

Tobia Moroder (Ed.)

The Ladins of the Dolomites

People, landscape, culture

Published by the Istitut Ladin Micurá de Rù.

ISTITUT
LADIN
MICURÁ
DE RÙ



This book is published with the assistance of the
Autonomous Region of Trentino–South Tyrol.



Image credits:

Archiv Claus Soraperra: p. 64, 65 | Archiv Intendènza Ladina: p. 41 | Archiv Istitut Cultural Ladin Majon di Fascegn: p. 85 | Archiv Istitut Ladin Micurá de Rù: back flap, p. 5, 22, 29, 30–31, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 42, 47, 50, 54, 55, 57, 58, 66, 67 infra, 80, 83, 96, 97, 101 | Archiv Luis Trenker, Museum Gherdëina: p. 61 infra | Archiv Albert Moroder: p. 46, 48, 49, 56, 62, 68, 86 | Archiv Museum Ladin Čiastel de Tor: p. 24, 25, 26, 27 | Mario Clara: p. 102 | Egon Dejori: p. 71 | Doppelmayr Italia/Roland Pircher: p. 51 | Alfred Erardi: p. 6–7, 12, 19, 87, 90 | Markus Vallazza: p. 91 | Diego Gaspari Bandion: p. 63 | UNIKA/Matthäus Kostner: p. 70 | Andrea Lanzi: p. 104 | Max Moroder: p. 89 | Tobia Moroder: p. 15, 77 | Carolin Ott: p. 10–11 | Caius Perathoner: p. 104 | Diego Perathoner: p. 72 | Simon Perathoner: p. 84 | Werner Pescosta: p. 18, 61 sup., 82, 98 | Freddy Planinschek: p. 59 | Flavio Valle: p. 60 | Gerhard Watzeck: p. 73 | Gustav Willeit: p. 2, 51, 78 | www.ganes-music.com: p. 100 | www.giorgiomoroder.com: p. 99 | Stefano Zardini: p. 8, 13, 16, 20–21, 23, 38, 67 sup., 74, 76, 79 | Vito Zingerle: p. 52, 103

Cover image: Barbara Tavella, „Ralegrëiete ...“, 2015, photo: Gustav Willeit

© Folio Vienna/Bolzano and Istitut Ladin Micurá de Rù, San Martino in Badia, 2016
Second edition, 2022

Translation: Gareth Norbury

Proofreading: Martina C. Moser

Graphic design: no.parking, Vicenza

Prepress: Typoplus, Frangarto

Printed in Italy

ISBN 978-3-85256-697-9

www.folioverlag.com

www.micura.it

Language

Roland Bauer

LADIN OR RHAETO-ROMANCE?

Ladin (also called Dolomite Ladin, Sella Ladin, Central Ladin or Central Rhaeto-Romance) is one of the languages descended from Latin and thus belongs (like French, Spanish and Italian) to the greater family of Romance languages. Geographically, Ladin is the central building block of a language family called *ladino* (< LATĪNU), which was only “discovered” or rather scientifically defined in 1873. The Italian umbrella term *ladino* is synonymous with the German term *Rätoromanisch* (“Rhaeto-Romance”), which refers to the old name of the Swiss canton of Grisons/Graubünden (*Alt fry Rätien*). The Rhaeto-Romance or Alpine-Romance language family also includes the Graubünden Romansh of south-eastern Switzerland and the Friulian of north-eastern Italy (see map p. 30).

The individual nature and relationship between the three language groups mentioned above as postulated in the second half of the 19th century is based upon the simultaneous occurrence and particular combination of certain phonetic features. More recent (so-called dialectometric) studies have however shown that the family resemblance that still holds for phonetic aspects (including the sense of a corresponding demarcation and distancing from Italian and its dialects) can largely be applied to the fields of word formation and sentence structure (morpho-syntax), but not to that of the lexicon. There are striking differences in the vocabulary of the three language groups (especially between Graubünden Romansh and Ladin), while the Friulian lexicon is comparatively close to Italian. This also explains why problem-free everyday understanding between the three groups is only possible to a very limited extent.

