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(Serie Terza, XI)

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MAIR PARRY

Language tutorial: The dialect of Cairo Montenotte

1. *Introduction*

The vitality of the dialects in Italy has meant that the development of Italian linguistics as a scientific discipline was accompanied by dialect studies that made a significant contribution to our understanding of the nature of language, its structure, variation and evolution, as detailed in Benincà (1996). Dialectology may at times have been viewed by general linguists as a rather parochial or archival concern for local forms of speech, but its welcome resurgence owes much to the widespread recognition that:

Dialectology constitutes a privileged observation point for determining language variation, just because it studies minimally different systems. As such, it is as close as possible to a scientific experiment where variables (intended as differences in grammar) are controlled and few independent factors interfere with the study of a single grammatical property (Benincà and Poletto 2007).

The comparative study of dialect variation as the route to discovering the possibilities and limitations of natural language has led to major advances in linguistic theory, especially by generative linguists, but also in other frameworks, such as Role and Reference grammar (see Benincà and Pescarini, forthcoming). However, before one can usefully compare different varieties, a good understanding of the behaviour of the phenomena under investigation in the individual varieties is essential (Benincà 1996: 78). All dialects, whatever their sociolinguistic status, can reveal new phenomena that may open up new channels of research – the transition dialect described here was often presented to me initially as scarcely worthy of study, a *dialetto bastardo*, a cross between two much more prestigious types (Piedmontese and Ligurian). However, it proved to be a treasure-house of interesting linguistic phenomena, due to the well-known tendency for varieties less subject to external cultural and normative influences to show increased levels of spontaneous linguistic development. For this reason I was invited to prepare a language tutorial, which is perforce a descriptive grammar that provides the raw data on which theoretical argumentation may later be constructed. Thus, for exam-

ple, the highly unusual ordering of complement clitics and preverbal negative marker in this and some other dialects of the Val Bormida has contributed to furthering our knowledge of language structure, in particular the typology of pronominal clitics and negative markers (see, for instance, Parry 1997, Zanuttini 1997, Poletto 2000), while the analysis from a diachronic perspective of the seemingly asymmetric distribution of prototypical Piedmontese and Ligurian features over the different linguistic levels has served to highlight the complex mechanisms of linguistic change (Parry 2006).

The data are presented within a basically structural framework, although informed by recent linguistic theory, including both generative and functional approaches. Given the complex interaction between the diverse levels of natural language: semantics, pragmatics, syntax, not to mention the phonology and morphology, different theoretical approaches often turn out to be complementary rather than antithetical and an eclectic stance can illuminate the analysis of a particular phenomenon.

1.1. *Methodology of data collection*

This description of the main distinctive features of the dialect of Cairo Montenotte presents data gathered during recorded interviews with native speakers during field-work that has spanned several decades. The focus during the initial period of research was sociolinguistic, with the aim of ascertaining the influence of well-known sociological variables, such as age, sex, place of birth, level of education, on language use in a small industrial town that had witnessed high levels of immigration in the first half of the twentieth century, both from the surrounding countryside and from further afield. An additional aim was to investigate the influence of Italian on the structure of the dialect, as the north-west of Italy shows the greatest spread of Italian at the expense of the dialects, except for Tuscany and Lazio (see Parry1991a).

	only or mainly Italian	only or mainly dialect	Italian and dialect	another language ¹
Liguria	68.5	8.3	17.6	5.2
Piedmont	59.3	9.8	25.4	4.9

Table 1. *Language use in the family: ISTAT, 2006.*

¹ Some respondents may include the dialect in this category (for Piedmontese, see Parry 1994).

Although my interest in the structure and historical development of the dialect led later to the preparation of specific linguistic questionnaires and the analysis of relevant data in a comparative and diachronic perspective, sociolinguistic and pragmatic information are often crucial to the correct analysis of data. Not only reasons of space but also the nature of a language tutorial limit this presentation to a description of the main phonological, morphological and syntactic features. For a more comprehensive analysis, see Parry (2005), while explanatory hypotheses and theoretical discussion may be found in the bibliographical references.

2. *Cairese*

This Romance variety is spoken in the Val Bormida, part of the Ligurian hinterland that borders on Piedmont. It is thus a transition dialect, combining elements characteristic of the Piedmontese sub-area of the Monferrato, which is open to Lombard influence, and of Western Ligurian (for details of these dialect types, see Parry 1997 and Forner 1997).

2.1. *Phonology*

2.1.1. *The vowel system*

There are nine vowel phonemes, as exemplified in the minimal pairs of Table 2.

	i	e	æ	y	ø	a	u	o	ɒ
i		mi	fi	mi	fi	fi	mi	fi	fi
e			mei	me	pe	fen	me	te	me
æ				mæi	fæ	fæ	mæi	fæ	fæ
y					dzy	dzy	my	ʃkyra	ʃkyra
ø						fø	bøi	fø	fø
a							man	fa	fa
u								tuk	mu
o									so

Table 2. *Cairese vowel phonemes.*

/bøi/ 'oxen', /bui/ 'bee-hive', /dza/ 'already', /dzy/ 'down' (adv.), /dzø/ 'game', /fa/ '(s)he does', /fan/ 'they do', /fɒ/ 'done' (PP), /fæ/ 'do' (INF.), /fi/ 'thread', /fen/ 'hay',

/fo/ 'beech', /fø / 'fire', /man/ 'hand', /mæi/ 'apple', /mɒ/ 'evil', /me/ 'my'(SG.), /mei/ 'better'; 'my' (PL.), /mi/ tonic 'I, me (OBL)', /mu, -i/ 'mulberry, -ies', /mun/ 'brick', /my, -i/ 'mule, -s', /pe/ 'foot', /pø / '(s)he can', /so/ 'his, her' (SG.), /sɒ / 'salt', /ʃkɒra/ 'ladder', /ʃkora/ 'school', /ʃkyra/ 'dark' (F.), /te/ 'tea' (SG.), /to/ 'your', /tok/ 'piece', /tuk/ 'I touch'.

