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CORSICAN DIALECT CLASSIFICATIONS

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Abstract

This paper deals with the various classifications of Corsican dialects, both in terms of their relationship with Sardinian and Italo-Romance dialects, particularly Tuscan, and from an internal point of view. The starting point is Falcucci's 1875 classification, which proposes a fundamental bipartition between *Cismontano* (north) and *Pumuntincu* (south), to which he adds *Capo-Corsino*. Following this publication, Guarnerio examined Corsican dialects in relation to those of Sardinia, in particular Gallurian and Sassarian. The bipartition proposed by Falcucci was a milestone but was later questioned by Bottiglioni (1926-1927) and Melillo (1977). Today, thanks to the work of Dalbera-Stefanaggi (1991, 1991, 2002), we have a partition into five dialectal areas (including Gallurian), to which Sassarian is added. Classifications of Corsican fall within the framework of Romance Linguistics and Dialectology.

Keywords: dialect classification, Corsican dialects, Gallurian dialects, Sassarian dialect, Italo-Romance dialects, Sardinian

Name: Corsu ['korsu]

Language-code: ISO 639-1 co; ISO 639-2 cos

CLASSIFICACIÓ DIALECTAL DEL CORS

Resum

En aquest treball s'examinen les diferents classificacions dels dialectes corsos, tant pel que fa a la seva relació amb els dialectes sard i italo-romànic, en particular el toscà, com des d'un punt de vista intern. El punt de partida és la classificació de Falcucci de 1875, que proposa una bipartició fonamental entre *Cismontano* (nord) i *Pumuntincu* (sud), a la qual afegeix *Capo-Corsino*. Després d'aquesta publicació, Guarnerio va examinar els dialectes corsos en relació amb els de Sardenya, en particular el gal·lur i el sassarès. La bipartició proposada per Falcucci va ser una fita, però posteriorment va ser qüestionada per Bottiglioni (1926-1927) i Melillo (1977). Avui, gràcies al treball de Dalbera-Stefanaggi

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(1991, 1991, 2002), tenim una partició en cinc àmbits dialectals (entre ells el gal-lur), als quals s'afegeix el sassarès. Les classificacions del cors es troben en el marc de la lingüística i la dialectologia romàniques.

Paraules clau: classificació dialectal, dialectes corsos, dialectes gal-lurs, dialectes sassaresos, dialectes itadoromànics, sard

CLASSIFICA DI I DIALETTI CORSI

Abstract

Ind'è issu articulu si parlerà di e varie classifiche di i dialetti corsi, ind'a so articolazione cù u sardu è i dialetti itadorumanzi, in particolare tuscani, quant'è da un puntu di vista internu. Si parerà da a classifica di Falcucci ind'u 1875 ch'è prupone di stabili una bipartizione fondamentale *cismontano* (nordu) – *pumuntincu* (meziornu), aghjunghjenduci u *capo-corsino*. Dopu à issa pubblicazione, Guarnerio hà da interessassi à e parlate corse ind'a so articolazione cun quelli di a Sardegna, in particolare cù u gallurese è u sassarese. A bipartizione pruposta da Falcucci firmerà ind'i studi successivi puru cù interruzione da a parte di Bottiglioni (1926-1928) po di Melillo (1977) sin'à definì, in tempi nostri è grazie à i studi di Dalbera-Stefanaggi (1991, 1991, 2002) à un partizione cun cinque aghje dialettale (cumpresu u gallurese) aghjunghjenduci u sassarese. E classifiche ch'è riguardanu u corsu si scrivenu ind'u quattru di a Linguistica è di a Dialettologia Rumanze.

Parole chiave: Classifica di i dialetti, dialetti corsi, dialetti galluresi, dialettu sassarese, dialetti itadorumanzi, sardu

1. Introduction

Corsican is an Italo-Romance dialect spoken on the island of Corsica¹ as well as in Gallura, in northern Sardinia, where it is called Gallurian and where it was imported from the far south of Corsica and represents a secondary dialect on the neighbouring island. Corsican was also spoken in Capraia (Tuscan archipelago) (Map 1).

¹ Corsica has two alloglot communities: Cargese, where Greek is spoken, and Bonifacio, where a Ligurian dialect is spoken. The island is currently experiencing linguistic practices linked to the settlement of immigrant populations, especially from the Maghreb and Portugal (cf. Géa 2005), in addition to the traditional populations from various regions of Italy.



Map 1. Area of Corsican dialects

Corsican originated from Latin, which became established on the island during antiquity, following the joint conquest of Corsica and Sardinia in the 3rd century BC (cf. in particular Jehasse 2003: 41-42). The functional linguistic separation of the two islands, following their joint Latinization, probably took place around the beginning of the 3rd century AD.² It was then that Corsica turned towards central Italy and, from the High Middle Ages onwards, entered the orbit of Tuscany, which exerted a strong influence on the island's languages. Tuscan was the islanders' prestige language throughout the Middle Ages, before giving way to Italian (16th century) in all vehicular usage. The Genoese presence (XIII-XVIII century) left much more superficial traces in Corsican, mainly limited to lexical borrowings.³

² We refer to Straka (1956: 254), who dates: "l'individualisation du sarde [...] au moins deux générations avant le milieu du III^e siècle, c'est-à-dire au plus tard vers la fin du II^e siècle" (see also the synthesis, *op. cit.*: 258). W. von Wartburg (1953: 59) gives a later chronology, i.e. the IV century for the separation of Sardinia and the other areas of conservation of Latin vowel timbres under accent (cf. below).

³ Recent studies suggest that links with northern Italy should be re-evaluated (Dalbera-Stefanaggi 2005, Medori 2013).

With the French conquest in 1769, Corsica embarked on a process of linguistic francization. Initially, French occupied the vehicular register, then replaced Italian. Gradually, it also infiltrated vernacular usage, and today can be considered the language most widely used by islanders, to the detriment of Corsican.

Paradoxically, from the end of the 19th century onwards, the progress of French was the vector of an awareness that the language of the islanders was in danger of disappearing, and from then on Corsican entered a process of linguistic elaboration⁴. This is manifested in processes of conservation, reclamation, and revitalization. Although, like France's other regional languages, Corsican has no official status, there is a strong commitment to its revitalization; the language, which remains non-standardised and non-normalised, offers a high degree of social visibility (see Colonna 2013 and 2020).

Despite this, Corsican is classified as an endangered language by UNESCO and could be, according to a 2012 survey (CTC 2013), in a phase preceding extinction according to the criterion of interfamilial transmission, which does not exceed 16% (14% of those surveyed say they speak in Corsican and French to their children, and only 2% in Corsican). However, the latest sociolinguistic survey commissioned by the Collectivité de Corse offers a more optimistic panorama.⁵

In Sardinia, Gallurian, like other Italian-Romance dialects in Italy, does not enjoy national protection, but is recognized regionally for its preservation (cf. Blasco-Ferrer - Di Marzo 2017: 6). Conditions are favourable for the continued use of the dialect⁶ and initiatives are being taken to standardize it. Present in Capraia in past centuries Corsican has become extinct on this island (Nesi 2012 and forthcoming b).

Linguistically, Corsican can be divided into five dialectal areas: Corso-Gallurian, Taravian, Central-Southern, Central-Southern, North-Eastern and Corsican Cape⁷. If we

⁴ This notion is at the heart of Corsican sociolinguistics, cf. in particular Thiers (2020).

⁵ CdC (2022). The statistics presented in this report, although refined in relation to the previous survey, should be treated with caution in the absence of a large-scale qualitative and quantitative assessment.

⁶ For an overview of the issue of linguistic minorities in Italy, see Toso (2008).

⁷ We are leaving aside here the classifications of Corsican sociolinguistics (notably Comiti 1992), which are based on unrepresentative samples and questionable methodologies (work on perception and representations based on textual samples that lack precision).

consider the territory of northern Sardinia, in addition to the Gallurian belonging to the Corsican group (Corso-Gallurian area), we must add the Sassarian to this inventory.

This classification is currently the most detailed. It follows a series of proposals,⁸ embedded in a general Romance framework or classifications specific to Corsican dialects and, partly from northern Sardinia.

2. Classifications

As Dalbera-Stefanaggi (1991 § 185: 309) points out, the first classifications of Corsican were devoted to its place in the Romance language family, and in particular its relationship with Tuscan and Sardinian:

Le dénominateur commun à tous ces travaux auxquels nous nous référons est constitué par leur problématique relative à la position du corse dans la Romania et plus particulièrement au sein de l'aire italienne. On pourrait même préciser les choses ainsi: le corse entre le sarde et le toscan.

On page 74 of his *Grammaire des langues romanes*, Diez (1874), divides Italian into three main areas: north, centre and south. He includes Corsica and northern Sardinia in the central area, along with the dialects of Tuscany and Rome, while he places the other Sardinian dialects in the southern area. Following Falcucci's description in 1875, Ascoli published an article devoted to the partition of Italo-Romance dialects (1882-1885). He proposed integrating Corsican into a group of dialects distinct from Tuscan and Italian and including all of them in the same group of specific Neolatin varieties (Ascoli 1882-1885: 110; see Cugno 2023). Ascoli places Gallurian as northern Sardinian strongly hybridized with southern Corsican. He relies on a few features, mainly phonetic and, to a lesser extent, morphological.

⁸ Concerning the general classification of Corsican within the Italo-Romance group, we refer to the article by F. Cugno (2023) as well as the article on *Italia Dialettale* by M. Loporcaro (2016), which is based on G. Pellegrini's classification.

In a general classification introductory to his *Grammar*, Meyer Lübke (1890-1906) establishes the existence of two dialectal groups in Italy: *Upper Italian* (northern Italy), and *Italian* as a whole. He considers Sardinian to be separate, and that Gallurian is closely related to Corsican (1890, t.I: 12 § 6).⁹ In his later *Grammatica storica della lingua italiana e dei dialetti toscani*¹⁰ Meyer Lübke divided Italian dialects into two groups: central and southern dialects, and northern dialects. He places Corsican, Gallurian and Sassarian with the central Italian group (1941: 3 § 2 and *aggiunte e correzioni*, *idem*: 223). He emphasizes the kinship of Corsican dialects with Italian (*idem*: 1 § 1) and the dialects of Tuscany (*idem*: 2 § 1): “La Sardegna settentrionale e la Corsica gravitano linguisticamente sulla Toscana, meglio che sulla Sardegna centrale” (*idem*: 223).

Bartoli (1905), for its part, divides the Italian dialect groups according to the Appenino mountain range. It should be remembered that Corsican alone forms the fourteenth group (*Sud-appeninico occidentale*).

Bourciez (1910) links the southern Corsican dialects with Sardinian and Gallurian, and the northern ones with those of Tuscany. He states that Corsica’s southern dialects occupy a third of the island, and that above Ajaccio, Corsican dialects have a close affinity with that of Tuscany (Bourciez 1910: 480, § 399). Beyond this general consideration, in his description of Romance languages from a phonetic, morphological and syntactic point of view, he mentions several features of Corsican dialects.