THE ORIGINS OF THE LADIN / RHAETO-ROMANCE LANGUAGE

The process of linguistic Romanisation began at the same time as the conquest of the Alpine region by the Romans (15 BC). In simplified terms, this meant the gradual adoption and transformation of the Latin spoken at that time by Roman soldiers, officials, settlers and merchants (called Vulgar Latin) by the native population, along with the simultaneous suppression of their own pre-Latin mother tongue which, after a longer phase of bilingualism, was finally abandoned but left traces in the newly emerging Romance languages: e.g. Celtic **glasina* > Ladin *dlasena* “blueberry”, pre-Latin **kripp* > Ladin



cröp “rock”, **kiramo* > *cir* “Swiss stone pine”. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire (476 AD) – precursors of the later Rhaeto-Romance were at that time spoken throughout almost all the Alpine region, from eastern Switzerland to the northern Adriatic – the events of the so-called “*Völkerwanderung*” (Migration of Peoples) also contributed to the special linguistic character of Rhaeto-Romance, as the languages of the new (now entirely Germanic) rulers left their mark in the outlying areas that had not been Germanised, i.e. that remained Proto-Romance-speaking. With the advance of the Bajuvarians (Baiuvarii) over the Brenner Pass (600 AD), the Germanisation of the South Tyrolean region began (by 1200 some two thirds of South Tyrol were already German-speaking) and the Ladins were pushed back into more remote, peripheral Alpine valleys; nevertheless, old Rhaeto-Romance place names often remain in the Germanised areas in reference to their linguistic past, e.g. *Glurns* in the Vinschgau Valley (South Tyrol) or *Ischgl* in the Paznaun Valley (North Tyrol). The Migration of Peoples also saw the inevitable separation and linguistic decoupling of the three Rhaeto-Romance language areas, because Graubünden, in contrast to the Dolomite region, came under Alemannic influence (Alemannic *bräme* > Graubünden Romansh *bréma* “(horse) brake”), while Friuli was under Langobard influence (Langobard **farh(o)* “piglet” > Friulian *fark* “mole”). As far as Ladin is concerned, other external factors (see chap. History and identity, p. 42) have contributed to the fact that this language family, characterised by its conservatism and independent development, has evolved linguistically differently from the northern Italian dialects in the south, themselves increasingly influenced by Italian/Tuscan, not least due to the centuries of language contact with Germanic/German.

The Roman provinces after the conquest of the Alps to the Danube (7 BC)


LADINIA SCIENTIFICA



A Swiss Romansh
Rumantsch

C Friulian
Furlan

B Dolomite Ladin
Ladin dolomitich

 Transitional areas
outside of A, B and C



MORE RECENT EXTERNAL LANGUAGE HISTORY AND LANGUAGE POLICY

Following the annexation of South Tyrol – including the Ladin valleys – by Italy as agreed in the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1919), as well as the Italianisation measures that began once the Fascist regime came to power in 1922 (e.g. the 1923 Italianisation of place names), the region was divided into three political and administrative components, still in existence today: Ampezzo and Livinallongo became part of the province of Belluno (Veneto region), the Badia and Gardena valleys became part of the province of Bozen/Bolzano (South Tyrol), while the Fassa Valley remained part of the province of Trento (Trentino).

The Statute of Autonomy for the Trentino-South Tyrol region, adopted in 1948, only marginally took Ladin interests into account: Ladin became a subject and language of instruction for religion in primary and secondary schools, while Ladin place names could once again be used. In 1951 the Ladins of South Tyrol were legally recognised as a separate language group. It was not, however, until the second Statute of Autonomy in 1972 that improved provisions for their protection were introduced, such as the representation of Ladins in the South Tyrolean Provincial Assembly or the Trentino South Tyrol region, or the introduction of a separate Ladin school board. In 1976 the Trentino Ladins were also recognised as a separate language group. Since 1988 there have been regular TV programmes in Ladin and, in 1989, Ladin was established as the third official language of the province of Bolzano. This meant, among other things, the right to use the language in dealings with Ladin authorities within the province, e.g. when issuing public documents, as well as the right to have an interpreter present during court proceedings. In 1994 Ladin finally became the official language of the Fassa Valley. In 1995 a compulsory weekly Ladin lesson was introduced into secondary schools in the Badia and Gardena valleys, with the number of lessons increased to two in 2010.

WHERE IS LADIN SPOKEN TODAY?

