

Semi-Speakers and Data Reliability: The Case of the Cimbrian Variety of Foza

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1 Introduction¹

The municipality of Foza/Vüsche (approximately 600 inhabitants) is located in the Altopiano dei Sette Comuni (Vicenza), a highland area historically inhabited by people of German origin who, in addition to a number of specific traditions, used an ancient variety of German called ‘Cimbrian’.² Unlike other marginal areas of the plateau, where the language was replaced by the Venetian code during the 17th and 18th centuries, Cimbrian was spoken in Foza until recent times. Still highly diffused in mid-19th century, when during his trip to the Sette Comuni, J.A. Schmeller ([1838] 2020: 39) reported Dal Pozzo’s opinion that the inhabitants of Foza preserve and speak their own language better than others, the variety underwent a rapid process of linguistic obsolescence. Approximately a century later, Bruno Schweizer, the greatest scholar of Cimbrian,³ visited the village three times (1936, 1941, 1942), finding just a couple

1 Thanks to the anonymous reviewers for their comments and advices, which have been taken into account.

2 As first emphasised by Dal Pozzo (1820) and confirmed on linguistic and philological grounds by Schmeller (1838 [2020]), the hypotheses of Vicenza and Verona’s erudites, who saw a connection with the ancient people of the Cimbri, Goths or Huns are without foundation. In any case the ethnonym ‘Cimbrian’ used by these scholars was adopted by the speakers themselves, although in the various areas the language is also defined as *taich* or *slambrot*.

3 Whose scientific merits cannot be disjointed from the shadows. From 1937 onwards he worked permanently for the *ss-Ahnenerbe*, founded in 1935 by Heinrich Himmler, Richard Darré and Hermann Wirth. The Ahnenerbe was entrusted with the task of scientifically documenting the German and Ladin culture of the Province of Bolzano-Bozen before the later transfer of the mentioned populations to Germany following the option agreements of 21 October 1939 between Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Together with Matthias Insam, Bruno Schweizer was entrusted with the area of linguistic and dialect research, especially for his expertise in linguistic geography (cf. Dow 2018). However, despite being busy with the documentary work of the *Südtiroler Kulturkommission*, Schweizer undertook several research expeditions to the Cimbrian territories. For an overview of Schweizer’s figure and studies, see Dow (2005, 2018).

of speakers and recording the last traces of this language in Foza. Through these unpublished notes⁴—with only partial inclusion in the *Zimbrische Gesamtgrammatik* (Schweizer [1951–1952] 2008 = [ZGG]) and in the *Zimbrisches und Fersentalisches Sprachatlas* (Schweizer [1951–1952] 2012 = [ZFS])—a glossary of the Cimbrian of Foza was recently published (cf. Zuin & Bidese 2022b). The aim of this contribution is to highlight the problems which lie beneath the data analysis of this dialect, which represents a ‘Restsprache’ of a linguistic diasystem that finds in the far more attested varieties of Roana and Rotzo two ‘Kleincorpusprache’⁵ and in that of Luserna/Lusérn a ‘definitely endangered’ variety (cf. UNESCO).⁶ As will be demonstrated these problems are connected, on the one hand to the dialectal fragmentation of the Cimbrian diasystem and on the other to the linguistic competence of the informants.

The paper is structured in two main parts. In the first, the Cimbrian diasystem will be described, showing its common peculiarities with respect to German and Bavarian (§ 2), the progressive obsolescence over time (§ 2.1) and the dialectal fragmentation (§ 2.2). In the second part, the variety of Foza will be analysed. Firstly, the scarce testimonies collected before Schweizer’s investigation, as well as the methods of his research and the sociolinguistic situation in mid-20th century will be described (§§ 3, 3.1). Secondly, the similarities and divergences on all linguistic levels between the Foza variety and the others will be analysed (§ 3.2), and in the last part (§§ 3.3) it will be shown how the modality of Schweizer’s research and the linguistic competence of the last speakers affect, in some cases, the reliability of the linguistic data.