In 1925, at a time when documentation on Corsican had become increasingly rich, Merlo published an article devoted to “Concordanze corse-italiane-centromeridionali”. Essentially based on phonetic and morphological elements, he draws attention to the similarities between Corsican dialects and those “parlati nella nostra penisola dalle Marche meridionali e dall’Umbria alle Puglie, alla Calabria, alla Sicilia”. It deals with phonetic features and some morphological elements. He is particularly interested in the phono-syntactic variation of the initial, the mechanism concerning the dialects of central-southern Italy, Sardinia, Corsica and Tuscany (Merlo

⁹ In his *Grammar*, Corsican examples are cited when they deviate from Italian.

¹⁰ We refer to the Italian edition. The German version dates from 1905.

1925: 248); he rightly sees it as one of the most significant phenomena of this Romance group.

2.1 Francesco Domenico Falcucci (1875)

Francesco Domenico Falcucci (1835-1902), originally from Corsican Cape, spent most of his life in Tuscany, where he worked as a translator and journalist (for further details, cf. Liccia, Franceschini and Nesi all in 2018). Thanks to a request from Giovanni Papanti, Falcucci (1875) drew up the first description of Corsican languages, and since then has been working with several Italian linguists, particularly Guarnerio.

2.1.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

In 1875, Papanti published a collection of translations of the short story IX from the first day of the Decameron (*La Dama di Guascogna e il Re di Cipro*) to mark the anniversary of Boccaccio's death. For Corsica, the translations were entrusted to Falcucci,¹¹ who delivered five of them, accompanied by a commentary that proposed a landmark score of Corsican dialects. In addition to these translations, the linguistic material he exploited in his work (1875 then 1915) was based on Tommaseo's *Canti Corsi* (1841, and cf. Nesi 2020), as well as on the lexical and literary collections he carried out in Corsica and among Corsicans from several regions of the island (cf. Luneschi 2018a).

Falcucci identifies certain distinctive features of Corsican in general, in contrast to Tuscan and even Italian. He sometimes establishes links with the languages of Sardinia, particularly those of Gallura.

We will now outline the general characteristics mentioned by Falcucci, sometimes in a scattered and confusing way for¹² Corsican, but sufficiently rich to serve as a basis for subsequent descriptions. It should be pointed out that Falcucci was

¹¹ Franceschini (2018) recalls the history of Falcucci's contribution to this collection.

¹² Guarnerio recalls (1892: 129) that Falcucci: "faceva precedere e seguire da una serie dei suoi appunti preziosissimi, sebbene non peranco metologicamente coordinati".

not trained as a linguist,¹³ so he presents phenomena without necessarily identifying the processes to which they belong.

Falcucci, proposes a bipartition between the northern Corsican languages, which constitute *Cismontano*, and the southern Corsican languages, which constitute *Pumuntincu*.¹⁴ According to him, the line dividing the two areas follows the mountain range that divides Corsica in two (1875: 573):

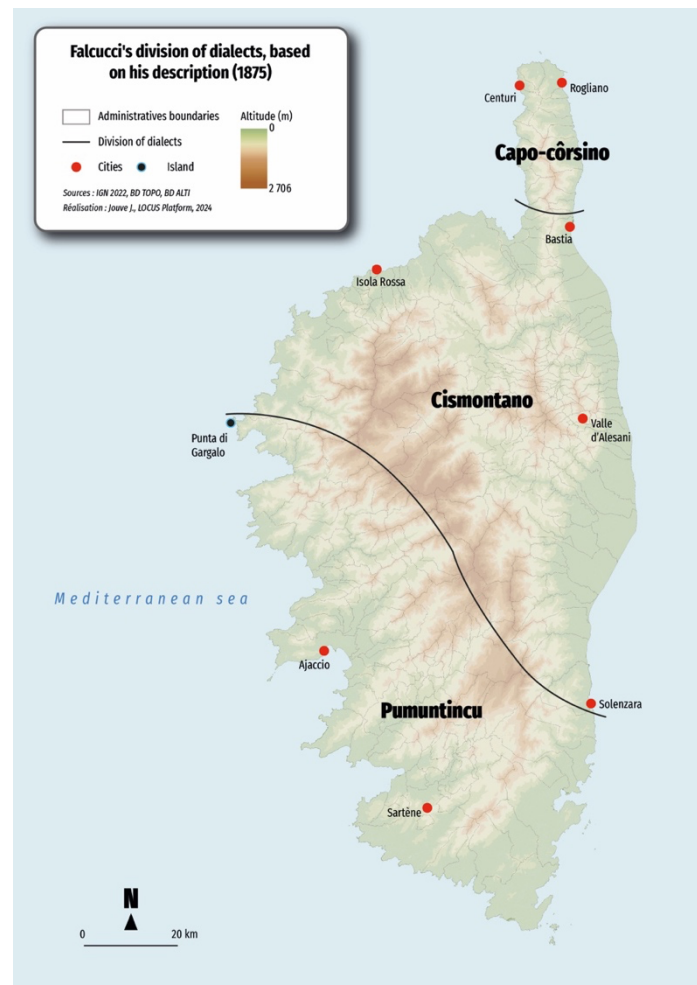
L'isola si divide dagli stessi naturali in due parti ben distinte dalla giacitura delle sue alpi. La linea di partizione corre da borea-ponente, movendo dalla punta di Gargalo, a mezzodì-levante fino alla marina di Solenzara [...] di quà da' monti, corrisponderebbe bene il gruppo ch'io chiamerò cismontano; all'altra, detta banda di fuori, o de là dai monti, quello oltremontano, che i Còrsi stessi dimandano *pumuntincu*.

In the scientific literature, the fundamental bipartition between north (here *cismontano*) and south (here *pumuntincu*) has long persisted and has only been amended very gradually.

To these two main dialects, *Cismontano* (north) and *Pumuntincu* (south), Falcucci (1875: 573) suggests adding a third area, that of *Capo-Corsino*, which he claims is spoken in the Bastia region.

¹³ He studied law. When we talk about the phenomena he describes, we will try to re-establish the scientific terminology that Falcucci lacks in his descriptions.

¹⁴ Falcucci specifies (1875: 573) that *pumuntincu* is a form used by Corsicans to designate the languages of the south of the island, while *cismontano* is a way of adhering to a description of Corsica based on geography understood in a vision of the island from the mainland, in this case Italy.



Map 2. Falcucci's division of Corsican dialects (based in his description)

Paradoxically, this last dialect is the one Falcucci describes least, as it is the starting point for his 1875 description (cf. Aprea 2018, Retali-Medori 2018), and the first Corsican dictionary he was to produce (published in 1915 post-mortem by Guarnerio) which includes several of the island's dialects.¹⁵ It should be noted that the Corsican Cape area was neglected by specialists (apart from Guarnerio), and it was not until the end of the XX^e century that it was studied in depth.

¹⁵ Cf. Aprile (2018 and forthcoming), who emphasizes the originality of Falcucci's (1915) work on the areal character of the dictionary in contrast to the more strictly dialectal monographs contemporary with it. On methodology, cf. Nesi (2018) and Luneschi (2018a).

2.1.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

Falcucci divides the island's languages essentially into three groups: *cismontano*, for northern Corsica; *pumuntincu*, for the south; *capo-corsino*, for Corsican Cape. After outlining the general characteristics of Corsican, we will look at the main features of each of these dialect areas (Map 2).

Phonetically, Falcucci (1875) characterizes Corsican by the presence, as in Gallurian, of the palatal consonants /c/ and /ɟ/, for which he proposes a grapheme with <chji> and <ghji> then <chj> and <ghj> (Falcucci 1915): *anchjiūa* 'anchovy', *piènghjie* 'cry'. He also points out the existence of the alveolar fricative sound /ʒ/ for which, he gives no solution graphically and conforms to the notation of the affricate in Italian: *nigiuna* 'none', *frigettu* 'ribbon', etc (cf. Aprea 2018).

Falcucci shows that, in Corsican, there is a phono-syntactic variation of the initial and a conservation after consonant within the word. Thus, the palatal /ɟ/, which alternates in the weak initial with /j/ (transcribed by <j>): *Ghjiuvanni* (first name *John*), *lu jocu* 'the game', *inghjuria* 'insult, insult'. Using the same phenomenon of alternating strong and weak initials, he points out that etymological V and B are confused in the initial by /β/ in a weak position and /b/ in a strong position or after a closed syllable: *li voni* 'the good ones' (from *bonu* 'good'), but *imbecchjià* 'to grow old', so' *becchjiu* 'I'm old'. He also observes devoicing in intervocalic position for certain phonemes: *lechjie* 'to read' (/ɟ/ > /c/), but these have a geographically limited extension, which Falcucci does not specify (cf. below). Similarly, he notes an /r/ realization of intervocalic /d/: *merolla*, *mirolla* 'spinal cord',¹⁶ 'breadcrumbs', but this phenomenon constitutes a case of complex geolinguistic variation that will be described in later work. Finally, Falcucci records the affrication of /s/ after /n/ as in Tuscan (a variety he knows well). However, while affrication can be found scattered across the territory (e.g. in *falzu* 'false' or 'hypocrite' < FALSUS, REW 3171; cf. BDLC map '(c'est) faux'), it is currently more characteristic of southern speakers.

¹⁶ This example is based on a comparison with Italian *midolla*. However, REW proposes a MERÜLLA etymon (REW 5463.2), which cites Tuscan *mirolla* with several Italo-Romance forms, including Corsican, with -r-, alongside MEDÜLLA (REW 5463).

As far as vocalism is concerned, Falcucci's general description of Corsican only gives indications of atonic vocalism. In the pre-tonic position, he specifies that /u/, /i/ or /a/ are essentially found, as opposed to the Tuscan forms¹⁷ which have /o/ or /e/: *cunisciutu* 'known' (it. *conosciuto*), *adore* 'odor' (it. *odore*), *bargogna* 'shame' (it. *vergogna*). But he also points out that there are exceptions, for example in *beccaccia*, *biccazza* 'woodcock' (it. *beccaccia*). In any position, the vowel /e/ regularly changes to /a/: *libaru* 'free', *par* 'for', etc.

In connection with the vowel inventory in atonic position, Falcucci discusses apophony, which is present throughout Corsica, citing *coffa* 'basket, couffe' / *cuffone* 'big couffe', *cuncorenu* 'they compete' / *cuncurendu* 'competing'.

Conditioned by the atone position, the inflectional morpheme of the masculine singular is -u versus -o in Tuscan, and Falcucci points out that this is the situation in Latin and various Italian dialects.