The actual territory of the Dolomite Ladinia, understood here to be an area that grew historically upon the basis of its roughly 1,000-year affiliation to the diocese of Sabiona/Bressanone and its affiliation to the County of Tyrol, which persisted until the end of the First World War, covers around 1,200 km². The number of speakers is generally estimated at around 30,000: at the last census (2011) some 4.5% of South Tyroleans and 3.5% of Trentino residents declared themselves as belonging to the Ladin language group (the highest figure was in the Badia Valley at 97%).

From a geographical, historical and indeed linguistic point of view, the following idioms spoken in the valleys radiating out from the Sella



massif are generally considered as Ladin: 1. *Ladin* (*de mesaval*) and *Badiot* in the Badia Valley, 2. *Marèo* around Marebbe, 3. *Gherdëina* in the Gardena Valley, 4. *Fascian* in the Fassa Valley (with the subvarieties *Cazet*, *Brach* e *Moénat*), 5. *Fodòm* in Livinallongo and Colle Santa Lucia, 6. *Anpezàn* in Ampezzo (today strongly influenced by Italian; see map inside front cover). There are other areas on the edge of this linguistic landscape whose dialects, from a purely linguistic point of view, may be classified as more or less Ladin, but whose speaker communities do not generally feel that they belong to Dolomite Ladinia.

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF LADIN/RHAETO-ROMANCE

As throughout northern Italy, the Latin intervocalic (i.e. between vowels) closure sounds *p*, *t* and *k* are also sonorised (i.e. voiced) in Ladin/Rhaeto-Romance, while in Central and Southern Italy they remain voiceless sounds: the Latin *RÔTA* (“wheel”) in Ladin becomes *roda*, whereas in Italian it is *ruota*; the Latin *SECÛRU* (“safe”) in Ladin becomes *segur* and in Italian *sicuro*.

The following features, among other things, phonetically differentiate between northern Italian and Ladin/Rhaeto-Romance: *l* following a consonant is retained in Rhaeto-Romance, while in (northern) Italian it changes to the sound [i/j]: the Latin *FLÁMMA* (“flame”) in Ladin becomes *flama*, whereas in northern Italian it is *fiama* (Italian *fiamma*); *plénu* (“full”) in Ladin becomes *plen*, but in northern Italian *pïen* (Italian *pieno*).

Also the final Latin *-s*, i.e. at the end of the word, is predominantly retained, e.g. to indicate a plural: the Latin *RÔTAS* (“wheels”) in Ladin becomes *rodes*, in Italian *ruote*.

The Latin sounds [k] (written *c*) and [g] are palatalised before an *a*, i.e. articulation shifts to the hard palate: the Latin *CÁMPU* (“field”) in Ladin becomes *ciamp*, whereas in northern Italian *camp(o)*; the Latin *GÁLLU* (“cock”) in Ladin becomes *gial* and in northern Italian *gal*.

Several centuries of contact with the German-speaking world mean that the Rhaeto-Romance vocabulary is characterised by a high number of borrowings from Germanic or German, although the overall frequency decreases from the (northern) Dolomite Ladinia via Graubünden to Friuli. Sources include Old and Middle High German,

such as *giwant* > *quant* (“costume”), *saiffa* > *jafa* (“soap”), or *künden* > *incundé* (“to announce”). From Tyrolean, for example, come *kerša* (“cherry”) or *plecia* (“large leaf”), while from German come *krot* (“frog”), *paur* (“farmer”), or *tloštr* (“monastery”). Furthermore, several different Germanisms can occur in the three Rhaeto-Romance varieties to designate the same thing, such as a “cooking pot, pot”: Tyrolean *hafn* > Graubünden Romansh *afna*, Tyrolean *testn* > Graubünden Romansh *tešt*, Old High German *phanna* > Ladin *fana*, Tyrolean *secht* > Ladin *sechte* (in the special meaning of “laundry pot”). The two southern Ladin dialects in particular (i.e. those of the Fassa Valley and Livinallongo) are also characterised by so-called Italianisms (i.e. borrowings from their contact language, Italian): for example, for “deer” southern Ladin has *capriol* (from the Italian *capriolo*), but northern Ladin has *rehl* (from the Tyrolean *Reachl* or German *Reh/Rehle*in), for “monk” southern Ladin has *frate* (Italian *frate*), but northern Ladin has *kapuziner* (German *Kapuziner*) and for a “male, male animal” southern Ladin has *masćio* (Italian *maschio*) while northern Ladin has *mandl* (borrowed from the Tyrolean).