2 The Cimbrian Diasystem

Historically Cimbrian was spoken in the mountainous areas between today’s Veneto Region and the Autonomous Province of Trento. This area could be described as falling within a triangle with the cities of Verona, Trento and Bassano del Grappa as vertices (cf. Bidese 2004, 2021). Although the precise origin of the German ethnicity and the resulting period of migration is unclear,⁷ the

4 Stored in the Schweizer Fund (*Forschungszentrum Deutscher Sprachatlas*, Marburg an der Lahn).

5 For the definition of the concept see Untermann (1989: 15–20).

6 According to a recent survey (see CLaM 2021), 64.4% and 81% of the approximately 350 residents are able to speak and understand the language.

7 The first hypothesis put forward was that of the “German wedge” (Schmeller [1838] 2020: 175), which assumes that around the 10th century, the German language coexisted alongside the



MAP 13.1 The Cimbrian linguistic area

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.VANILLAMAGAZINE.IT/IL-POPOLO-DIMENTICATO-DEI-CIMBRI-LA-STORIA-DEGLI-ULTIMI-BARBARI-D-ITALIA/](https://www.vanillamagazine.it/il-popolo-dimenticato-dei-cimbri-la-storia-degli-ultimi-barbari-d-italia/) (LAST ACCESSED ON 30 JUNE 2023).

language shares many characteristics with the Old Bavarian of the 11th–12th centuries,⁸ together with phenomena that depend on the profound linguistic contact with Romance varieties. Nevertheless, the presence of some features typical of the Neuhochdeutsch stage prove that the migration in the area lasted at least until the 15th century (cf. Kranzmayer [1923] 1985: 14; Zuin 2020: 15–38).

Among the specific peculiarities of Cimbrian, as far as the phonetic level is concerned, MHG /e:/ and /o:/ developed into [ea] and [oa] as well as in

Romance one in the Po Valley, with the Romance one being firmly established in the cities and the German one present primarily in rural areas. Only later “l’elemento romanico a Sud di Salorno travolse completamente quello tedesco, fino ad assorbirlo. La neve della lingua nordica si sciolse nelle valli miti, affollate e densamente abitate. Solamente sulle alture inospitali e di difficile accesso il tedesco sopravvisse” [‘the Romance element south of Salorno completely overwhelmed the German element, to the point of absorbing it. The snow of the Nordic language melted away in the mild, crowded and densely populated valleys. Only on the inhospitable and difficult-to-access heights did German survive’]. Differently, E. Kranzmayer ([1923] 1985: 8–15), based on phonetic developments and terminological analyses believed that the Cimbrian peopling was the result of the migration of settlers from Oberloisach and Ötztal around 1150. Finally in an article of 1948, B. Schweizer (1948: 111–129), underlining how Cimbrian shows some features which can’t be traced back to the OHG, argues that the Cimbrian settlements are nothing more than the continuation of the Arimannic settlements placed to guard the borders of the Duchy of Verona, Vicenza and Trento, although he acknowledges a later bavarianisation of the language.

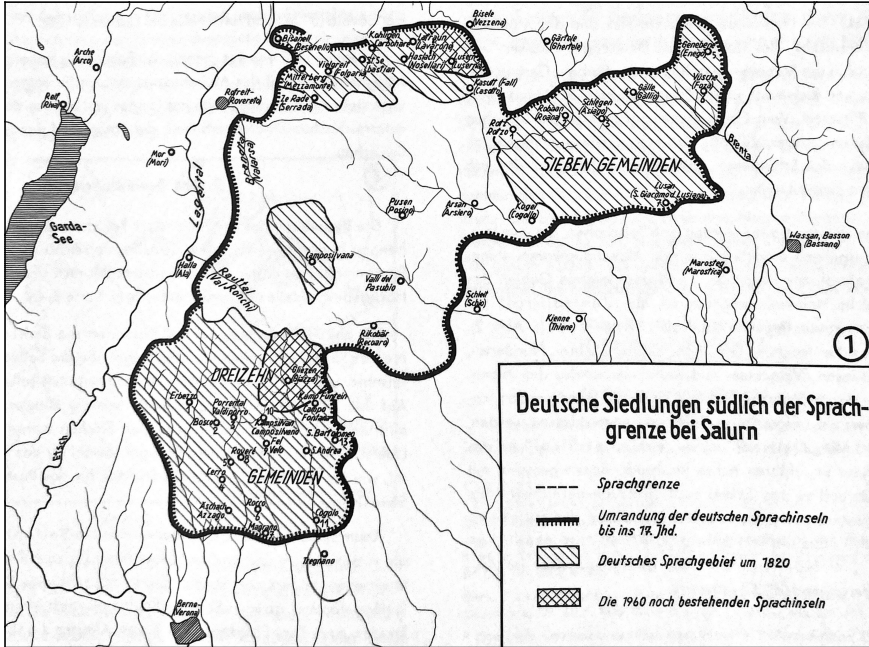
⁸ For a deeper examination of the Old Bavarian characteristics of Cimbrian see Kranzmayer ([1923] 1985: 7 ff.). For Cimbrian characteristics that can’t be traced back to OHG or MHG see Hornung (1987).