On the other hand, in the field of morphology, the possessive adjective can be enclosed: *māmata* 'your mother', *bābitu* 'your father'. Falcucci points out that in Corsican there's a stronger tendency towards composition than in Tuscan: *babuziu* 'paternal uncle', *malmendi* 'vices, defects'. In addition, composition can take place with the linking element -i-, the noun being generally anteposed to the adjective: *spallilèrgu* 'broad-shouldered'. In terms of verbal morphology, Falcucci highlights the use of the infix -eghji- in the present indicative, present subjunctive and imperative: *interrugheghji* 'yo ask' or 'asks!', *ch'ella lu libereghji* 'to set him free'. There is also a gerund in -endu introduced by the preposition *in*: *in turnendu* 'returning'. On the syntactic level, Falcucci mentions the use of the vocative introduced by o, as well as the prepositional accusative.

Finally, Falcucci's biographical journey between Corsica, Tuscany and Sardinia enables him to observe that Corsican has specific lexical elements such as *teppa* 'hillside, sloping rock', and some words are shared with Gallura in Sardinia: *falà* 'to go down', *tumbà* 'to kill', *eghju* 'lamb', *stazzu* 'sheepfold' and terms he defines as specific to "mountain people", e.g. *sarconu* 'park for sheep'.

¹⁷ In Corsican writing, *Tuscan* is often understood as 'Italian' and not just as a dialect of Tuscany.

2.1.2.a *Pumuntincu* (south)

According to Falcucci (1875), *Pumunincu* is characterized by the use of tonic /u/, which sets it apart from other Corsican dialects with /ɔ/: *cursa* vs *corsa* ‘race’, and the atonic vocalism comprises three vowels, -i, -u and -a: *cumu* ‘how, like’, *dunqua* ‘therefore’. The *pumuntincu* is a cacuminal (or retroflex) realization of the Latin geminate laterals -ll- > [dɖ], which the author transcribes <-dr->:¹⁸ *edra* ‘she’, *fratedru* ‘brother’.

Regarding morphology, Falcucci notes that the nominal inflectional morpheme for nouns and adjectives in the 3rd Latin declension is -i (instead of -e in the rest of Corsica): *cunsulazioni* ‘consolation’. He also notes the existence of plurals in -a¹⁹: *li preta* ‘the priests’, *li pecura* ‘the sheep’, *li fiora* ‘the flowers’, *li jorna* ‘the days’, a situation he compares to ancient Lucchese, and he opposes to the form of feminine plurals which is normally in -i: *funtani* ‘fountains’.

Falcucci points out the form of the definite article and the direct object pronoun: *la si sbacca* ‘he brags about it’, *li jorna* ‘the days’, etc. He also observes a diminutive value for the suffix -onu/-oni: *fratedronu* ‘little brother’. There’s also a diminutive value for the suffix -onu / -oni: *fratedronu* ‘little brother’ and a specific lexicon: *jàcaru* ‘dog’ or *puzzinosa* and *predachjia* ‘fox’.

2.1.2.b *Cismontano* (north)

Phonetically, *Cismontano* is characterized by the palatalization of /a/ into /e/: *faraghju* > *feraghju* ‘I will’, as well as by a significant presence of /o/ in atonic position. At the level of dialectal subgroups, he notes a realization /ɲ/ of the palatal nasal /ɲ/ in Balagne transcribed as <ngn>.

¹⁸ In the *Vocabolario*, Falcucci (1915) also gives the spelling <-dd->.

¹⁹ It’s traditionally accepted that these plurals refer to inanimates that have a masculine singular form in -u. The question has been debated several times. On the alternating gender in Corsican, cf. Faraoni - Loporcaro (2016).

In terms of verbal morphology, the imperfect form of the verb *esse* 'to be' is *ghjiéra* for *éra* (Pe3, 'he was') and there are sigmatic forms of the past simple tense in Pe3: *prupose* 'he proposed', while in Bastia, the past simple tense is in *-ede*.

2.1.2.c The *capo-corsino*

For *capo-corsino*, Falcucci ²⁰ mentions the phonetic and phonological palatalization of /a/ > /ɛ/ before the nasal, in syllables hindered by /n/ or /r/, or even in other palatal contexts: *enima* vs *anima* 'soul', *merchente* vs *mercante* 'merchant', *imbercà* vs *imbarcà* 'to embark', *ecqua* vs *acqua* 'water'. Concerning consonants, we note the dissimilation of geminates: *micca* > *minca* 'not', *suppurtà* > *sumpurtà* 'to support'. Etymological V changes to /g/ on contact with rounded vowels: *gulintéri* (vs *vulintéri*) 'gladly', *golpe* (vs *volpe*) 'fox'.

Morphologically, Falcucci lists the full form of the definite article *la*, *lu...* as opposed to *a*, *u*, etc. Verbal morphology also differs from *Cismontano* in several respects. Falcucci specifies that the imperfect indicative of the verb *esse* 'to be' is *ghjére* (Pe3). The imperfect indicative of verbs in the first class is *-aie* in Rogliano, Ersa and Tomino, *-aia* in the rest of Corsican Cape (vs. *-ava* in northern Corsica), and *-eie* for Latin mixed II, III, III verbs: *vuleie*, *sentie* (vs. *-ìa* elsewhere).

As for the lexicon, Falcucci highlights the use of specific terms: the nightingale is called *cāvriu* in Rogliano and *filumena* in Centuri, and the 'runt' is called *ambréchjiu* in Corsican Cape.

²⁰ The *capo-corsino* has been the subject of a monograph (Medori 1999) and articles (Medori 1995, 2001a,b 2005). The way in which this dialect is reflected in the work of Falcucci is dealt with in Retali-Medori (2018).

2.2 Pier Enea Guarnerio (1892-1898, 1902-1905, 1911)

Pier Enea Guarnerio (1854-1919), a linguist specializing in Sardinian and a student of Ascoli,²¹ first became interested in Corsican through a study of Gallurian and Sassarian, and later through his links with Falcucci.²² His work has led him to discuss the place of Sardinian dialects (Sardinian, Gallurian and Sassarian) and Corsican in the classification of Romance languages. He published the results of his research in a series of articles between 1892 and 1911. Guarnerio defined four distinct groups for Sardinia (Guarnerio 1902-1905: 502): “1° il logudorese [...], 2° il campidanese; 3° il gallurese; 4° il sassarese”.

By including Corsican and separating the dialects of northern Sardinia to Sardinian, while distinguishing Gallurian and Sassarian he has contributed to debates on the classification of the dialects of the two islands.

2.2.1 Framework: Isoglottic dialectology

Guarnerio’s descriptions of Gallurian, Sassarian and Corsican (1892-1898) are based not only on the geographical configuration and history of the islands concerned, but also on translations of literary texts (traditional poems) or texts written intentionally in the 19th century and published by Prince Bonaparte, Zuccagni-Orlandini or Papanti.²³ As far as Corsican is concerned, Falcucci’s publication (1875) plays a decisive role in Guarnerio’s description. For Sassarian and Gallurian, on the other hand, Guarnerio produced texts collected orally and transcribed by himself (1898: 408-420 §5 *Appendice, Saggio di trascrizione di testi vivi*).

As Dalbera-Stefanaggi (1991: 311-312, § 189) points out, the material used by Guarnerio to describe Corsican is not homogeneous and, unlike Gallurian and Sassarian, is based exclusively on textual data. Moreover, the sources used do not

²¹ A biographical note on P. E. Guarnerio written by F. Avolio is available in Treccani’s *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (available online at www.treccani.it).

²² Guarnerio published Falcucci’s dictionary (1915) following the latter’s death in 1902. On the links between Falcucci and P. E. Guarnerio, we refer to Nesi (2018).

²³ The documents used are described by Guarnerio in the introduction to his study (1892-1898: 127-130).

allow us to clearly delimit the dialect areas mentioned by the author. He did, however, propose the first scientific description of Corsican, comparing it phonetically and phonologically with the dialects of northern Sardinia in terms of phonetics and even phonology (phono-syntactic variation of the initial),²⁴ morphology and lexicon from a diachronic angle, making this a remarkable work.

2.2.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

2.2.2.a Sardinia and Corsica in the Romance ensemble

In a first article (1892-1898) Guarnerio studied Gallurian and Sassarian and, from there, Corsican.²⁵ Its starting point is Friedrich Diez's (1874) proposed classification of Romance languages, which includes Corsica and northern Sardinia in the central Italian group. In a review article, Guarnerio (1902-1905) also revisits the classification proposed by Meyer Lübke (1890-1906, 1941) and then that of Bartoli (1905).

Starting with his wide-ranging article on the dialects of Sassari, Gallura and Corsica (1892-1898), Guarnerio went on to establish, in subsequent publications (1902-1905 and 1911), the place to be given to these dialects within the Romance group. His studies clarified the distinction to be made between the dialects of northern Sardinia and Logoudorian (considered Sardinian proper) and Campidanian (1911: 198).

Using the criterion of Romance vocalism, which is the basis for Meyer-Lübke's (1890-1906, 1941) grouping of Corsican and Sardinian, Guarnerio (1902-1905) shows that Gallurian and *Oltramontano* Corsican,²⁶ in line with the situation in Logoudorian, retain the distinction between vowel timbres derived from Ĩ and Ů and those derived from Ē and Ō respectively (Gallurian *tela* 'cloth', *pilu* 'hair', *fiori* 'flower', *nući* 'nut',

²⁴ For Sassarian, he describes the phenomenon on pages 180-183 (1898), for Gallurian on pages 184-185, and for Corsican on page 185 (§ 193). In his 1911 article, Guarnerio discusses the sources available for describing the dialects of Sardinia, in particular medieval texts.

²⁵ Guarnerio (1915-1916) devoted a series of etymological notes on the Corsican lexicon, alongside Carlo Salvioni (1916).

²⁶ *Oltramontano* is to be understood here as "extreme southerner": "che ha il suo nido segnatamente nelle parlate del distretto di Sartene" (Guarnerio 1902-1905: 512).