The status of [ə] is problematic (Parry 2005: 78-82). Stressed vowels are long except for [ə], and except before the velar allophones of /n/, which occur in syllable-final position and in a weaker version, preconsonantly, e.g. [feŋ] 'hay', [puŋt] 'bridge'. Vocalic length is not phonemic but the position of the stress is:

- (1) *purte* /'purtæ/ 'doors' ~ *purte* /pur'tæ/ 'carry (INF.)'²

2.1.2. Consonant phonemes

Like other northern Italian varieties, and unlike Italian and centre-southern Italo-Romance, the Val Bormida dialects lack long consonantal phonemes:

- (2) *tût, tûta, tûci, tûte* [tyt, 'tyta, 'tytʃi, 'tytɛ] 'all'
vs. It. *tutto*, -a -i, -e [tutto, -a, -i, -e]

Long consonantal allophones occur, however, after [ə]:

- (3) *mëssa* [məs:a] 'mass'

	Labial	labio-dental	dental	palatal	velar
Plosive	p b		t d		k g
Affricate			ts dz	tʃ dʒ	
Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ ʒ	
Nasal	m		n	ɲ	
Lateral			l		
rolled			r		

Table 3. *Cairese consonant phonemes* (See Parry 2005: 98-101 for minimal pairs).

² For exemplification, in addition to the International Phonetic Alphabet, I use an italicized, phonemically based, adapted local orthography (Parry 2005: 11-12). Latin etyma appear in small capitals, as do abbreviations: M. masculine, F. feminine, SG. singular, PL. plural, SCL subject clitic, EXPL expletive subject clitic, NEG negation, PP. past participle, INF. infinitive, OBL oblique.

Details of consonantal and vocalic allophonic variation may be found in Parry (2005).

Cairese displays significant consonant clustering as a result of the loss of many unstressed vowels:

- (4) word-initial: *sc-freugg* [ʃfrødʒ] ‘deceit’ ~ It. *frodo*
 (5) word-medial *cardlin* [kar'dliŋ] ‘thrush’ ~ It. *cardellino*
 (6) word-final: *sc-nisc-tr* [ʃniʃtr] ‘left (ADJ.)’ ~ It. *sinistro* (3 syllables)

Clause-initially and post-consonantly complex clusters are resolved by vocalic prosthesis, e.g. with the imperative: *vni* [v'ni] ‘come’ (<VENIRE):

- (7) *evni, evni, evni!* [ev'ni, ev'ni, ev'ni]
 ‘come on, come on, come on!’

but

- (8) *s'a i fuma vni bèi gròsci* [sæ j 'fuma v'ni bej 'groʃi]
 if SCL them make come nice big ‘if we get them to grow nice and big’

Lexicalised prosthesis with [a-] is not uncommon:

- (9) *amsuria* [am'surja] ‘sickle’ < MESSORIA
ariurd [a'rjurd] ‘memory’ ~ It. *ricordo* (*ricordare* ‘remember’
 RE- + COR, CORDIS ‘heart’)
augëtte [aw'dʒət:ɛ] ‘boiled chestnuts’
 (cf. It. *vecchiette* < VETUL- + dim. -ITTAE ‘little old women’)

Interestingly, these transitional Val Bormida dialects present a highly distinctive profile in that they display all the emblematic features of Piedmontese and Ligurian respectively. They appear to exhibit an asymmetric distribution of Piedmontese and Ligurian features in respect of the different linguistic levels: whereas the phonological level seems typically Ligurian, the syntactic one appears typically Piedmontese (see Parry 2006 for a reasoned account).

2.1.3. Typically Ligurian phonological features

- (i) palatalisation of Latin clusters: PL > [tʃ], BL > [dʒ], FL > [ʃ]:

Latin CL, GL palatalise in Piedmontese (*ciamé* [tʃa'me] 'call' < CLAMARE, *giaira* ['dʒajra] 'gravel' < GLAREA), but not PL, BL, FL, whereas they all do in Ligurian dialects.

(10)	<u>Cairese</u>		<u>Piedmontese</u>	<u>Ligurian</u>
	<i>ciù</i> [tʃy]	< Lat. PLUS 'more'	<i>pi</i> [pi]	<i>ciù</i> [tʃy]
	<i>gianch</i> [dʒaŋk]	< Germ. BLANK 'white'	<i>bianch</i> [bjaŋk]	<i>gianco</i> ['dʒaŋku]
	<i>sciama</i> ['ʃama]	< Lat. FLAMMA 'flame'	<i>fiamà</i> ['fjama]	<i>sciama</i> ['ʃama]

Palatalisation also affected Cairese dental fricatives [s], [z], when followed by [i] or by consonants:

(11)	<i>sci</i> [ʃi] < SIC 'yes'	~ It. <i>si</i>
	<i>vèsc-pa</i> ['vɛʃpa] < VESPA 'wasp'	~ It. <i>vespa</i>
	<i>sc-tagion</i> [ʃtadʒiun] < STATIONE(M) 'season'	~ It. <i>stagione</i>
	<i>sç-dentò</i> [ʒdɛŋ'tɔ] 'toothless'	~ It. <i>sdentato</i>

As is characteristic of Monferrato dialects, palatalization by a following [i] affected the dental plosive [t] also, but in a restricted number of contexts, mainly plural quantifiers (but *dènci* ['dɛŋtʃi] 'teeth', which gave the analogical singular, *dènc*):

(12)	<i>tût</i> [tyt] (SG.)	~ <i>tûci</i> ['tytʃi] (PL.) 'all'
	<i>quant</i> [kwaŋt] (SG.)	~ <i>quanci</i> ['kwaŋtʃi] (PL.) 'how many?'