a large part of the Bavarian area (cf. Kranzmayer 1956: 45 ff., K. 10; 44 ff., K. 9). Nevertheless, the realisation of the MHG /a/ as [a] is significant, since the pronunciation of [o] is attested in MHG from the 12th century onwards (cf. Kranzmayer 1956: 74).⁹ In the consonant system the pronunciation as [p] of the MHG /b/ is typical of Bavarian varieties, whereas the maintenance of [v] (< MHG /v/) instead of NHG. [f] and the preservation of the phonetic opposition between /s/ < Germ. *s and /z/ < Germ. *t are typical features of MHG. An influence due to contact with Romance languages can instead be found in the development as [b] of the MHG /w/, shared by all Germanic varieties in Italy (cf. Kranzmayer 1956: 74).¹⁰ In the morphological system the superlative form obtained through the juxtaposition of the morpheme [-ste] and the comparative morpheme [-or], [-ur], [-er] (e.g. *jüngerste*, *jungurste jüngerste* 'youngest'; cf. [ZGG]: 399) is characteristic of Cimbrian, whereas the preservation of a Conditional mood, morphologically distinct from the Subjunctive, and the use of the gerund analogous to that of Romance varieties is the result of linguistic influence. This dynamic between the preservation of ancient Bavarian features and contact induced development is far more evident in the lexicon. In fact, besides Bavarian homonyms, toponyms and heritage words such as *ködn* 'to say' (cf. got. *quīpan*) < OHG *quēdan*, bav. *choden* (late 11th–12th century), *taidn* 'to suck mother's milk' < OHG *tāen* 'to suck' (Germ. **dējan*), *öbe* 'sheep' < OHG *ou* (Germ. **ewi*) 'mother sheep', *ertakx* 'Tuesday' < OBay *eritag*, *fōat* 'shirt' < MHG *pfeit* (cf. Kranzmayer [1923] 1985: 9–10), many ancient Romance borrowings can be found.¹¹ As can be seen in words such as *bodàil* 'shovel' (It. *badile* < Lat. **patillum* < Lat. *patulum*), *sürch* 'corn' (< Lat. *surgum*, *surcum*) 'grain from Syria' or *glair* 'dormouse' (< Lat. *glīs*, *-ris*) with the preservation of the Lat. GL- cluster, the antiquity of the language contact is highlighted.

9 Only in the varieties of Folgaria (Fol.), San Sebastiano (S.Seb.) and Carbonare (Carb.) did the influence of modern Bavarian lead to widespread realisation as [o] (cf. [ZGG]: 18–20; cf. also [NS]).

10 In his opinion the development /w/ > [b] is the result of the romance influence that, after having rendered the MHG phoneme /w/ as [b], would then have led to the diffusion of this realisation also among the German varieties in Italian territory.

11 The question of Romance borrowings in Cimbrian is particularly interesting because it permits the identification of different stratifications that correspond to influences exerted with differing intensity on the area by different Romance varieties. The work of Gamillscheg (1912), only taking into consideration the borrowings in the Luserna variety, identifies in Ladin the most archaic influences, followed by Lombard, Veneto and finally Italian.