Corsican *tela*, *pilu*, *boçi* ‘voice’ and *ġula* ‘throat’). On the other hand, he shows that Sassarian confuses the endings of stemming from Ī and Ē as well as Ū and Ō (*tela*, *pēlu*, *fiori*, *nōži*), following the example of northern Corsican speakers (*cismontano* and *capo-corsino*). To show the separation of Sardinian dialects on these vowel criteria he proposes the following summary diagram (Figure 1; Corsican is mentioned in the comments):

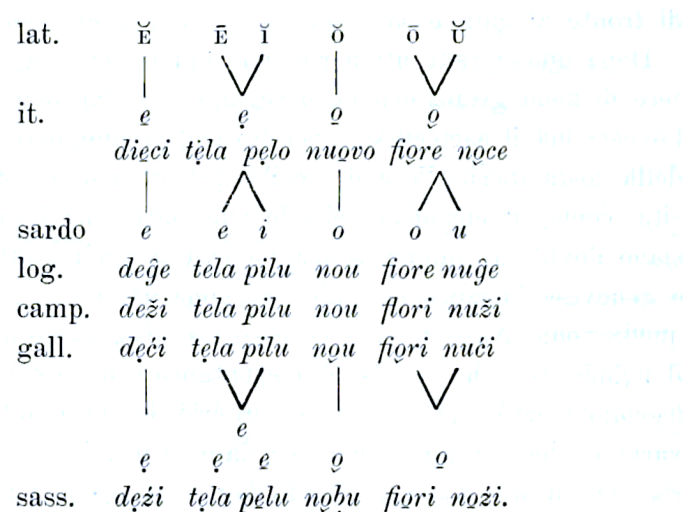


Figure 1. Diachronic vocalisms of Sardinian dialects (Guarnerio 1902-1905: 504)

Regarding *Cismontano*, Guarnerio has established that, while departing from Western Romance as well as from Sardinian, it shares characteristics with what he calls (1902-1905: 513):²⁷ “[il] tipo italiano e più precisamente toscano.” In a summary diagram (Figure 2), he considers the dialects of Sardinia separately within the Romance group, because of the importance that Sardinian played in the physiognomy of Gallurian and Sassarian, and places Corsican in the group of dialects of the central Italian group. In his view, Gallurian, Sassarian and Corsican *Oltramontano* form an intermediate group between Sardinian and the Tuscan group, to which the dialects of northern Corsica belong (*idem*: 200). The linguistic bridge” that Corsica and northern Sardinia form between Tuscan and Sardinian is a constant in scientific literature.

²⁷ Guarnerio’s work also deals with the *capo-corsino* variety, which was neglected in later studies until the end of the 20th century.

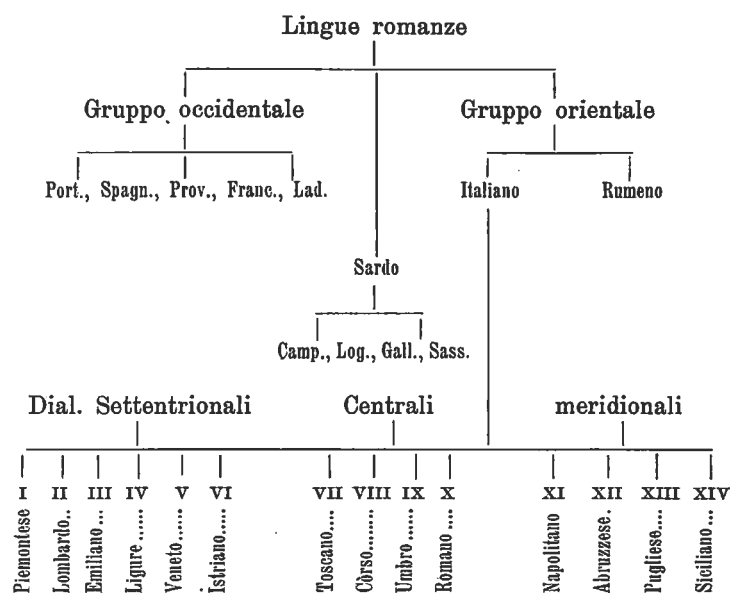


Figure 3. Sardinian (Logoudorian and Campidanian), Gallurian and Corsican within the Romance languages (Guarnerio 1902-1905: 516)

2.2.2.b Features common to Sardinian and Corsican

In addition to the realizations of Ĭ and Ē, as well as Ů and Ō in Sardinia and Corsica, Guarnerio examined other phonetic, morphological and syntactic criteria, giving a more restricted place to the originality of the lexicon of the regions concerned (1892-1898).

Among the features common to Gallurian, Sassarian and Corsican, Guarnerio discusses the betacism of etymological V in strong initial position and within the word, after consonant (cf. sass. *bṗži* ‘voice’, gall. *bṗci* ‘voice’, crs. *bera* ‘true’ and *imbeččà* ‘to grow old’) and mentions the realization /ʒ/ < -SJ- in intervocalic position (*kažu* ‘cheese’, with a voiceless fricative in Gallurian). Morphologically, Guarnerio points out that all the dialects share metaplasms of feminines from III declension to I (*frēbba* ‘fever’) and confusion of verbs from Latin II, III and IV conjugations, although the reorganization of verbal classes can differ geographically.

2.2.2.c Partitions between Gallurian, Sassarian, *Oltramontano* and *Cismontano*

Among the elements that distinguish the areas, Guarnerio points out that Gallurian and *Oltramontano* are opposed to Sassarian and *Cismontano* by the realization of Ė in /a/ in the former set against /ɛ/ in the latter (except in Balagne) before /rr/ or r+ consonant (*tarra* vs *terra* ‘earth’). The punctual palatalization of /a/ in Gallurian (*ġreŋde* ‘large’, *dreŋtu* ‘interval of space or time’) is attributed to an influence from *Cismontano*, which is familiar with this phenomenon.

The dialects of northern Sardinia share with *Oltramontano* the cacuminal realization /qd/ of the Latin geminate -LL- (*baḍḍà* ‘dance’) while *Cismontano* and *Capo-Corsino* have /ll/; cacum articulation /qd/ < -LJ- being also shared by Gallurian and *Oltramontano* (*paḍḍa* ‘straw’) while Sassarian and *Cismontano* have /ʎ/ (*aʎu* ‘garlic’).

In Gallurian, Sassarian and *Oltramontano*, the consonant group -RN- (*forru* / *furu* ‘four’) is assimilated. These dialects also share the marked by -i in both masculine and feminine forms, whatever the nominal class. In *Cismontano*, the inflectional morpheme of the plural is -i for the masculine, while -e characterizes all feminine plurals. Isolated from other dialects, *Oltramontano* has an -a plural inherited from the Latin neuter, which would extend to both genders and all nominal classes (*li aṇṇeḍḍa* ‘lambs’, *dita* ‘fingers’, *frateḍḍa* ‘brothers’, *oṣṣa* ‘eyes’, *fiora* ‘flowers’).²⁸

Gallurian and Corsican share palatals from GL and CL with /ʝ/ and /c/ (and gemination within the word) respectively, while Sassarian has two affricates /dʒ/ and /tʃ/. Northern Sardinian and *Capo-Corsino* share the full form of the definite article is *lu, la, li, le*. As for the criteria that separate northern Sardinian dialects as a whole from Corsican, there’s the shift from R before consonant to /l/ (gall. *ċelvu* ‘deer’).

2.3 Gino Bottiglioni (1926-1927, 1933, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1941)

Gino Bottiglioni (1887-1963, cf. Treccani’s *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*) has made one of the most remarkable contributions to our knowledge of Corsican. The

²⁸ The forms cited by Guarnerio (taken by Falcucci 1875) deserve to be discussed, particularly in the light of the most recent work on the subject (Faraoni - Loporcaro 2016, and Dalbera-Stefanaggi 2002: 103).

work of this Italian linguist from Tuscany, a student of Merlo, covered Corsica, Tuscany and Sardinia, as well as ancient (Italic) languages. Bottiglioni is best known as the author of the *Atlante Linguistico Italiano della Corsica* (ALEIC) published between 1933 and 1942,²⁹ which includes, as part of the linguistic continuum, localities in Tuscany and Sardinia in addition to the 49 that make up the network in Corsica. On the occasion of the preliminary surveys that the Italian linguist carried out on the island for ALEIC, the material gathered was compared with data from Guarnerio and the *Atlas Linguistique de la France, Corse* (ALF Corse, with a critical approach to sources). He produced a fundamental study of island languages, entitled *La penetrazione toscana e le regioni di Pomonte* (1926-1927), and is the author of an abundant body of work on Corsican dialects, which will enable us to refine our description of them (1935, 1936, 1937, 1941). A remarkable study concerns the phono-syntactic variation of the initial consonant (1933); it contributes to the partition between *pomonte nord* (*cismontano*) and *pomonte sud* (*pumuntincu*). Bottiglioni studied Corsican's relationship with Tuscan (particularly medieval Tuscan), and in the genesis of island dialects in connection with Sardinia and central and southern Italy. The above-mentioned phenomena being an illustration of this double movement of Corsican dialects which conditions their partition. On the question of vocalism, he thus determined the redistribution that takes place from "original" Corsican in contact with other varieties (1937: 522).

2.3.1 Theoretical framework: Isoglottic dialectology

As an introduction to his article on the *penetrazione toscana* (1926-1927), Bottiglioni recalls the achievements of Guarnerio's work (Bottiglioni 1926-1927: 156-157), which he intends to clarify in terms of descriptive elements, but also concerning the geographical extension of the two main dialectal areas of Corsican, i.e. *Cismontano* and *Pumuntincu* (called *Oltramontano* by some authors). Firstly, he refers to the

²⁹ ALEIC is the second linguistic atlas devoted to Corsica, as it follows on from the Corsican section of Edmont and Gilliéron's *Atlas Linguistique de la France* (ALF Corse), published in part between 1914 and 1915. On linguistic atlases dedicated to Corsica, see Dalbera-Stefanaggi (2002: 27-35) and Cugno (forthcoming).

difficulty of determining the extension of *Pumuntincu*. The other difficulty, although the distinction between two main areas is not called into question, is that of delimiting them geographically.

2.3.2 Classification of dialects and subdialects

Thus, starting with the Corsican name *Pumonte*, which he Italianized as *Pomonte*, he denominated (Bottiglioni 1926-1927: 158):

- *Pomonte nord* is the set of northern languages known as *Cismontano*;
- *Pomonte sud* is a group of southern languages also known as *pumuntincu* (Falcucci) or *oltramontano*.

If these names around *Pomonte* seem irrelevant or even likely to lead to confusion, we retain them in the presentation of Bottiglioni's work when he uses them.

In the *penetrazione toscana* (1926-1927), Bottiglioni set himself the goal of determining the original characteristics — phonetic essentially — of Corsican from a diachronic perspective before the island's dialects came under the influence of Tuscan and Gallurian (1926: 162). He considers that Corsican must have formed a linguistic unit with Sardinia, Sicily and central-southern Italy. In synchronicity, the *Pomonte nord* is to be classified with Tuscan, while the *Pomonte sud* and the northern Sardinian languages are to be classified with Sardinian (1927: 16-17 n. 2). It should be pointed out that, at the time of writing, Bottiglioni had concentrated mainly on the southern half of Corsica, where he had carried out the greatest number of ALEIC surveys (in 1937, he summarized the various studies published on the Corsican language). If what he observes resonates more than once with previous work, Bottiglioni's dialect collection work carried out directly in the field makes it possible to determine more precisely what belongs to one dialectal area or the other.³⁰ His results are embodied in some twenty synthesis maps, two of which compile data from the other maps. One aims to establish the Tuscan versus Gallurian zone of influence in the southern half of

³⁰ With a few notable exceptions, we'll simplify the presentation of the data by breaking them down into *Pomonte Nord* and *Pomonte Sud*.

Corsica, and the other to determine a synthesis of the various isoglosses and micro-areas within a more general whole.