Consonantal palatalization is no longer a synchronic process: Cair. *piati* ['pjati] 'plates' (SG. *piat*), *bièti* ['bjæti], 'tickets' (SG. *bièt*). Clusters formed as a result of vowel syncope do not show palatalization:

(13)	<i>stanta</i> [ʃtaŋta] 'seventy'	It. <i>settanta</i> < SEPTANTA
	<i>sgund</i> [zɡuŋd] 'according to'	It. <i>secondo</i> < SECUNDU

Dental affricates that have simplified in many Piedmontese and Ligurian dialects (as in French) are usually maintained, except in rapid speech:

(14)	<i>zinch</i> [tsiŋk] 'five'	Pied. <i>singh</i> [siŋk]	It. <i>cinque</i>
	<i>quinz</i> [kwɪŋdz] 'fifteen'	Pied. <i>quindes</i> ['kwɪŋdes]	It. <i>quindici</i>

(ii) rhotacization of Latin intervocalic [l]. Modern Genoese has lost the resulting weak palatal fricative [ʎ], but it is still found in West Ligurian dialects. Latin intervocalic [r] also > [ʎ]:

- (15) Cairese: *candeira* [kaŋ'dɛʝiɑ] < CANDELA 'candle'
 mòre [mɔɖiɛ] < MA(T)RE 'mother'
 Pied. *candèila* [kaŋ'dɛʝiɑ]
 mare [ˈmare]

2.1.4. Piedmontese phonological features

- (i) loss of unstressed vowels other than a [a], e.g.
- (16) word-final (except plural markers for certain categories of nominals):
 CARRU > Cair. *chèr* [kær] 'cart' ~ Genoese: *cáro* [ˈkaru]
- (17) pretonic vowels: GENUCULU > Cair. *sç-nugg* [ʒnɔdʒ] 'knee' ~ W. Lig. *zenùgliu* [ze'nuʎu]; and Gen. *zenoggio* [ze'nudʒu]
- (18) internal postonic vowels of proparoxytones: SELINON > Cair. *scèlr* [ʃèlr] 'celery' ~ Ventimigliese [ˈsela.ɪu], Gen. *sèllou* [ˈsɛlou]; often with typical Pied. final [u]: CALIGINE > Cair. *carizu* [ka'ridzu] 'haze' ~ W. Lig. *carize* [ka'ridze] ~ Gen. *càize* [ˈkajze]
- (19) the whole final syllable: PERSICU > Cair. *pèrci* [ˈpɛrʃi] 'peach' ~ Gen. *pèrsego* [ˈpɛrsegu]
- (ii) 1st conjugation infinitives (< Lat. -ÀRE) show palatalization of tonic [a], e.g.
- (20) *zighè* [dzi'gɛ] 'play' ~ W.Lig. *zùgà*, Gen. *zugà* [zy'gɑ];

and the suffix -ÀRIU also gives ɛ: *fervè* [fɛr've] 'February' ~ W.Lig. and Gen. *frevà* [fɛr'va].

Although the palatalization of the clusters PL, BL, FL is a particularly salient Ligurian characteristic, as is the rhotacization of Latin intervocalic [l], Cairese (and many other Val Bormida dialects) have in fact many Gallo-Italian phonetic features that are not Ligurian.

2.2. Morphology

On this level, Cairese again shows both Ligurian and Piedmontese characteristics.

2.2.1. Nouns

There are two major classes, each containing masculine and feminine nouns:

Class 1 varies for number and gender, but not for case. Like Piedmontese, it kept the feminine plural marker *-e* (despite the tendency to lose final vowels other than [a]), but Cairese also kept or reinstated the masculine plural marker *-i*:

	SG.	PL.
M	⊙	-i
F	-a	-æ

Table 4. Cairese class 1 nouns.

Feminine nouns, as in Ligurian and Piedmontese, have a final vowel for both numbers:

- (21) *fia* [ˈfiɑ] ~ *fie* [ˈfiæ] ‘daughter, -s’ It. *figlia*
nuda [ˈnuda] ~ *nude* [ˈnudæ] ‘niece, -s’ It. *nipote* F.

Masculine nouns ending in a consonant or accented vowel:

- (22) *óm* [om] ~ *omi* [ˈomi] ‘man, men’ It. *uomo, uomini*
medich [ˈmedik] ~ *medichi* [ˈmediki] ‘doctor, -s’ It. *medico, medici*

with consonantal palatalisation:

- (23) *mèis* [mɛjz] ~ *mèisçi* [ˈmɛjçi] ‘month, -s’ It. *mese, -i*
can [kaŋ] ~ *cagni* [ˈkaɲi] ‘dog, -s’ It. *cane, -i*

with diphthongisation:

- (24) *curù* [kuˈru] ‘colour’ ~ *curù* [kuˈruj] ‘colours’ It. *colore, -i*
có [ko] ‘cabbage’ ~ *cói* [koj] ‘cabbages’ It. *cavolo, -i*

As Ligurian and Italian, Cairese has a group of nouns deriving from Latin neuters that have masculine singulars and feminine plurals:

- (25) *braz* [brats] m. ~ *braze* [ˈbratsæ] f. ‘arm, -s’ It. *braccio, -a*
euv [øv] m. ~ *euve* [ˈøvæ] f. ‘egg, -s’ It. *uovo, -a*

Piedmontese varieties have assimilated this group to the invariable masculine type, e.g. *brass* [bras], *euv* [øv].

Class 2 nouns are invariable for number – they usually derive from Lat. 3rd declension nouns and are often feminine, ending in a consonant or accented vowel:

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| (26) | <i>neucc</i> [nøtʃ] F. ‘night, -s’ | It. <i>notte</i> |
| | <i>man</i> [maŋ] F. ‘hand, -s’ | It. <i>mano</i> |
| | <i>vi</i> [vi] F. ‘vine, -s’ | It. <i>vite</i> |

They may also be masculine, ending in an unaccented vowel (often from shortened Latin proparoxytones):

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| (27) | <i>sangu</i> [ˈsɑŋgu] ‘blood’ | It. <i>sangue</i> |
| | <i>pèntu</i> [ˈpɛŋtu] ‘comb, -s’ | It. <i>pettine, -i</i> |
| | <i>prèvi</i> [ˈprɛvi] ‘priest, -s’ | It. <i>prete, -i</i> |

2.2.2. Adjectives

The vast majority belong to Class 1 with variation according to number and gender:

- | | | |
|------|--|------------------------------|
| (28) | <i>còd, -a, -i, -e</i> [kɔd, -a, -i, -e] ‘hot’ | It. <i>caldo, -a, -i, -e</i> |
| | <i>grand, -a, -i, -e</i> [grɑŋd, -a, -i, -e] ‘big’ | It. <i>grande, -i</i> |
| | <i>zunn, -a, -i, -e</i> [dzun, -a, -i, -e] ‘young’ | It. <i>giovane, -i</i> |

with consonantal palatalisation in MPL.