MAP 13.2 The Cimbrian linguistic domain
KLEIN, SCHMITT & KÜHEBACHER 1965: MAP 2.

2.1 *Obsolescence of Cimbrian*

The Cimbrian linguistic domain has progressively dwindled, as can be observed in Map 13.2, where the linguistic vitality in the 18th century was marked in white within the border, that of 1820 with single hatching, when the language was still spoken only in the Altipiano dei Sette Comuni (Vicenza) on the right, in that of Lessinia (Verona) on the left, and in the area roughly corresponding to today's Magnifica Comunità degli Altipiani Cimbri (Trento). Over the last two centuries, the pressure of Romance languages has led, after a situation of diglossia, to the progressive decay of Cimbrian, which nowadays survives widely just in Luserna/Lusérn (TN), marked with double hatching, whereas in Roana (VI) and Giazza (VR) the semi-speakers barely reach ten in number.

While in the white area within the border Cimbrian is only attested by onomastic and toponymical data, the documentation of the language in the Sette Comuni (7C.) had already begun in 1602 with the Cimbrian Catechism *Christlike unt korze dottrina*, written in the variety of Asiago and based on contemporary Italian and German models (cf. Meid 1985). From this time onwards, a flourishing amount of both religious and profane literature developed, reaching its peak in the 18th and 19th centuries and then gradually decreasing together with the language. At the same time glossaries, dictionaries and grammars recor-

ded dialects belonging to different localities of the 7C. Dalla Costa first wrote a glossary (1763) of the variety of Asiago (cf. Stefan 1998: 179–197),¹² whereas that documented by Bartolomei ([ca. 1760] 1910–1912) under the label ‘Septempagensis’ is not clear.¹³ There are also works on the two western municipalities of Rotzo and Roana (Slaviero 1760, Dal Pozzo 1820, Schmeller 1855), while in the mid-20th century Schweizer recorded the variety of Foza, but also those of the hamlets of Campoverve (Roana) and Bosco (Asiago). Instead, no clear documentation is available for the dialects of the southernmost and easternmost part of the 7C., corresponding to the territory of Lusiana and Enego, where according to Pezzo (1763: vi–vii) the language had almost disappeared by the middle of the 18th century.

Even more limited are samples of the varieties from Lessinia’s Tredici Comuni (13 C.), where in the mid-18th century Pezzo (1763: vi–vii) already lamented how, because of the intense economic relations with the Romance plain and extensive exogamy, the language only survived in the most remote municipalities of Selva di Progno and Campofontana. From the former most of the texts collected by Rapelli (1983), the glossary of Pezzo (1763)¹⁴ and that of Cipolla-Cipolla (1883), while the linguistic samples collected in mid-20th century by Schweizer and published in the [ZGG], in [Cp] (2009) and in Bidese (2011) are in the dialect of Giazza (Selva di Progno).

Scarcer still are the ancient testimonies from the north-western area between 7C. and 13C. A recently edited text from 1810 testifies that at this time Cimbrian was still spoken in Lavarone, Luserna and Valdastico (cf. Zuin & Bidese 2022a: 117–152). Moreover Sulzer (1855: 250–251) registered a text in Folgaria in the mid-19th century and Schmeller (1855: 13) interviewed the two last speakers of Terragnolo—a variety which is, however, only known thanks to a short text by Beltrami ([1820] 1883). One century later during the research of Schweizer, with the exception Luserna,¹⁵ some semi-speakers could be found just in S.Seb. and Carb. (Folgaria).

12 For an annotated history of Cimbrian literature, see Matzel (1982: 81–102), Bidese (2010: 61–85), and for a collection of the different compositions see Schmeller ([1838] 2020: 69–129), Heller (1988).

13 According to Schweizer ([ZGG]: 68), it should be the dialect of the municipalities of Enego, Gallio or Lusiana.

14 Two hitherto unpublished texts of the variety of San Bortolo delle Montagne and Velo Veronese are preserved in the *Bibliothèque Municipale de Rouen*, Manuscripts, Fond Montbret ff. 525–526, 527–528 (cf. Ködel 2010: 20).