The kinship of Corsican with Sardinian is demonstrated by the presence of a tonic vocalism that preserves the timbres of Latin in the extreme south of Corsica distinguishing the outcomes of Ī and Ē as well as Ū and Ō (see also 1939: 131), or by the passage from -O and -U in atonic final position to /u/ and, in pre-tonic position, from /u/ (< O-, U-) to /a/, these last two characters being Pancorsian (for pre-Tuscan Corsica, see Bottiglioni 1937: 520 and 1939: 131; Merlo 1925 and Guarnerio 1892-1898). On the consonantal level, the realizations /ʃ/ < J, /nʃ/ < -NJ-, -GN, -NG'-, /ʒ/ < -SJ-, /v/ < -F- and /b/ of V- would also attest to the Corso-Sardinian linguistic community. This extends to southern Italo-Romance dialects and Sicilian for certain features such as /qd/ < -LL-³¹, the affrication of /s/ after /n/ or /r/, or the realization /ll/ of -LD- in particular (1928: 63-64 for all these points). On this question, he thus extends his thinking to the hypothesis of a linguistic unity between the Tyrrhenian islands and southern Italy, which would include the entire ancient state of Corsican (*op. cit.*: 68-69), and in this he joins Merlo's (1925) observations.

He also points out that, while Sardinia closed in on itself after the fall of the Roman Empire, Corsica has been continuously influenced by Tuscany since the 8th century onwards, which only weakly affected northern Sardinia and southern Corsica (*op. cit.*: 65-66, on the stratigraphy of Corsican based on phonetic, morphological, syntactic and lexical criteria cf. Bottiglioni 1933, 1937, 1939, 1941, 1942). This is particularly evident in the tonal vocalism of the *Pomonte nord* and Sassarian parts of the island (where Ī > /ɛ/ and Ū > /ɔ/), which is nevertheless subject to the conservative pressure of Gallurian (*op. cit.*: 67). In the central zone of Corsica, various phenomena would mark the effects of contradictory waves coming from Sardinia and Tuscany (*idem*). These would have ended up splitting linguistic Corsican into two dialectal areas (1939: 131).

³¹ Bottiglioni deals with this question among the elements that southern Corsican preserves in a stratigraphic perspective, and with the aim of highlighting the common formation of Sardinian and Corsican (1939: 131).

Regarding syntactic features, Bottiglioni (1935) highlights the use of the prepositional accusative, which Corsican shares with the dialects of Sardinia, Sicily and Central-Southern Italy, as well as the Ibero-Romance area (Castilian and Portuguese). Similarly (*op. cit.*), he looks — rather briefly — at the order of clitic pronouns (enclise or proclise) in relation to Italian, French and Old Tuscan.

Finally, Bottiglioni clarified the division between *pomonte nord* (*cismontano*) and *pomonte sud* (*pumuntincu*) by determining a cluster of isoglosses (1937), which nevertheless left a number of southern island languages imprecise. One isogloss marks the southernmost limit (Propriano - Levie - Conca),³² and another the northernmost part (Calcatoggio - Bocognano - Ghisoni - Aleria) of the island's dialects. He did not produce a synthesis map,³³ but here is a list of the main isoglosses he determined (Bottiglioni 1937: 521-522 and 1939):

- Latin vowel endings Ē, Ĭ, Ō, Ū: to the south of the Propriano - Levie - Conca line there is a distinction of these vowels, while to the north there is confusion of the endings of Ē and Ĭ on the one hand and Ō and Ū on the other³⁴;
- Between Calcatoggio - Bocognano - Ghisoni and Aleria, the line shares several phenomena: to the south, the -i ending of -E in the final atonic position, the cacuminal realization of -LL- (> /dd/ vs /ll/ in the north) and the retention of deaf occlusors (vs sonorization in the north). /dd/ vs /ll/ in the north) as well as the conservation of deaf occlusors (vs sonorization in the north) and the assimilation of -RN- > /-rr-/ (vs /-rn-/ in the north, 1937: 6), and the culmination /j/ of -STR- (vs - /ʃtʃ/ in the north, in *nostru* 'our/our' and *vostru* 'your/yours').

Bottiglioni's work is therefore essential for understanding the partition of Corsican dialects, and the abundant material he published through ALEIC will play an essential role in subsequent descriptions.

³² Bottiglioni (1941: 5) points out that the southernmost isoglossal line includes Sartene and Santa Lucia di Portovecchio, as well as Ghisonaccia for the northernmost line (*idem*).

³³ It was not until Rohlfs in 1941 and Melillo in 1977 that synthesis maps were produced from ALEIC materials: see below.

³⁴ The sub-divisions he determines for the endings of Ĭ (1937: 522) in particular seem to us to have to be taken with caution their degree of aperture would require controls difficult to achieve.

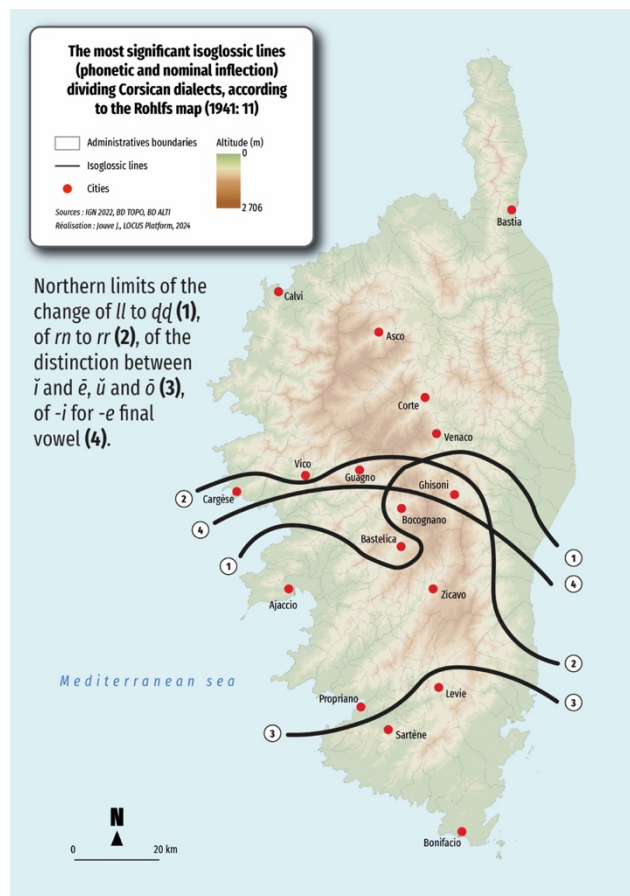
2.4 Gerhard Rohlfs (1941)

Corsican dialects attracted the attention of the renowned German-born novelist Gerhard Rohlfs (1892-1986). They feature in several of the author's publications, and in particular in the *Grammatica* (Rohlfs 1966-1969)³⁵ where Rohlfs discussed Corsican from a Romance perspective. The island is also present in two articles devoted to the linguistic structure of Italy. He also highlights the conservative nature of Corsican, which maintains lexical and morphological forms specific to the old Tuscan (1972: 12-14) and devotes a major article to the subject (cf. Rohlfs 1972: 177-186).

Rohlfs, in 1941, drew up a stratigraphy of island dialects, mainly based on material from ALEIC and the dictionaries of Falcucci (1915) and Alfonsi (1932), highlighting the linguistic community of pre-Romance and then Latin Corsica and Sardinia, and the way in which Tuscan played a fundamental superstratum role in the formation of Corsican. The author also saw the islands of the Tuscan archipelago and Corsica as a linguistic bridge between Tuscany and Sardinia. The 1941 publication is accompanied by two synthesis maps. The first traces the boundaries of phonetic phenomena that southern Corsican shares with the dialects of Sardinia. A first isogloss allows us to determine the area of extension of the cacuminal realization [ɖɖ] of the Latin geminate -LL-, which would be assigned to a substratum common to the Tyrrhenian islands and Calabria,³⁶ echoed in the preservation of the Latin stamps of Ĩ and Ũ (line no. 3). The assimilation of -RN- common to Corsica and Sardinia, with echoes in the far south of Italy constitutes isogloss no. 2 (Map 3).

³⁵ Published in German under the title *Historische Grammatik der italienischen Sprache und ihre Mundarten* (1949-1954).

³⁶ An essential study of the geographical distribution of cacuminales in the Tyrrhenian islands and northern Africa was carried out by Millardet (1933).



Map 3. Significant isoglosses in Rohlfs (1941). Adapted map

Rohlfs mentions the lenition of consonants in intervocalic position, the phonosyntactic variation of the initial and a lexical heritage shared with Sardinia, Tuscany or Genoa, depending on the period to which he refers; lexical isoglosses are partially illustrated by the second map. Verbal morphology with, for example, the desinences of Pe4 in the present indicative, the construction of the simple past with the desinences *-edi* (Pe1) / *-ede* (Pe3) or sigmatic forms, enable him to show convergence with medieval and peripheral Tuscan. The order of clitics, as in Bottiglioni and Guarnerio, is a point of discussion of the kinship between Corsican and ancient Tuscan. But it's the lexicon that's abundantly used to show the historical formation of Corsican, and that's what's so striking about this study. Rohlfs' monograph, published in 1979, puts the Corsican lexicon into perspective with that of other so-called marginal Tuscan areas, and proves highly illuminating for grasping the linguistic community that unites the island with that region of Italy.

2.5 Armistizio Matteo Melillo (1977)

In 1977, Armistizio Matteo Melillo, an Italian researcher involved in the *Carta dei Dialetti Italiani* (CDI), published a volume devoted to Corsica (*Corsica*, no. 21) in the *Profili dei dialetti italiani* collection, accompanied by a vinyl record (45 rpm) and a map. In the introductory part of this volume, Melillo states that he wishes to publish the results of the notes he took while reading the ALEIC materials and the observations made during field surveys he carried out on the island for the CDI (1977: 20): five were carried out in the southern part of the island and one in Bastia (Melillo 1973). Melillo's work (1977) on Corsican is a kind of *Historical Grammar*, focusing mainly on diachronic phonetics (pages 28 to 109), with some observations on morphosyntax, and lexicon; it also contains transcriptions and translations of short extracts from his own surveys (one extract per locality). Melillo's idea is to provide a dynamic overview of the areal distribution of linguistic phenomena (Melillo 1977: 8 § 0.3).

Melillo provides an illuminating review of previous classifications in Italo-Romance dialectology. Among these, he recalls Lausberg's classification (1976, I: 78 § 28), which evokes the kinship of Corsican, Sassarian and Gallurian with Logoudorian before Corsican came under strong Tuscan influence, leading to its inclusion in the central Italian group, in particular Tuscan (op. cit.: 76 § 27). Another, a diagram shows how Melillo (1977: 17, cf. Figure 3) interprets Lausberg's classification within the Sardinian group:

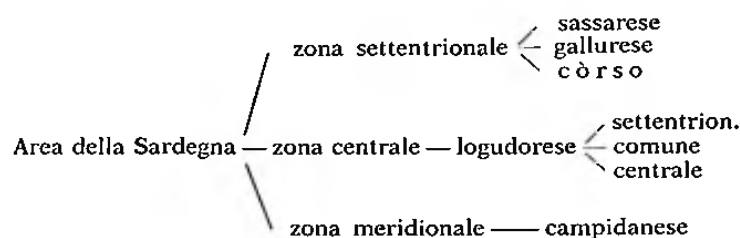


Figure 3: Lausberg's classification of Sardinian Dialects in Melillo (1977: 17)

Melillo (1977: 20) suggests that there is still a Sardinian-Corsican unity³⁷ which he probably still perceives strongly because of his survey network which, apart from Bastia, is that of a group of southern localities. Above all, he considers Corsican to be part of the Central-Southern Italo-Romance group.