- | | | |
|------|---|------------------------------|
| (29) | <i>bun, buina, bugni, buine</i> [buŋ, 'bujna, 'buɲi, 'bujne] ‘good’ | It. <i>buono, -a, -i, -e</i> |
| | <i>cairés, cairésa, cairésci, cairése</i> [kaj'rez, kaj'reza, kaj'rezi, kaj'reze] ‘Cairese’ | |

There are a very few invariable adjectives, e.g.

- | | |
|------|-------------------------------|
| (30) | <i>citu</i> [ˈtʃitu] ‘silent’ |
|------|-------------------------------|

Comparatives and superlatives are usually formed analytically, except for a few common ones which continue the Latin synthetic forms:

- | | |
|------|--|
| (31) | <i>ciù</i> [tʃy] ‘more’, <i>ménu</i> [ˈmenu] ‘less’, <i>méi</i> [mej] ‘better’, <i>pézi</i> [ˈpedzi] ‘worse’ |
|------|--|

Even these are often replaced by analytic forms:

- (32) *ciù tant* ['tʃy taŋt] 'more' *ciù pòch* ['tʃy pok] 'less'
ciù bun ['tʃy bun] 'better' *ciù mâ* ['tʃy mɔ] 'worse'

ciù ['tʃy] and *ménu* ['menu] are used adverbially for the comparative/ superlative of other adjectives:

- (33) *ciù* ['tʃy] *mé surèla ciù cita* [me su'ɛla 'tʃy 'tʃita]
 my sister less small 'my younger/-est sister'
 (34) *ménu* ['menu] *u libr ménu interesant* [u libr 'menu interɛ'sant]
 the book less interesting 'the less/least interesting book'

2.2.3. The definite article

As in most of the Romance languages, this derives from the Latin distal demonstrative, *ILLE*, and it shows significant allomorphic variation (not only for gender and number), due to the outcome of [l]:

- [l] > [u] before [+coronal] consonants (dentals and palatals): *u dènc* [u dɛŋtʃ]
 [l] > [ɛ] before other consonants: *er can* [ɛ.ɪ kaŋ]
 [l] remains before vowels: *l'om* [lom]

- (35) *vòrda'r can* / *vòrda u dènc* / *vòrda l'om*
 ['vɔrda.ɪ kaŋ / 'vɔrda w dɛŋtʃ / 'vɔrda lom]
 'look at the dog / look at the tooth / look at the man'

- (36) *vòrda ra fia* / *vòrda l'amisça*
 ['vɔrda.ɪa 'fia / 'vɔrda la'miʒa]
 'look at the girl / look at the friend (F.)'

2.2.4. The indefinite article

This derives from the numeral 'one' and, as in Italian, the plural of the partitive article is used for the plural:

- (37) *a pia na cadréga* [a 'pia na kad'rega] 'she takes a chair'
 a pia der cadréghe [a 'pia dɛɪ kad'rege] 'she takes some chairs'

2.2.5. The partitive article

This is formed from the preposition *ed* [ɛd] 'of' and the definite article:

- (38) *a veui du zúchr nen du lòit* [a vɔj du tsykr nɛŋ du lɔjt]
 SCL want sm sugar NEG sm milk 'I want some sugar, not milk'

The partitive appears far more frequently in Cairese than in Italian with indefinite nouns, but is not obligatory, unlike in French. The form without the definite article is compulsory after negation, as in French:

- (39) *a n'eu nènt ed muné* [a nø nɛŋt əd mu'ne]
 I NEG have NEG of change 'I have no change'

2.2.6. Pronouns

2.2.6.1. Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns retain some variation for case, as in other Romance varieties:

	1SG	2SG	3MSG	3FSG	Expl	1PL	2PL	3MPL	3FPL	REFL
Tonic	mi	ti	kæl	'kila		nuj	vuj	'kæji	'kile	
						nuj'ɔtʃi (M) nuj'ɔtrɛ (F)	vuj'ɔtʃi (M) vuj'ɔtrɛ (F)			
Subject clitics	a	t	u	a	u	a	i	i	i	
Pre-Vocalic Subject clitics	j	t	l	ɹ	l	j				
Proclitic Complement clitics	m	t	l	ɹa/la		n	v	i/j	s	
Enclitic Complement clitics	mɛ	tɛ	lɛ	ɹa/la		nɛ	vɛ	jɛ	sɛ	
			DATIVE i							
			DATIVE jɛ							

Table 5. *Personal pronouns in Cairese.*

Like the Piedmontese group, but unlike Ligurian varieties, the Val Bormida 3rd person tonic personal pronoun derives from the reinforced distal demonstrative of Latin, *ECCU ILLE*, etc.:

- (40) *chël* [kæl] 'he', *chila* ['kila] 'she', PL. *chèii* ['kæji], *chile* ['kile] 'they'

Northern Italian dialects (including northern Tuscan and Florentine) have compulsory subject clitics for some or all persons of the verb, often in addition to distinctive person markers on the verb itself (see Vanelli 1997

for further details). There is variation according to the dialect as to which persons are involved (the most frequent ones being the 2sg., 3sg. and 3pl.), as well as variation dependent on syntactic context (see Poletto 2000).

Subject clitics derive from Latin nominative subject pronouns, which were gradually replaced in subject position by originally left-dislocated stressed oblique forms: cf. French, *Moi, je parle*:

- (41) Cairese [mi a pɔrli] 'I speak' [ni 'ɔtʃi a par'luma] 'we speak'
 [ti t'pɔrli] 'you.SG speak' [vui 'ɔtʃi i 'pɔrli] 'you.PL speak'
 [kæl u 'pɔrli] 'he speaks' ['kæʒi i 'pɔrli] 'they.M speak'
 ['kila a 'pɔrli] 'she speaks' ['kilɛ i 'pɔrli] 'they.F speak'

Modern subject clitics may be considered part of the verb's flexion (Rizzi 1986, Brandi and Cordin 1989, but see Manzini and Savoia 2005, Cardinaletti and Repetti 2008 for recent alternative interpretations). In Cairese they are compulsory in all contexts involving finite verbs:

- (42) a. if there is no NP subject
a ven [a ven] 'I come' ~ It. *vengo*
- b. impersonal constructions
u ciöv [u tʃøv] 'it is raining'
u fióca [u 'fjoka] 'it is snowing'
u s diʒ [u s diʒ] 'it is said/ one says'
 EXPL REFL says
- c. with tonic pronominal subjects (see (41) above)
- d. with preverbal lexical NP subjects
me mòre a l' era bèla cuntenta [me 'mɔɾɛ a l ɛɾa 'bɛla kuŋ'tɛŋta]
 my mother SCL SCL was nice happy
 'my mother was really happy'
- e. with postverbal lexical NP subjects
i sun emni tùci [i suŋ em'ni 'tytʃi]
 SCL are come(pp.) all 'they all came'
- f. in coordinated structures
me mòre a lavòva e a sc-tiròva tùt u di
 [me 'mɔɾɛ a la'vɔva e a ʃti'rɔva tyt u 'di]

Romance languages unstressed complement clitics precede finite verb forms, but in Piedmontese and Val Bormida dialects, in compound verb tenses formed by an auxiliary + past participle, they attach enclitically to the latter. In the conservative dialects of the Val Bormida, the clitics still appear preverbally as well (for a diachronic analysis, see Parry 1995):

- (45) a. *u t' i òva dòtie* [u t-j-ɔva 'dɔ-t-jɛ] SCL you-them had given-you-them 'he had given them to you'
 b. *a's nun suma andòsne* [a s nuŋ 'suma an'dɔ-s-nɛ] SCL-REFL away are gone-REFL-away 'We went away'

2.2.6.2. *Demonstrative pronouns*

For real demonstrative function (spatial deixis, not anaphora) the Val Bormida dialects have witnessed a reduction of the Latin ternary system (HIC, ISTE, ILLE), not to two as in many Romance varieties, but to one paradigm, which derives from the Latin pronoun of identity IPSE:

- (46) *es* [ɛʃ], *sa* [sa], *sci* [ʃi] *se* [sɛ] 'this/that'

Compare It. *questo* 'this' ~ (*codesto* 'that near you') ~ *quello* 'that'.

Pronominal use requires reinforcement by adverbs to produce a binary or ternary opposition, but these are optional in adjectival use (as in French):

- (47) *es chi* [ɛs 'ki] 'this one', *es li* [ɛs 'li] 'that one', *es là* [ɛs 'la] 'that one over there'
es can (*chi/li/là*) 'this/that dog'

Cul [kul] (< ECCU ILLE) is used for cataphoric and anaphoric reference. It shows a special evidential use in narratives: whereas anaphoric *es* refers to things/events which are presented in their immediacy, *cul* marks them as distant, either temporally or psychologically (see Parry 1991b for detailed discussion).

2.2.7. *Verb forms*

On the basis of their morphology (theme, i.e. root + thematic vowel – [infix] – ending), Cairese verbs may be grouped into two main classes, the second comprising three sub-groups (⊙ = zero morph):

	I	a	II b	c
Infinitive	maŋ'd.æ	'perd.i	'pɔrti /par'ti	fi'n.i
Present indicative	'maŋd⊙ -i -a '-uma -i -u	'perd⊙ -i ⊙ '-uma -i -u	'pɔrt⊙ -i ⊙ '-uma -i -u	fi'n.i-ʃ⊙ -i ⊙ '-uma -i -u
Present subjunctive	'maŋd-a -i -a -mu -i -u	'perd-a -i -a -mu -i -u	'pɔrt-a -i -a -mu -i -u	fi'n.i-ʃ-a -i -a -mu -i -u
Imperfect indicative	maŋ'd.ɔ-v-a -i -a mu -i -u	per'd.i-v-a -i -a -mu -i -u	par't.i-v-a -i -a -mu -i -u	fi'n.i-v-a -i -a -mu -i -u
Imperfect indicative & Conditional	maŋ'd.ɛj-s-a -i -a -mu -i -u	per'd.i-s-a -i -a -mu -i -u	par't.i-s-a -i -a -mu -i -u	fi'n.i-s-a -i -a -mu -i -u
Future	maŋ'd-r-ø -ɔj -a -uma -æj -aŋ	per'd-r-ø -ɔj -a -uma -æj -aŋ	par't.i-r-ø -ɔj -a -uma -æj -aŋ	fi'n.i-r-ø -ɔj -a -uma -æj -aŋ
Past participle	maŋ'dɔ	per'dy	par'ti	fi'n.i
Imperative	'maŋda maŋ'd-æ	perd⊙ 'perd-i	pɔrt⊙ 'pɔrt-i	fi'n.i-ʃ⊙ fi'n.i
Exhortative	maŋ'd-uma	per'd-uma	par't-uma	fi'n.i-ʃ-uma
Gerund	maŋ'd.a-ŋdi	per'd.i-ŋdi	par't.i-ŋdi	fi'n.i-ŋdi

Table 6. *Cairese regular verbs.*

Cairese has the characteristic Piedmontese 1st pl. present indicative ending in $-[l'uma]$ in all verb conjugations, in contrast to Lig. $-[l'amu]$, $-[l'emu]$, $-[l'imu]$.

There is no distinct conditional tense, as it merged with or was supplanted by the Imperfect subjunctive, except in the case of the verb 'be'. As argued in Parry (1990), this is not a case of the persistence of the Latin subjunctive in conditional sentences, as in some southern Italo-Romance varieties, and was probably largely due to:

i) weakness of the distinguishing $[r]$ of the earlier conditional, which had generalized the infix $-[s]$ - of the imperfect subjunctive:

(48) Condit. *mandreisu* 'they would send' ~ Imperf. subjunc. *mandeisu*;
Condit. *vurèisa* $[vu'rejsa]$ 'he would like' ~ Imperf. subjunc. *vurèisa* $[vu'rejsa]$

ii) the popular tendency for clausal symmetry in conditional sentence.

Conditional forms (e.g. *mandreisu* 'they send', *meritreisu* 'they deserve') are found in some early 20th c. poetry in Cairese and still exist in neighbouring southern Piedmontese dialects.

2.2.7.1. Compound tenses

The perfect tense is formed, as in French and Italian, by selecting one of two perfect auxiliaries, *ésci* $[eʃi]$ 'be' or *avèi* $[a'væj]$ 'have', followed by a past participle:

- i) with 'be' the past participle agrees in gender and number with the subject (49a-c), except in presentational constructions, or if there are complement clitics, these are copied onto the PP (45b), (49d)
- ii) with 'have' the PP agrees with a preceding complement clitic via clitic copying (45a)
- iii) auxiliary distribution is similar to Italian ('be' in unaccusative structures and in reflexives, 'have' in transitives and unergative constructions). Some verbs take both, depending on the transitivity of the construction (see Sorace 2000 for a comparative study of the distribution of the two auxiliaries).