15 The language of which is firstly attested by [Z] Zingerle (1869), [L] Leck (1884) and [B] Bacher (1900, 1901, 1905).

2.2 *Cimbrian Dialectal Differentiation*

To these three Cimbrian areas correspond just as many macro-dialectal language systems, namely Settecomunigiano (7C.), Tredicomunigiano (13C.) and Nordoccidentale,¹⁶ which as well as sharing many common features also show numerous phonological, morphological and lexical differences, as emerges both from an examination of the [ZGG] and a comparison of coeval vocabularies, e.g. [Schm] for the 7 C., [CC] for the 13 C. and [Z] for Luserna.

From the phonetic point of view for example the 7C. generally preserves the final atonic vowels of OHG (e.g. *sunna* 'sun', *garto* 'garden', *èerda* 'earth', *namo* 'name'), whereas the 13C. generalized them into [e] as in MHG (e.g. *sunde*, *garte*, *earde*, *name*) and in Lus. the Bavarian vocalic fall is witnessed, e.g. *sunn*, *gart*, *nâm* (but *earde*); in all the varieties the OHG /i:/ and /e:/ normally underwent the diphthongation in [ai] and [ea], although in the 7C. the monophthong sometimes appears (cf. [ZGG]: 53 ff.; 73 ff.),¹⁷ e.g. *mîn* 'my', *kêhran* 'turn' (vs. Lus. *main*, *khearn*, 13 C. *main*, *mear* 'more'). In consonantism the MHG /v/ is preserved in the 7 C., whereas in the 13 C. and north-western Cimbrian it coexists besides the allomorph NHG [f] e.g. 13 C. *finden* 'finden', *fisch* 'fish', *vater* 'father', Lus. *feler* 'mistake', *vennen* 'finden'.¹⁸

Morphologically the comparative suffix emerges as [-or] in the 7C., as [-ur] in the 13 C. and as [-er] or [-ar] in the north-western varieties (cf. [ZGG]: 395–396), and the gerund is created through the morpheme [-enten] in 7C., [-inje] in 13C., [-ante] and [-ane] in north-western Cimbrian ([ZGG]: 433). For the construction of the future, if the north-western varieties show a periphrasis with the auxiliary *werden* and the Inf. as in German (e.g. Lus. *i bart kemman* 'I will come'), the others use the present tense or a series of periphrases with the verb 'to come' or 'to go' (cf. [ZGG]: 838–842).

In the lexicon the three dialectal areas show the dynamic between preservation of the heritage form and innovation. Sometimes through a new creation as in 7 C. *ring* 'ring' (< MHG *ring*) opposed to the denominative of the 13 C. *gefingert* and Lus. *gavingar* from MHG *vinger* 'finger'; other times through a loanword, e.g. [R] 7 C. *balîn*, 13C. *balîn* (< Ven. *balin*) vs. Lus. *kugele* (< MHG

16 The varieties of Lavarone and Folgaria were in the past indicated with the glottonym *slambrot*. For the etymology of this term, see Mastrelli (1984) and Geyer (2012).

17 It is not clear whether these forms are the result of conservation or innovation. Schweizer ([ZGG]: 74) points out "Diphthongierungen nur vor R zu finden [sind] und auch da handelt es sich [...] mehr um offene ê mit einem Übergangslaut zum r, um 'unechte' Diphthonge wie Schmeller das nannte".

18 The persistence of both allomorphs is only recorded in Lus. by [Z] (1869). About thirty years later [v] seems to have been generalised (cf. [B] 1905).