Internally, he points out that Corsicans naturally distinguish between the southern and northern languages of the island, and initially proposes to determine the presence of five dialects: “il sartinese, l’aiaccino, il balanino, il bastiaccio ed il capocorsino.” Then, and using ALEIC data (Melillo 1977: 21), he establishes that the partition line between *cismontano* (north) and *oltramontano* (south) includes Calcatoggio, Bocognano, Zicavo e Sari di Porto Vecchio, which he materializes on a map (Melillo 1977: 22, cf. *infra*). He proposes to start from the premise that there are two main zones: the conservative zone, which is the *Oltramontano*, and the Tuscanized zone, which is the *Cismontano* (Melillo 1977:21-22). Then he determines four areas from the set of synthesis maps he has drawn up (Melillo 1977:22):

Volendo essere più precisi, potremmo individuare nella zona conservativa una zona propriamente arcaica ed in quella in quella toscanizzata una zona di compromesso. La ‘zona arcaica’ coincide grosso modo colla provincia di Sartène, la ‘zona conservativa’ è delimitata dalla linea già tracciata che unisce Calcatoggio, Bocognano, Zicavo e Sari di Porto Vecchio, la ‘zona di compromesso’ comprende i territori di Vico, Calvi e Corte e la ‘zona toscanizzata’ Bastia e la piana fertile giú lungo il litorale orientale fino ad Aleria.

To support this description, he draws up a summary diagram (Figure 4), which we reproduce here, along with a map (Melillo 1977: 22-23) (Map 4).

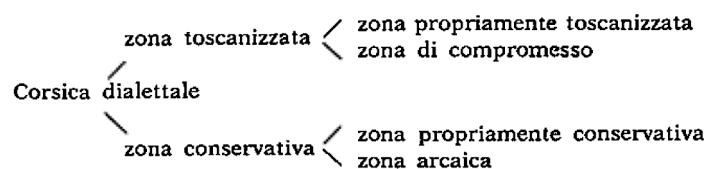
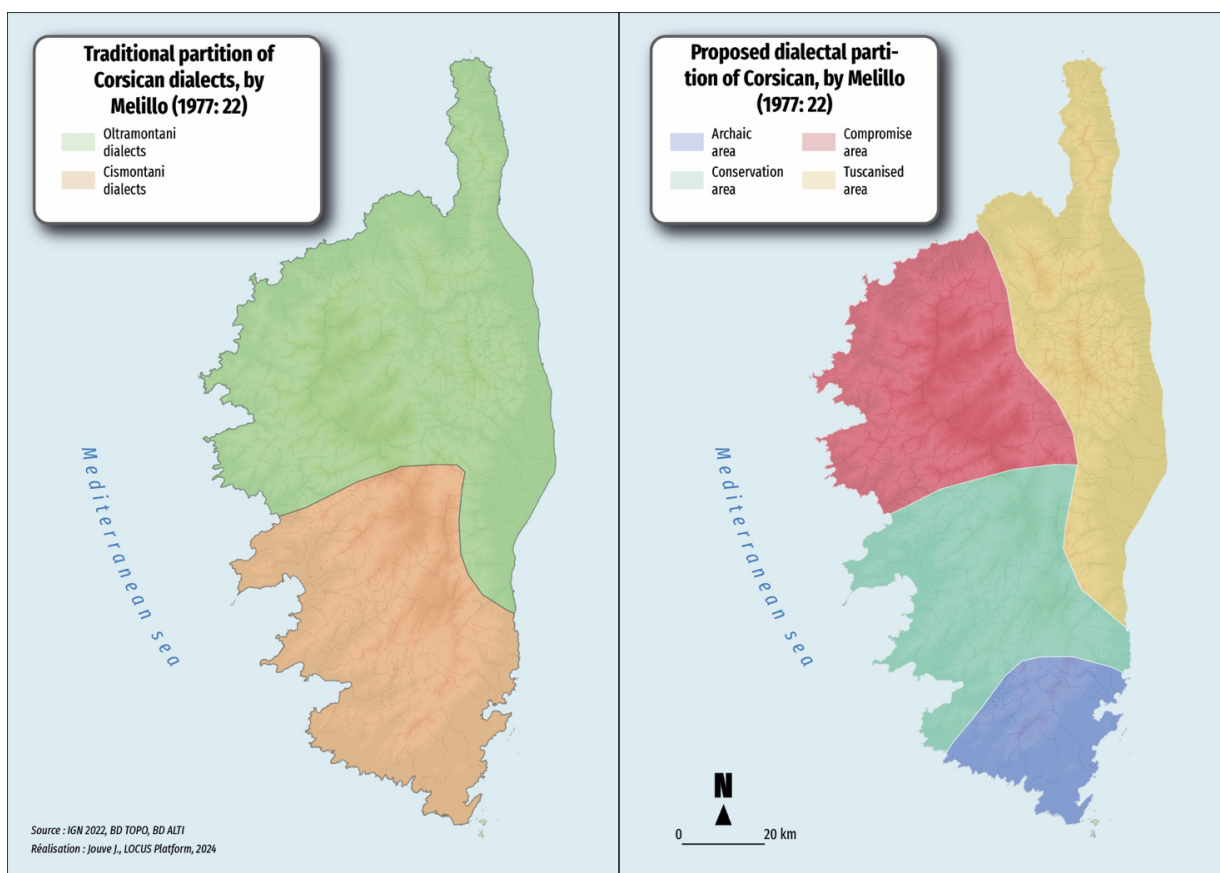


Figure 4: Corsican Dialects Classification to Melillo (1977: 22-23)

³⁷ This is also the perspective from which Pellegrini (1975: 82 § 11), in his article on the “Cinque sistemi dell’Italo-romanzo”, classifies all the dialects of Sardinia together with Corsican, which were to be unitary before their contemporary fragmentation, with *oltramontano* now distinguished from Sardinian by the influence of Tuscan.



Map 4. Corsican dialects partitions in Melillo (1977: 22), adapted maps

In order to understand Corsican from both a synchronic and a diachronic angle, he will deal with each Latin vowel and consonant, morphological features and syntax, while treating the lexicon like a small dialectal dictionary. These headings help to clarify the geographical extensions of the phenomena, and the maps he produces are a very important contribution to geolinguistic knowledge of Corsica, as are the summary diagrams of evolutions he occasionally presents. These make it possible to explain forms that, although they are common to Italian, had no previous explanatory framework. He explains certain facts through contact with Tuscan or through the prism of geolinguistics, which is at the heart of his work.

As far as tonal vocalism is concerned, while he adheres to a dynamic vision of geolinguistic data, he does not always understand movements in the same way as Bottiglioni. Thus, Melillo points out (1977: 34) that the results of ALEIC surveys show

that Ĩ endings make it possible to determine three areas with /i/ in the extreme southern area, /e/ in the north-eastern region encompassing Bastia and Cervione (with Corsica Cape: synthesis map no. 6 on page 36), /ɛ/ in the rest of the territory from the zone that borders the extreme south area with the whole of the center and north of the island. While for Ů, Melillo stresses that the endings are parallel, he points out that in this case the closure that characterizes the endings of Ĩ in the northeastern area is missing, and that consequently we end up with two areas with Ů > /u/ in the extreme southern area and /ɔ/ in the rest of the island. If Ĩ > /i/ and Ů > /u/ in the far south reflect the original state of the Corso-Gallurian ensemble, the aperture degrees of the middle vowels derived from Ĩ and Ē are interpreted in the light of contact with Tuscan. Thus, if Melillo and Bottiglioni consider that originally we have Ĩ > /i/ and Ē > /ɛ/ the influence of Tuscan — where Ĩ and Ē > /e/ — is resulted at two levels, which are the modification of aperture in one case (Ē > /ɛ/ > /e/) and timbre modification on the other (Ĩ > /i/ > */e/ > /ɛ/), the two phenomena interacting with each other (Melillo 1977: 35-36 § 2.1.8; Bottiglioni 1926: 184). But on the realization of Ě > /e/ (throughout Corsica, with closed-syllable aperture in the extreme south), the opinions of the two researchers diverge, for while Bottiglioni sees in it an influence of Tuscan that would intervene — paradoxically — from Gallura, Melillo sees in it the original form of Corsican (Melillo 1977: 30).

Melillo's book on Corsican languages adds many new details to previously published and discussed material on the island's linguistic geography and its position between Sardinia and Tuscany, or even the central meridian of Italo-Romania.

2.6 Mathée Giacomo-Marcellesi (1977)

Mathée Giacomo-Marcellesi, Professor of Italian Linguistics at the Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3, presented in an article published in 1977 the results of five surveys she carried out in the south of Corsica³⁸ supplemented by another collection in the

³⁸ Among the localities surveyed was Sartène, where Giacomo-Marcellesi sheds interesting light on the presence of two varieties linked to the social stratigraphy of the town, where the notables (*i sgiò*) preserve the ancient Alta Rocca variety, while the migration of shepherds from Taravo has brought

center of the island (Venaco). Her presentation of syntactic, phonetic and lexical problems focuses on the identity of these regions. Among the issues she addresses is the deletion of the subordinating conjunction in the complex sentences that characterize the data to the far south (Sotta). She also compares the tonic vocalisms of Sotta with those of other southern localities and Venaco. She thus takes up the issue of the genesis of Corsican vocalisms, distinguishing the vocalism of Corsica's far south (cantons of Tallano-Scopamène, Figari, Porto-Vecchio, Giacomo-Marcellesi 1977: 220) from the so-called "inverted" vocalism in relation to vowel aperture in the Western Romance system. The former retains the timbres of Latin and refers to a common Romanization with Sardinia, and to a kinship with dialects of Lucania (or Basilicata, Giacomo-Marcellesi 1977: 220-221). The second common vocalism with the rest of Romania and the inversion of timbres are attributable to contact with Tuscan, according to Giacomo-Marcellesi, through hypercorrection (Giacomo-Marcellesi 1977: 221). She thus draws the dividing line between the two vowel types:

(...) le "passage" de l'inversion vocalique délimiterait la région définie traditionnellement comme région de l'Alta Rocca, qui comprend l'Extrême Sud limité au Nord par le massif de l'Incudine, à l'Ouest par les Monts de Cagna et le Rizzanese.

