was phonetically very eroded – and is, to this day, a

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crumbling language, phonetically speaking. This permanent strong erosion led to the replacement of many words, and the vocabulary of modern French and Occitan is very different from Romanian.

Metaphorically put, French is an extremely wrinkled sister of Romanian, while Italian Meridional dialects are very well-preserved, young-looking cousins.

We propose a name for this area – VALLL – Vivaro-Alpin, Western Lombard, Liguria, Ladinia.