TABLE 13.1 Differences among the three macro-dialectal language systems

	7C.	13C.	Lus.
final atonic vowel	preserved: <i>sunna, garto, èerda, namo</i>	generalized [e]: <i>sunde, garte, earde, name</i>	dropped: <i>sun, gart, earde, nãm</i>
OHG /i:/, /e:/	[i]/[ai]: <i>mîn</i> [e]/[ea]: <i>kêhran</i>	[ai]: <i>main</i> [ea]: <i>mear</i>	[ai]: <i>main</i> [ea]: <i>khearn</i>
MHG /v/	[v]: <i>vindan, velar, vennan</i>	[f]/[v]: <i>finden, fisch, vater</i>	[f]/[v]: <i>feler, vennen</i>
comparative suffix	[or]: <i>jüingor</i>	[ur]: <i>jungur</i>	[ar]: <i>djüingar</i>
gerund	[-enten]: <i>totenten</i>	[-inje]: <i>buaninje</i>	[-ane]: <i>slavane</i> [-ante]: <i>slavante</i>
future	Aux: <i>kemen, gear</i>	Aux: <i>kemen, gear</i>	<i>i bart kemman</i>
MHG <i>ring</i>	<i>ring</i>	<i>gefingert</i>	<i>gavingar</i>
MHG <i>kugele</i>	<i>ballin</i>	<i>balin</i>	<i>kugele</i>
MHG <i>kella</i>	<i>katzööla</i>	<i>katzóul</i>	<i>khel</i>

kugele '(hunting) bullet'; 7C. *katzööla*, 13C. *katzóul* (< It. *cazzuola*) vs. Lus. *khel* (< MHG *kella*) 'trowel'.

The dialectal differentiation is however not limited merely to the three macro-groups, but also appears between varieties of the same group. As far as 7C. is concerned, if one considers the data collected by Schweizer in the [ZGG] and [ZFS], it emerges how a series of isoglosses contribute to differentiating the varieties from each other. Among these, two main bundles in particular can be identified, which correspond to as many natural obstacles. The Val d'Assa (Assa Valley) cuts across the plateau and isolates the western varieties of Roana Mezzaselva, Rotzo and Castelletto, from the central ones of Asiago, Bosco and Camporovere. The Val Frenzela (Frenzela Valley) on the other hand, separates the central varieties from the eastern one of Foza, both geographically and linguistically. Thus the OHG /u:/ before /r/ developed as [ua] in Ro. und Rtz., as [o:] in C.Rov., as [u:o] in Bos. and as [u:] in Fo. (e.g. *snuar, snor, snûr, snur* 'rope', cf. ZGG: 60). Then although the OHG /tz/ is rendered in the varieties as [tz], [z], [s], [ʃ] there is no correspondence in the same lemma, e.g. Ro., C.Rov. *tsait* vs. Fo. *tsait, zait, sait, dsait* 'time'; Ro. *tzo* vs. C.Rov. *zu, zo* vs. Fo. *tsu, tzo, zo, du, se* (cf. [ZGG]: 248). Differences are noticeable in the morphology too. Thus the 1st singular nominative pronoun OHG *ih* appears as Rtz. Ro. *ix, ig*, C.Rov. *i, ige*, As. *ich* ([ZGG]: 402). And on the lexical level as well, where e.g. the term for 'mutton' is *bello* in Ro., *Frisching* in C.Rov. and *wot6o* in Bos.; and 'yeast' appears as *gêrm* in the western part, *desemo* in Bos. ([ZFS]: 433, 437).

There are many reasons behind this differentiation. One of these can be identified in the different contacts the different localities maintained with the Romance area from a political, social, economic and linguistic point of view.

TABLE 13.2 Differences within varieties of the same macro-dialectal language systems

	Ro., Rtz.	C.Rov.	As.	Bos.	Fo.
OHG /u:/ before /r/ /tz/ in OHG <i>zait</i>	[ua]: <i>snuar</i>	[o:]: <i>snor</i>		[u:o]: <i>snûr</i>	[u:] <i>snur</i>
pronoun 1st singular	<i>ix, ig</i>	<i>i, ige</i>		<i>ich</i>	<i>tsait, zait, sait, dsait</i>
term for Eng. 'mutton'	<i>bello</i>	<i>Frisching</i>		<i>wot6o</i>	
term for Eng. 'yeats'	<i>gêrm</i>			<i>desemo</i>	