The southward penetration of Romanesque vocalism would seem to be linked to a relatively recent economic context (settlement of tenant farmers and day labourers, as well as shepherds). But the extreme southern area is also characterized, in her view, by "a cultural originality" she highlights for the Sotta region. It is worth pointing out that a study carried out from the inside (by an islander), something that has not happened since Falcucci, provides interesting keys to understanding the island's southern territory. But it is on the question of the lexicon that Giacomo-Marcellesi's study, complementing Rohlfs (1941 and 1969), most significantly enriches the partition and stratigraphy of the Corsican lexicon. It establishes a Corso-Sardinian latinity (and

another dialect which, while close, differs from the first in vowel quality or lexicon. She thus returns to Bottiglioni's ALEIC survey, whose main informant was a speaker of the dialect imported by the shepherds (1977: 221-222).

beyond the prelatin lexicon common to both islands) already known but brought to light in an original way, as well as a non-Sardinian [corso-]southern latinity in the same way.³⁹

2.7 Marie José Dalbera-Stefanaggi (1978, 1991, 1995, 2001, 2002) with Medori (1999, 2005)

With Marie José Dalbera-Stefanaggi, Professor at the University of Corsica and Scientific Director of the *Nouvel Atlas Linguistique et ethnographique de la Corse - Banque de Données Langue Corse* (NALC-BDLC) program,⁴⁰ knowledge of Corsican dialects took on a new dimension. She studied Corsican from the perspective of General Linguistics (1978). The few localities in which the author had carried out her first surveys shed light on what she defined as the outline of a linguistic geography (Dalbera-Stefanaggi 1978: 6).

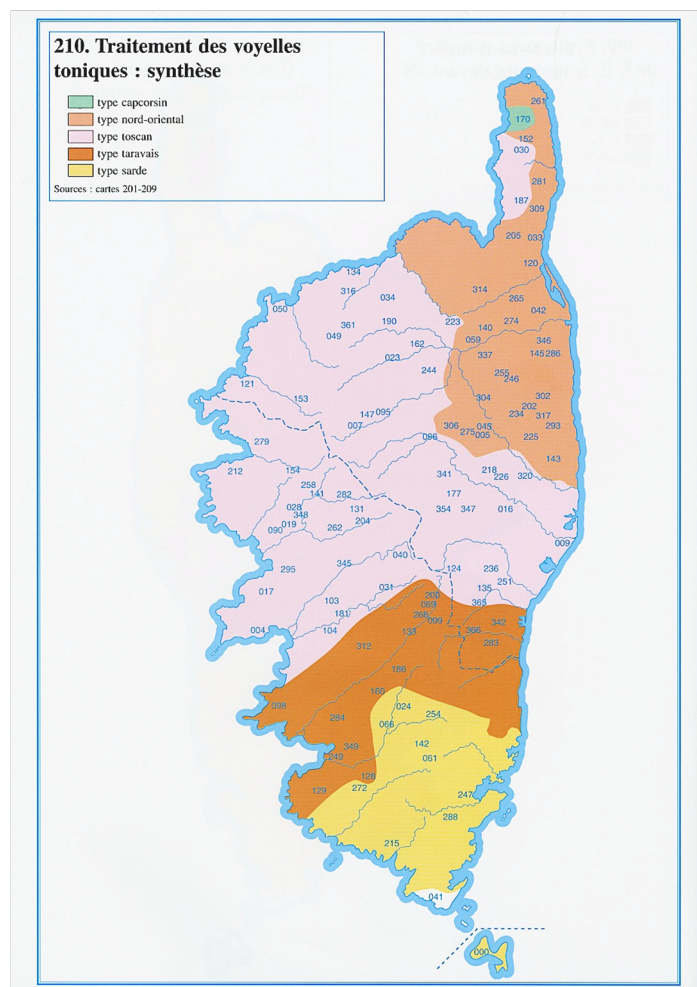
This project, aimed at establishing a synchronic and diachronic comparative description of Corsican languages, resulted in a book published in 1991 and the first volume of the NALC devoted to the phonetic Areology of Corsican. The NALC 1 project was an opportunity to renew the field survey methodology (cf. the introduction to the volume), with a questionnaire designed to produce mononymous maps, and a network of networks constructed a posteriori (on the maturation of the project, and in particular its field-tested reflection cf. 1991: 40-41 §§ 36-37).

The quantity of data provided by the atlas — its network has more than doubled compared to previous atlases⁴¹ — has enabled us to update and even renew the partition of Corsican dialects. In particular, as we shall see, the Taravu and Corsican Cape areas have been highlighted. A better understanding of the geolinguistic distribution and of the phenomena has been achieved (Map 5).

³⁹ Giacomo-Marcellesi is also the author of an article designed to demonstrate the originality of Corsican within the Romance language as a whole, illustrated by the use of the affirmative particle *iè* 'yes' (1982).

⁴⁰ She took over the direction of the NALC in 1981 when the University was founded, and then created the BDLC in 1986 by aggregating it with the atlas. Scientific responsibility for the program has been held by Stella Retali-Medori since 2015.

⁴¹ NALC 1 has 115 localities, including the island of La Maddalena, compared with 49 for Bottiglioni, plus Sassari and Tempio Pausania in Gallura, and 44 survey points, including Sassari in ALF Corse.



Map 5. A primordial partition: the tonic vocalisms of Corsican, NALC1 synthesis map

Dalbera-Stefanaggi (1991) offers a description focusing on the phonetic and phonological dimension of the material from field surveys for the NALC-BDLC program. Only if morphology, is interweaved with phonology in both synchronic and diachronic terms, it is addressed in the volume.

Dalbera-Stefanaggi has subjected all the dialects examined to a structural and occasionally instrumental approach. She looks at the structuring of the phoneme system, which varies across the island's linguistic space. The results obtained were used to establish a synchronic typology of Corsican dialectal areas (1991: 147-296). Then, in keeping with the Romanist tradition, the phonic material is interpreted from a diachronic and comparative perspective. Consonancy is approached globally by type of

phenomenon, giving rise to comparisons between speakers, while vocalism is treated by area, as it is a decisive criterion for the classification of dialects in the Romance domain.

While the bipartition of the Corsican dialects has been confirmed, the new descriptions have significantly enriched the reflection on isoglosses and dynamics, underpinned in particular by traces of certain phenomena that can be interpreted diachronically. NALC 1 and Dalbera-Stefanaggi's work (1991) have thus enriched the identification of Corsican dialectal areas, a process completed by a 1995 article on the invention of Corsican Cape vocalism and a monographic description of this area produced as part of the NALC-BDLC program (Medori 1999, 2005). We propose here to summarize the situation, providing a few elements to characterize these areas and their links with other areas of Romance (for an overview, we refer you to Dalbera-Stefanaggi 2002 and Retali-Medori - Dalbera-Stefanaggi 2016) (Map 6).



Map 6. Corsican dialects: a renewed classification

2.7.1 Bipartition of Corsican languages confirmed

With regard to the bipartition of Corsican dialects, we can first confirm its principle, while recalling that the different isoglosses are not superimposable (Dalbera-Stefanaggi 2002: 57). It is essentially based on:

1. cacum realization /ɖɖ/ of -LL- in the south versus /ll/ or /ll/ in the north;
2. the progressive assimilation of -RN- /rr/ in the south versus /rn/ in the north;
3. the simplification of -RR- in intervocalic position in the north in the face of conservation, of the opposition /-r-/ ~ /rr/ in the south;
4. the betacism of V- in a strong initial position in the north, as opposed to the sonorous labiodental fricative in the south;

5. a richer atonic vocalism in the north than in the south, enabling the organization of two major inflectional systems with four desinencial vowels in the north and three in the south.

The southern features are of course shared with Sardinia. This is true of the retroflex articulations shared by Sicily, Calabria, Salento and Garfagnana. The assimilation of -RN- into /rr/ is shared by southern Corsica with the whole of Sardinia, and the betacism of V- with Sardinian and Castilian, while Gallurian and Sassarian generally present a common solution with southern Corsica (where V > /v/ in strong position). For northern Corsica, the nominal inflectional desinencial vowels refer to Tuscany and part of the extreme southern Italo-Romance dialects, while the three final atonal vowels of southern Corsica are shared with Sassarian and Gallurian, as well as Campidanian and the extreme southern area of Italy (for an overview, see M. Loporcaro 2009: 82).

Moreover, southern Corsica tends to preserve consonants in intervocalic position and weak initials, while northern Corsican is prone to lenition. The phonosyntactic variation of the initial places Corsica within a group made up of central and southern Italo-Romance, along with Sardinia.

2.7.2 An enrichment of the dialectal partition of Corsican

Research into Corsican has identified the following dialectal areas:

- the Corsican Cape area,
- north-eastern area,
- the centro-septentrional area,
- the Taravian area,
- the Corso-Gallurian area,

and the Sassarian dialect, which shows significant genetic kinship with Taravian dialects.

2.7.3 The Corso-Gallurian area

The Corso-Gallurian area⁴² is notably characterized by a Sardinian-type vocalism, which retains the vowel timbres of Latin after the loss of the vowel quantity, and which is also found in Calabria and Basilicata in the famous “Lausberg area”. In closed syllables, the vowel aperture of mid vowels must be interpreted diachronically, including for non-etymological geminates, as preceding consonant assimilation where this has occurred, e.g. in *pèttu* ‘chest’ < PĒCTUS (REW 6335) or *nòtti* ‘night’ < NŌCTE (REW 5973). The Corso-Gallurian area retains occlusive consonants (muted and voiced) in intervocalic position, and the phonosyntactic variation of the initial opposes a simple realization in weak position to a reinforced realization in strong position as in [u ‘pani] (‘the bread’) vs [‘tɾɛ ‘ppani] (‘three loaves of bread’). Corsican dialects in this area know a plural in *-a* for certain nouns of the second class (*u tempu* ‘the time’, *i tempa* ‘the times’) which is not documented in Gallura. This phenomenon, regularly interpreted as a vestige of the Latin neuter or an influence of Tuscan, could reflect a secondary and recent restitution of indistinct vowels. Gallurian retains a full form of the article and a verbal system that preserves infinitives with accented final thematic vowels (*-ì* and *-è* beyond *-à*), facts reminiscent of the situation in Corsican Cape (see below).