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT; THE SITUATION OF LADIN TODAY

While the oldest surviving Ladin text dates back to the 17th century, the first works attempting to order the language date back to the early 19th century (*Versuch einer Grammatik* (“Attempt at a Grammar”) by Josef David Insam in 1806; *Versuch einer Sprachlehre* (“Attempt at a Grammar”) by Nikolaus Bacher alias *Micurá de Rù* in 1833). The beginning of the 20th century saw efforts to standardise, i.e. unify, Ladin spelling: it was only through the cooperation of all five valleys that an official standard orthography was however adopted in 1987. In 1994, a language planning project, SPELL, began with the aim of developing a common written language, i.e. *Ladin Dolomitan*, which was to be used in selected fields (e.g. advertising, administration, place names, media, etc.). However, the grammar and a *Dizionar dl Ladin Standard* (“A Dictionary of Standard Ladin”) (2001–2003) produced in the course of this project have not as yet been officially recognised or introduced. Since 2006 the Free University of Bozen/Bolzano has also had its own Ladin department, whose role is the training of Ladin kindergarten and primary school teachers. The activities to expand Ladin (e.g. promoting its use in the press, mass media, schools, administration, church, literature, etc.), mainly supported by the activities of individual educational and cultural institutions (see p. 114), have recently manifested themselves especially clearly in the writing of grammars and dictionaries (= grammatography and lexicography). Thus, a large number of language textbooks, school grammars and bilingual dictionaries have been published in recent years. The latter usually concern the language

pairs of German or Italian and a particular valley idiom (Badia Valley, Gardena Valley, Fassa Valley, etc.). Most of the dictionaries are also available online or via the *Ladin* app on smartphones (see below). The Ladin cultural institutes have in addition been publishing scientific journals for over four decades now, such as *Ladinia*, the *Revista scientifica* of the Ladin cultural institute *Micurá de Rù* in San Martino in the Badia Valley. Another focus of research is the Dolomite Ladin language atlas ALD, which provides detailed information on the three Rhaeto-Romance dialect groups on the basis of almost 2,000 language maps and whose data are being analysed at the University of Salzburg in order to shed more light on the position of Rhaeto-Romance within the neighbouring Italo-Romance dialect areas (see <<https://www.uni-salzburg.at/index.php?id=30697>>).

For the Ladin valleys of the province of Bozen/Bolzano, it can be assumed that (especially among the younger and middle generations) a trilingualism consisting of Ladin-German-Italian exists nowadays. Ladin is firmly anchored as the popular language of the Badia Valley, while it competes in some places in the Gardena Valley with German and, in the Fassa Valley, with Italian. Self-assessment indicates that the people of the Badia Valley have the highest Ladin reading skills, while those of the Fassa Valley have the lowest. Ladins traditionally do particularly well in South Tyrol's bilingual and trilingual examinations, which is taken as indirect proof of their multiple linguistic skills. This is based not least on the "parity" school model, where German and Italian share the same status as languages of instruction, while Ladin – apart from its function as a school subject (for two hours a week) and as a language of instruction (especially for religion and music) – has also assumed a central role as a language of explanation and communication.

ONLINE DICTIONARIES

- Badia Valley Ladin-German; Gardena Valley Ladin-German and Gardena Valley Ladin-Italian: www.micura.it/it/dizionari
- Fassa Valley Ladin-Italian and Ladin Standard: www.ladintal.it/
- BLad Vocabulary Database of all Dolomite Ladin varieties: <http://blad.ladintal.it>
- Ladin correction system: <https://micura2020.pixxdb.net/la/sorvisc-online/coretur-ortografich>

LANGUAGE COURSES

The Ladin cultural institutes (see p. 114) and the *Volkshochschule*

Südtirol (adult education centre) regularly offer Ladin language courses. www.micura.it; www.istladin.net; www.istitutoladino.org; www.volkshochschule.it

LADIN LANGUAGE ATLAS

The original dialect data (sound recordings and phonetic transcriptions) of the 1,950 language maps can be accessed via the ALD website. The area explored, covering approximately 25,000 km² of northern Italy and south-eastern Switzerland, includes 21 Ladin localities. <https://www.ald.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/en/>