Historically the 7C. and 13C. were submitted first to the Scaligeri and then to the Republic of Venice and were linked both religiously and commercially to Vicenza and Verona.¹⁹ On the contrary the north-western area has historically been in contact with the Tyrolean and German worlds and was subjected first to the duchy of Tyrol and the diocese of Brixen, then to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the diocese of Trento.²⁰ Another factor of differentiation can be identified in the different migratory flows from Germany that at different times and with different intensity affected each area in the three domains, leading diachronically and diatopically differentiated varieties of German to overlap with the older substratum. As has been shown elsewhere (cf. Zuin 2020: 15–38), this clearly emerges from the analysis of toponymy, where in the 7C. forms with [v] and [f] (MHG /v/) coexist, e.g. MHG *puvil* 'hill', Rotzo: *Puvel, Puvel del Rust* (Slaviero 2014); Lusiana: *puffe, pufele* (Rizzolo 2018).

3 Schweizer Research in Foza

A century before Schweizer's investigations some peculiarities of the Cimbrian dialect of Foza had already been highlighted by Schmeller. Although he did not

19 As Schweizer points out ([ZGG]: 5–9; 2012: 60–61) the parishes of the 13C. were founded as matrices of the mother church of Selva di Progno, in the 7C. those of Rotzo, Roana and Asiago historically depended on the parish of Caltrano, those of San Giacomo di Lusiana, Santa Caterina and Conco on that of Marostica, while those of Foza and Enego depended on the monastery Santa Croce di Campese and Arsìe respectively.

20 This is confirmed by an analysis of the place names recorded in the various dictionaries. If in the variety of Luserna there are numerous Cimbrian forms for Romance villages of Trentino (i.e. [B] *plaiif* 'Calceranica', *ten* 'Tenna', *Zilf* 'Selva di Valsugana') and fewer from the Veneto foothills, a different situation is recorded in the 7C. and 13C. (cf. [Schm] 1855, [CC] 1883).

visit the village during his two trips (1834, 1844) to the Cimbrian highlands, the father of German dialectology had in any case pointed out some features of this variety. For example, in the account of his first trip he reported the opinion of the inhabitants of Asiago, according to which in Foza the speakers said *glaz* 'glass', *rozz* 'horse' and *ezel* 'donkey' as opposed to *glas*, *ross* and *esel* of the other varieties (Schmeller [1838] 2020: 141 n. 71). Some of the linguistic information concerning Foza which appears in his work of 1838 were sent to him by the archpriest of Rotzo Cristiano Bonomo on 7 July 1834. The clergyman letter is preserved among the unreleased documents of the folder 'Schmelleriana XII 35' (*Schmeller Fund, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek*—BSB, Munich) and has been recently published by kind permission (cf. Zuin & Bidese 2022b: 175).²¹ Bonomo, who did not know German, wrote to Schmeller in Italian and in the variety of Rotzo, quoting some twenty forms in that of Foza, which were reported to him by the countryman Cristiano Cappellari. In addition to these, other forms were collected during Schmeller's journey in 1844, when the scholar had the chance to interview Casparo Cappellari, a forester of the village of Asiago (cf. Schmeller [1801–1852] 1996: 82–83). In any case, very little linguistic data has been included in the dictionary (Schmeller 1855), without generally indicating that they are peculiar of Foza.²²

Even because of the relatively few forms collected by Schmeller—around 15 explicitly reported as being from Foza in the dictionary—Schweizer's work on the scientific description of this variety was fundamental. The main result of his three investigations (1936, 1941, 1942)—accompanied by a collaborator, G. Albert, who could speak Italian—was the recording of c. 2000 lemmas and linguistic memories of the last two speakers, Giovanna Martini and her brother, who were both 80 years old ([ZGG]: 5) at that time.

Schweizer's notes are in two folders.²³ The first (Version 1—V1) of about 80 pages contains a series of disorganized and scattered observations about lin-

21 The heading of the document is "*Nomi proprj dei paesi dei Sette Comuni originari—Régcte Nāmen vūn Siben ersten Camāūn*". My heartfelt thanks go to the Bavarian State Library in Munich (scanning centre) for carrying out the digitisation of the unpublished material held in the Schmeller collection. Thanks are also due to Jakob Oßner and Oliver Baumann ('Cimbern-Kuratorium Bayern u. V.') for providing the digitisations.