2.7.4 The Taravian area

The Taravian area, named after the Taravo river to the west, also includes the Fiumorbo to the east. The originality of this area, only partially recognized by previous

⁴² This area was the subject of an article by Dalbera-Stefanaggi republished in the 2001 collection. In addition, Maxia (2003) has used archival documents to demonstrate the age of Corsican populations in northern Sardinia, and thus the common features of Sassarian, Gallurian and Corsican languages. He has devoted a volume of historical phonetics to Gallurian and “other Sardinian-Corsican varieties” (2012) ; a study not devoid of interest. However, the bibliography is not as up-to-date, and the linguistic atlases are too little used for a monograph of this nature. See also Maxia (2012).

researchers,⁴³ has been highlighted by a systematic inventory and description, particularly in terms of phonetics (Dalbera-Stefanaggi 1991, NALC1). In this area, there is a tonic vocalism which, although similar to that of the Corso-Gallurian area, opens Ĩ and Ũ from Latin into [ɛ] and [ɔ] respectively, and confuses Ē with Ĕ into /e/ and then Ō and Ő into /o/. This vocalism converges with that of Sassari; Dalbera-Stefanaggi proposes to see it as the second phase in the evolution leading to the Western Romance system.⁴⁴ This vocalism is reminiscent of that of the *Randgebiet*, which encircles the Latin-stamped system in southern Italy (first phase of the quantity of Romance evolution as in Corsica and Sardinia), and echoes it both in geolinguistic organization and, probably, in terms of strata of formation. The Taravian area is also characterized by its consonantal system, where reinforcements are present, with confusion of singles and geminates, simplification of geminates, and so on. Finally, we might mention the presence, in various localities in the region, of original realizations of Latin -LL- and L + yod that result in /ll/ or /j/ alongside /dd/ (in the latter case LJ > /dd/ as in the Corso-Gallurian area).

2.7.5 The centro-septentrional area

The central-northern area (*centro-septentrional area*) has a Tuscan-type vowel system with inversion of timbres. The central-northern area confuses Ĩ with Ē in /ɛ/, and Ũ with Ō in an open [ɔ]. Dalbera-Stefanaggi (2002: 92-93) explains the inversion of timbres in relation to Tuscan, and more broadly to the Western Romance type was consecutive to a mechanism of diphthongizing-closure of tonic half-open vowels. In the central part, following a sort of east-west “corridor”, we note the conservation of Ĩ > /i/ and Ē > /e/ endings found in the extreme southern area (Dalbera-Stefanaggi 1991:

⁴³ Melillo has identified a transition zone (1977) between the archaizing area in the far south and the northern area (cf. above), which corresponds approximately to the Taravian area, although it is not clearly defined.

⁴⁴ Barbato (2005-2006) considers this to be the result of pressure from northern dialects with Tuscan vocalism on an ancient stratum to the Corso-Sardinian, traces of which persist, including in the northern Taravian area.

481-484 § 318-319 and synthesis map *op. cit.*: 494).⁴⁵ Still in the centro-septentrional area, we note certain cases of consonantal reinforcement which partially converge with what occurs in contiguous areas (Taravu and Corsican Cape).

2.7.6 North-eastern area

The northeastern area shows a tonal vocalism identical to that of the *centro-septentrional area*. The presence of an additional vowel is observed, namely [æ] < A or E etymologicals in syllables closed by R or N ([‘kærne] ‘meat’, [‘græ̃ndɛ] ‘great’ vs [‘karne], [‘grāndɛ]), or even in palatal contexts ([‘brættʃu] ‘arm’ vs [‘brattʃu]). The atonic vocalism here is enriched by the presence of [ɛ] but also [ɔ], in pre-tonic position. In northeastern Corsica, we also note the existence of a feminine plural for forms from the third Latin declension similar to that of Tuscan, with the inflection *-i* instead of *-e* in the rest of northern Corsica (*e croci* vs *e croce* ‘the crosses’). In this area, with the Corsican Cape, that the assimilation of the consonantal group *-L’D-* > */-ll-/* as in the central and partly southern dialects of Italy (*callu* vs *caldu* ‘hot’) takes place.

2.7.7 Corsican Cape area

Finally, the Corsican Cape area (cf. Medori 1999 and 2005) previously included the island of Capraia, in the Tuscan archipelago (cf. Nesi 2012 and forthcoming b). The tonic vocalism of this area, now limited to the commune of Morsiglia and Centuri (Dalbera-Stefanaggi 1995, Negrinelli 2016), was once more widespread, as suggested in particular by certain notations in Falcucci (1915).⁴⁶ Corsican Cape vocalism, compared with other Corsican dialects, is characterized by a confusion, after neutralization, of middle vowels as derived from Ĭ, Ē, Ě > /e/ and Ŏ, Ō, Ů > /o/ (the aperture of middle vowels is subject to considerable fluctuations). This vowel system

⁴⁵ Dalbera-Stefanaggi (1991: 484 § 319) sees in his achievements the explanation for Bottigioni’s notation, in the north-east, of /e/ for Ē and which also conditioned Melillo’s (1977) analyses.

⁴⁶ This could prompt a review of certain analyses based on Falcucci’s (1875 and 1915) materials; see Aprea (2018).

has been analysed by Dalbera-Stefanaggi as an echo of that found in the Taravian area (2001: 121-138) and in Sassari; but it also resonates with the Randgebiet vocalism to which that of Corsican Cape corresponds even more obviously despite, here too, an inversion of timbre aperture with Ĩ, Ē, Ě > /ɛ/ and Ŏ, Ō, Ů > /ɔ/ (Loporcaro 2018: 80). There is a notable palatalization of A > /ɛ/ in a closed syllable before R or N or in a palatal context.

Furthermore, as in the dialects of the south of the island and in Gallura, there is a tendency in Corsican Cape to keep consonants in intervocalic position and in the weak initial. Similar consonantal reinforcement patterns (including V > /g/ *golpe* ‘fox’ or various devoicing) to those found in central Corsica can be observed (see above). The most notable reinforcement phenomenon affects the /s/+consonant nexus (Medori 2001a, 2005): the consonant following /s/ is either retained (whereas it becomes sonorized elsewhere: SP- > /zb-/) or reinforced with the muted realization of sonorants (*SB- > /sp-/), but can also give an occlusive (muted) ending to etymological fricative consonants (SF > /sp-/).

There are also affinities between the dialects of Cap Corse and Gallura in terms of morphology, since the full form of the definite article (*lu*) is found in both Corsican Cape and Gallura, whereas the rest of Corsica uses the short form (*u*). Southern and central Corsican dialects also attest to *lu*, synchronically, in articulated prepositions such as *in lu* or *à lu* (> *ddu*). In addition, both Corsica and Gallura have significant traces of Latin II and III conjugations with -*ì* infinitives (widespread in Gallura) and -*è*, and the conservation of thematic vowels in flexion, echoing the system of ancient Tuscan or peripheral Tuscan. Other Corsican languages have seen a shift in the tonic accent of infinitive forms, which has disrupted the verbal system. But Corsica’s southern dialects, despite the shift in accent also documented in Sardinian and southern Italian, show a reappearance of the paradigmatic thematic vowel as in Gallurian and Corsican Cape dialects, revealing an ancient unity.

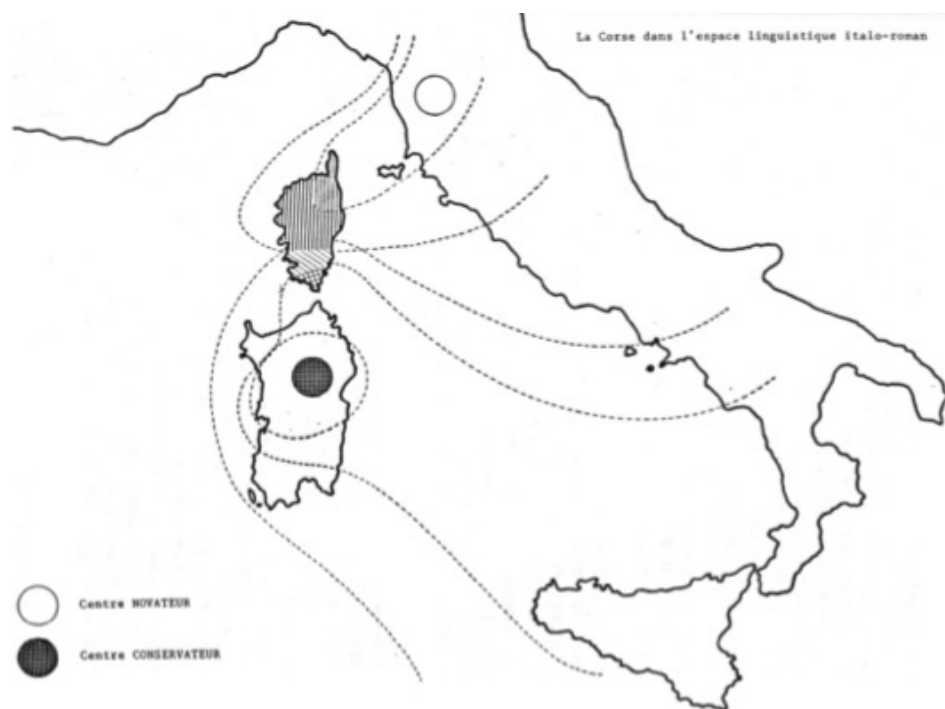
3. Conclusion

Since the work begun in the 19th century, the classification of Corsican dialects has been closely interwoven with the wider question of determining the links between Corsican, Sardinian and Tuscan, and how to position them within the Romance group. In this respect, it seems significant that this question was initiated in Sardinia with the publications of Guarnerio, who laid the foundations for a reflection on the links that Sardinian and Gallurian have historically maintained with Sardinian on the one hand, but above all with southern Corsican and even Corsican as a whole. First and foremost, this confirms the shared genesis of Corsican and Sardinian, which has shaped a unitary linguistic whole that has significant echoes in southern Italy. The fact that successive surveys focused at least initially on the south of the island reflects this and may also be considered to have conditioned subsequent studies, which took a keen interest in the isoglosses that mark the transitions between the languages of Sardinia and those of northern Corsica.

The way in which dialects have fragmented internally largely corresponds to lines that also run through the Italo-Romance and Sardinian regions, as illustrated by the map below (Map 7 “La Corse dans l’espace linguistique italo-roman”, in Dalbera-Stefanaggi 1991: 554). The diversification of Corsican and northern Sardinian dialects is in fact the result of currents of influence, particularly from Tuscany and, more discreetly, from other Italian regions, since Corsica and Sardinia are sometimes part of a whole that includes northern Italy and the other Tyrrhenian islands, sometimes reaching as far as southern Italy (cf. Dalbera-Stefanaggi 2005, Medori 2013, Retali-Medori 2016).

From a methodological point of view, since the first corpora were compiled in the 19th century, the division of Corsican, Sassarian and Gallurian dialects has been refined thanks to dialectal material, particularly from atlases. Corsica has been given priority in this respect, as it has benefited from three regional atlases that have enriched the data both qualitatively and quantitatively. The geolinguistic

representation of these data enables us to refine the way in which phenomena unfold. It also facilitates their interpretation in the light of territorial and social dynamics, in relation, for example, to the way in which transhumance routes and major axes of circulation based on geography encourage the movement of island populations (cf. in particular Dalbera-Stefanaggi 1991: 555-558 §§ 363-364 and Luneschi 2018b). Far from presenting a fragmented picture, this shows, on the contrary, a geolinguistic continuum and dynamic spaces.



Map 7. La Corse dans l'espace linguistique italo-roman in Dalbera-Stefanaggi (1991: 554)

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