- (49) a. *a sun indòia dar medik* (PP. *indò*) $[a\ suŋ\ iŋ'dòja\ dar\ 'medik]$
SCL am gone.F to-the doctor 'I (F.) went to the doctor's'
- b. *adèsi i sun morti tùci* (PP. *mort*) $[a'dæsi\ i\ suŋ\ 'morti\ 'tytʃi]$
now SCL are dead.MPL. all 'now they are all dead'

- c. (*er pegure*) *i sun pasòie li* (PP. *pasò*) [ɛɪ 'pɛɡuɪɛ i suŋ pa'sɔjɛ li]
 (the sheep) SCL are passed.FPL there '(the sheep) passed there'
- d. *me mòre a s'è sc-tùpise* (PP. *sc-tùpi*) [me 'mɔɪɛ a sɛ 'ʃty'pise]
 my mother SCL REFL is surprised-REFL 'my mother was surprised'

2.2.7.2. *The passive*

The analytic passive, with promotion of the logical object to syntactic subject is not a common construction in the dialect, but can be formed with the verb 'be' and the past participle:

- (50) *er permès u i'è sctò negò, i i'an nen dòile*
 [ɛɪ per'mes u j æ'ʃtɔ nɛ'gɔ, i jaŋ nɛŋ 'dɔjle]
 the permission SCL to-him is been denied, SCL to-him have NEG given-him-it
 'He was denied leave, it wasn't given to him'

The *se* passive (+ 3p. reflexive pronoun < Latin middle construction) is more common:

- (51) *ra còrn a's cata dar masç-lé* [ɪa kɔɪn a s 'kata daɪ məʒ'le]
 the meat SCL-REFL buys at-the butcher 'Meat can be bought at the butcher's'

2.2.7.3. *Indefinite subject*

The 3p. reflexive construction implying an indefinite subject (cf. It. *si*, Fr. *on*) is more frequent. In the case of transitive verbs, the structure is ambiguous between a passive and an 'impersonal' reading, given that post-verbal subjects in unaccusative constructions do not trigger verb agreement (see §4.2):

- (52) *us fa er furmagg/ i furmaggi* [u s fa ɛɪ fur'madʒ / i fur'madʒi]
 SCL-REFL makes the cheese /the cheeses 'cheese is made / they make cheese'

With intransitive verbs, only the indefinite subject reading is available:

- (53) *us andòva a mëssa* [u s aŋ'dɔva a 'məs:a]
 SCL-REFL went to mass 'One went to mass'

This construction is less grammaticalized than in Italian, as it is rarely used with perfect tenses. It cannot have direct object clitics, unlike Italian *lo/la/li/le si mangia* 'one eats it/them'; only the passive structure with the

subject clitic referring to the semantic object is possible:

- (54) *a's mangia / i's mangiu*
 'it is eaten / they are eaten'

It is not used in predicative or reflexive structures, except for calques of Italian (with MPL. agreement):

- (55) *quandi ch' u s' è vegi* [kwandi k u sɛ 'vedʒi]
 when that SCL-REFL is old.MPL 'When one is old'

3. Syntax

To illustrate the significance of northern Italian dialects for typological and theoretical study of language structure, I have selected a few key areas of Cairese syntax that diverge significantly from that found in the standard language.

3.1. Restructuring

In Italian, sequences of modal verbs + infinitive may 'restructure' as monoclausal constructions, so that clitics that are semantic complements of the infinitive raise to the finite modal verb, which is then construed as an auxiliary (Rizzi 1982). In such cases, the perfect auxiliary selected will be that of the main lexical verb, the infinitive:

- (56) *non ho potuto andarci* ~ *non ci sono potuta andare*
 NEG I-have been-able to-go-there NEG there I-am been-able.F to-go

The same happens with aspectual and motion verbs, but the auxiliary switch goes in one direction only: HAVE > BE (Cinque 2004).

Contrary to what is often thought about northern dialects, restructuring is frequent in the Val Bormida, though not obligatory, often with clitic copying on the infinitive:

- (57) *a'm sun duvù mitème int u lécc* [a m suŋ du'vy mi'tème int u letʃ]
 SCL-REFL am had to-put-REFL in the bed 'I had to go to bed'

but without compulsory auxiliary switch:

- (58) *a 'i 'eu vusciùie* *indè ina sgunda vota*
 [a j ø vu'ʃy-jɛ] *in'dɛ ina 'zɡuŋda 'vota]*
 SCL there have wanted-there to-go a second time
 'I wanted to go there a second time'

A noteworthy feature of Val Bormida, and some other Northern dialects, proves that auxiliary switch in cases of restructuring can involve the auxiliary verb of the complex construction switching from BE > HAVE in the case of a few verbs that have grammaticalised as aspectual verbs, in particular *tornare* 'return' (aux. BE), meaning 'do again' (Parry forthcoming). Thus:

- (59) *a m sun turnòme a lavè* [a m suŋ tur'nɔmɛ a la'vɛ]
 SCL myself am returned-myself to wash Reflexive infinitive: AUX. BE
 'I went back to washing myself / I got washed again'

but:

- (60) *u m'a turnòme a ciapè* [u ma tur'nɔmɛ a tʃa'pɛ]
 SCL me has returned-me to catch Transitive infinitive: AUX. HAVE
 'He caught me again'

3.2. *Verb Agreement*

Romance subjects usually show agreement in number and gender (if applicable) on the verb. In Northern Italian dialects, however, the non-topical and Undergoer argument of an unaccusative construction, especially if post-verbal, is less likely to trigger agreement. A lack of subject – finite verb agreement is found in sentences in which the subject or pivot is not the topic, but is a focus element which follows the verb in the non-contrastive focus position. An expletive subject clitic occurs with the non-agreeing verb in the following contexts:

i. Answers to questions (Argument focus, Lambrecht 1994):

- (61) *chi u vénn sc-ta sèira?* [ki u ven ʃta 'sejɾa]
 who SCL comes this evening 'Who is coming this evening?'
u vénn Carla e Maria [u ven 'karla e ma'ria]
 EXPL comes.SG Carla and Maria 'Carla and Maria are coming'

vs. Predicate focus:

- (62) *Carla e Maria i vénu* [ˈkarla e maˈria i ˈvenu]
 ‘Carla and Maria SCL come.PL’ ‘Carla and Maria are coming’

ii. Impersonal constructions, e.g. *u mzeugna* ‘(it) is necessary’, *u piòsc* ‘it is pleasing’:

- (63) *u’ i piàçiva er dònè* [u j pjaˈziva εɪ ˈdonɛ]
 EXPL to-him pleased.SG the women ‘he liked women’

iii. All-new utterances (Sentence Focus)

The function of presentational, existential and event-reporting sentences is to introduce a new entity or situation into the world of discourse; it need not necessarily be hearer-new but must nonetheless be presented in a new light (Lambrecht 1994: 46-50).

- (64) *u crèsc i presçi* [u kræʃ i ˈprezi]
 EXPL grows the prices ‘prices are going up’
- (65) *u còra r feuiè* [u ˈkɔɹa ɹ ˈføjɛ]
 EXPL falls the leaves ‘the leaves are falling’
- (66) *u i ’è pasòie li i infèrmière* [u j ε paˈsɔjɛ ˈli jɪnfɛrˈmjɛɹɛ]
 EXPL there is passed-there the nurses ‘The nurses passed by there’
- (67) *u l’è vnù tante fie e pòchi zunóti*
 [u lɛ vˈny ˈtaŋtɛ ˈfiɛ e ˈpɔki dzuˈnoti]
 EXPL SCL-is come(MSG) so-many girls and few young-men
 ‘A lot of girls and a few men came’

but in the following unergative construction, we have agreement:

- (68) *i an telefonò r tó amisçe* [i aŋ telefʊˈnɔ ɹ to aˈmizɛ]
 SCL have.PL phoned the your friends ‘Your friends phoned’

As a rule in Italo-Romance presentational structures the lack of subject-verb agreement is found only in unaccusative constructions. Much less often it occurs in certain unergative constructions, while a few northern dialects, as well as Tuscan ones, may even show lack of agreement with transitive verbs

(Brandi and Giannelli 2001). Piedmontese, Ligurian, and hence Cairese, do allow the presentational structure with unergative constructions, but there are far more restrictions, regarding the definiteness of the subject/pivot and verb tense, than with unaccusative verbs. The most common contexts for unergative verbs to appear in this construction are with indefinite pivots and non-compound tense forms (see Parry 2013a, for a theoretical account):

- (69) *in sa sc-tanzia, u'i drimiva i mèi noni*
 [iŋ sa 'ʃtantsja u j dri'miva i mej 'noni]
 in this room EXPL-there slept.SG the my grandparents
 'My grandparents slept in this room'
- (70) *chi, u'i a mangiòie i matoti* [ki u ja maŋ'dʒɔje i ma'toti]
 here EXPL-there has eaten-there the children 'The children ate here'

In Piedmontese the presentational structure includes a compulsory locative clitic:

- (71) *A l'è rivà-je Maria*
 EXPL SCL-is arrived-there Maria
 'Maria has arrived'
- (72) *An cost vir ëd la stra a-ì meuir vaire giovo tuti j'ani*
 in this curve of the road EXPL-there dies several youths each year
 'several young people die on this curve of the road each year'

but this is not the case in Ligurian, or in Cairese (see (iii) above). The locative clitics with the unergative verbs in (69) and (70) are anaphoric.

3.3. Negation

Val Bormida dialects are interesting in that they show all stages of Jespersen's Cycle of negation contemporaneously. Simple preverbal negation (NEG 1) is found in Italian, in the Florentine dialect on which it is based, as well as in the other central and southern dialects of Italy, including Sardinia; also in Venetan, Friulian and some Ladin varieties, as well as Ligurian. Discontinuous negation (NEG2) developed through the reinforcement of the original negative marker, usually by a nominal complement, which after a period of co-occurrence with the original marker, eventually assumed the

full function of negation so that the original negator was dropped (NEG3). The reinforcer can be a noun with general reference merged with a negative, Pied. *nen(t)* ‘nothing’ < Latin NE GENTE(M) ‘no people’ (Rohlf’s 1968: 218); or non-negative minimizers such as Lomb. *mi(n)ga* (< MICA(M) ‘crumb’) which acquired negative meaning through frequent collocation with the preverbal negative in the intermediate discontinuous strategy, *n ... nen/min-ga*, or less frequently, a resumptive holophrastic negator, Lomb. *nò*. NEG2 is still found in Emilian as well as in some alpine Lombard (Ticinese) and our border Piedmontese-Ligurian varieties, while NEG3 dominates the central Po area, Piedmontese and Lombard³.

These three structural types do not correlate with homogeneous geographical areas, since two or even three types may coexist in the same dialect, as is to be expected in the case of gradual syntactic evolution. In transitional areas in particular, micro-variation involves two or even all three strategies, as in dialects of the Val Bormida (Parry 1997). In Cairese NEG2 prevails, whereas NEG1 is found in irrealis clauses and in structures such as *n...àtr* ‘only’, and NEG3 favours two main contexts: (a) with the verbs ‘to be’ and ‘to have’ (frequent as perfective auxiliaries) and (b) in the presence of preverbal complement clitics, particularly nasal ones.

In the following example, the preverbal negative has been dropped:

- (73) *a n'eu nent abasc-tanza* [a nò nɛnt abaf'taŋtsa]
 SCL of-it have NEG enough ‘I haven’t enough’

Very occasionally, the negator *pa* may be used by older people instead of *nènt* to negate an expectation (as It. *mica*). It may also be accompanied by an enclitic *nu* (an unstressed form of Lombard *nò*), but *nu* can occur without *pa*. Both are preceded by the preverbal negator *n*:

- (74) *Scì, ma dùmìnica u n'è pa vnù-nu* [ʃi ma dy'minika u nɛ pɑ v'hynu]
 Yes, but Sunday SCL NEG is NEG come NEG ‘Yes, but Sunday he didn’t come.’

3.4. Relative clauses

As many other Italian dialects, Cairese has no relative proforms except for (*d*)*unda* ‘where’, which also serves as the interrogative. Finite relative

³ For a survey of Italo-Romance negation, see Parry (2013b).

clauses are linked to the NP by means of the complementizer *che* [ke] and they often contain a clitic pronoun marking the syntactic function of the head, e.g. relative clauses on the subject always feature subject clitics with finite verbs. Restrictive and non-restrictive/appositive relative clauses, which are distinguished only by intonation in Italian, are in some cases morpho-syntactically marked, e.g. *restrictive* relatives on the subject optionally use the presentational structure (as in 77), involving a non-agreeing unaccusative verb and the expletive subject clitic *u* [u]⁴.

Subject

- (75) +Restrictive
èco ra matóta ch'a canta stasera [ˈeko .ɪa ma'tota k a 'kaŋta sta'sɛjɪa]
 here-is the girl that SCL sings tonight 'Here is the girl who is singing tonight'
- (76) -Restrictive
èco Maria, ch'a canta stasera [ˈeko ma'ria, k a 'kaŋta sta'sɛjɪa]
 here-is Maria, that SCL sings tonight 'Here is Maria, who is singing tonight'
- (77) +Restrictive (presentational structure)
er matôte ch'u l'è parti póc fa i sun er me chisçine
 the girls who EXPL SCL is left.PP little ago SCL are the my cousins
 'The girls who left a short while ago are my cousins'.

Direct object

Unlike relative clauses on the subject, those on the direct object only contain an anaphoric clitic pronoun if the relative is *non-restrictive* (79):

- (78) +Restrictive
a l'eu dòle ara matóta ch' a i' uma visc-t ièri
 [a lø 'dɔle a.ɪa ma'tota k a 'j uma 'viʃt 'jɛ.ɪi]
 SCL it have given-it to-the girl that SCL SCL have seen yesterday
 'I gave it to the girl we saw yesterday'
- (79) -Restrictive
a l'eu dòle a Maria, ch' a i' uma visc-tra ièri
 [a l ø 'dɔle a ma'ria k a 'j uma 'viʃt.ɪa 'jɛ.ɪi]
 SCL it have given-it to Maria that SCL SCL have seen-her yesterday
 'I gave it to Maria, whom we saw yesterday'

⁴ For a typological account of relative clauses in northern Italo-Romance negation, see Parry (2007).

Indirect Object

As indirect objects always require doubling by a pronominal clitic inside the clause (Parry 2005:172), this also happens with relative clauses, whether restrictive or not:

- (80) +Restrictive
ra fia che ti t' i' òi dòie u libr ... [ʔa 'fia ke t j ɒj 'dɔje u libr]
 the girl that you SCL to-her have given-to-her the book
 'The girl to whom you gave the book ...'
- (81) -Restrictive
Maria, che ti t' i' òi dòie u libr ... [ma'ria ke t j ɒj 'dɔje u libr]
 Mary that you SCL to-her have given-to-her the book
 'Maria, to whom you gave the book, ...'

Object of preposition

If available in the repertory, a clitic appears whether the clause is restrictive or not (82); otherwise there is no anaphora, just the linking complementiser [ke] (83):

- (82) *la ca ch'a nun parlòvmu ieri sèjra*
 [ʔa ka k a nuɲ par'lɔvmu jɛ.ɪi 'sɛj.ɪa]
 the house that SCL of-it talked.1PL yesterday evening
 'the house we talked about last night'
- (83) *cun i sc-pili ch' a' n piòva i' emsùre* [kuɲ i 'ʃpili k a ɲ 'pjɔva jɛ'mzyɪɛ]
 with the pins that SCL to-us took the measurements
 'with the pins with which she took our measurements'

Locatives

The locative clitic occasionally does not appear in restrictive sentences:

- (84) *in punt d'apogg che ni òci a's fermòvmu*
 [iɲ puɲt d a'pɔdʒ ke ni 'ɔtʃi a s fɛr'mɔvmu]
 a point of rest that we-others SCL REFL stopped
 'a resting place where we stopped'

There is also a specific relative pronoun, (*d*)*unda* 'where' (used for both +R and -R clauses), preserved perhaps because of the high frequency of locative relative clauses, second only to those on the subject:

- (85) *i posc-ti dund a i' òva d' indè e und u' i era 'r pericul*
 [i 'poʃti duɲd a 'j òva d iɲ'dɛ e uɲd u 'j ɛɪa ɪ pe'rikul]
 the places where SCL SCL had to go and where SCL there was the danger
 'the places where I was meant to go and those which were dangerous'

More specific locatives (involving complex prepositions, e.g. *in drenta a* 'inside', *suta a* 'under') are introduced by the complementiser [ke] and the relationship is expressed by the corresponding adverbial preposition:

- (86) *a i' èrmu su dara sc-còra ch'a i' òvmu ra chisçina suta*
 [a 'j ɛɪmu sy 'da.ɪa 'ʃkɔɪa k a 'j 'òvmu ɪa ki'zina 'suta]
 SCL SCL were.1PL up at-the stairs that SCL SCL had.1PL the kitchen under
 'we were up on the stairs which were above
 (lit. under which we had) the kitchen.'
- (87) *mé cumpagn che a i' èrmu nsèm* [me kum'paɲ k a 'jɛɪmu ɲ'sɛm]
 my companion that SCL to-him were together 'the friend I was with'

4. Conclusion

Like all the dialects of Italy, Cairese is an inexhaustible mine of important linguistic data that may be used in a comparative framework to advance our understanding of language structure and evolution. By drawing, for instance, on recent theories of language change and models of diffusion in contact situations that pay particular attention to the notions of salience and markedness, it was possible to account historically for the apparent asymmetric distribution of Piedmontese and Ligurian features. Indeed, apart from the high-profile palatal consonants, which do give the dialects a Ligurian aspect, there are few elements shared with Ligurian that are not simply conservative features. Overwhelmingly, inflectional and syntactic innovations have been associated with Piedmontese developments, suggesting that close typological similarity contributed to their adoption (Parry 2006).

This overview has touched only on the most salient aspects of Cairese grammar, but further details, together with historical and sociolinguistic information, are available in Parry (2005). Theoretical analysis of specific topics may be found in the cited articles, as here the brief was to provide a language tutorial.

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Edizioni ETS
Piazza Carrara, 16-19, I-56126 Pisa
info@edizioniets.com - www.edizioniets.com
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