22 Thus for *schallen* (cf. Schmeller 1855: 165) is given as meaning both 'to waffle' and 'to speak', without specifying that the second is attested just in Foza. Only for *sprechen* (cf. Schmeller 1855: 173) there is a note, where it's said "ich hörte von einem Fozaner *schallen* (gleichsam gallen), z.B. *das dirnle schallet van saindar mueter* 'das Dirnchen spricht von seiner Mutter'; *biar schallen belos*, 'wir reden welsch'".

23 Stored in the Schweizer Fund (*Forschungszentrum Deutscher Sprachatlas*, Philipps-Universität Marburg).

guistic features, personal impressions, socio-linguistic and social peculiarities on the situation in the village. The Cimbrian lemmas are regularly written in the Latin alphabet according to current orthographic standards, whereas the numerous annotations in German are in 'Sütterlin', i.e. that particular style of cursive used until the first half of the last century. The second folder (Version 2—V₂) is the result of the reorganisation of V₁'s materials and offers a first draft of glossaries with the German word and its Cimbrian equivalent. Everything is written in block letters, although with a particular spelling—different from that of V₁ and [ZGG]. This spelling is used for Cimbrian to represent, as faithfully as possible, the various phonic nuances of the language, partly taking up the linguistic notation customs of the time but also supplementing them with new symbols.

3.1 *The Informant's Linguistic Competence*

Interesting information on the language competence of the informants, in particular Giovanna Martini, emerges from V₁. After having extensively described the difficulty of finding someone in Foza who was still able to speak the language²⁴ and the informant's initial reluctance to respond to some of the requests, Schweizer notes how:

Die Martini weiss viele Dinge selbst nicht mehr, an andere erinnert sie sich oft nur mühsam, denn sie spricht das Zimbrische ja schon seit Jahren nur mehr selten. Sie wohnt ja auch nicht bei ihren Brüdern. Dadurch ist es leicht zu erklären, dass die Fleriousformen des Zeitwortes nicht mehr so erhalten sind wie etwa in Giazza (dreizehn Gemeinden) [...] ich könnte mir aber nicht gut vorstellen, dass sich die Geschwister Martini einen ganzen Tag ausschließlich des Zimbrischen bedienen würden: Sie würden sich oft nicht verstehen u. dann selbstverständlich zu dem sehr ausdrucksfähigen u. ihnen geläufigen venezianischen Dialekt greifen.²⁵

24 Schweizer emphasised how many elderly people only remembered a few common words in Cimbrian or German, since they had often moved to Germany as seasonal workers. At the same time, he underlined how, among a not inconsiderable number of the inhabitants, the memory of the linguistic diversity that once characterised Foza in relation to the Veneto plain had also disappeared.

25 'Martini herself does not remember many things, and often only remembers others with difficulty, because for years she only rarely spoke Cimbrian. Moreover, she does not live with her brothers. This explains why the florid forms of the time are no longer preserved as they were in Giazza (thirteen communes), [...] I cannot imagine that the Martini siblings used Cimbrian exclusively for a whole day: they often did not understand each other and, therefore, naturally resorted to the very expressive and familiar Veneto dialect' (my translation).

Although the author points out how, through his insistence in demanding answers, the Cimbrian was gradually awakening in the consciousness of the informant, it is however clear that rather than knowing Cimbrian, Giovanna Martini and her brother simply remembered it. That was confirmed by the quote Schweizer reported in the Grammar ([ZGG]: 491): “in Foza war fast jedes vierte Wort der letzten Zimbrin J. Martini: “tüet, tüatz”, womit sie sagen wollte, es sei nun genug, sie wisse nichts weiteres mehr” [‘In Foza, almost every fourth word of the last Cimbrian speaker, G. Martini, was *‘tüet, tüatz’*, by which she meant, that was enough, she knew nothing more’].

Possessing an incomplete linguistic competence G. Marini must therefore be considered a ‘semi-speaker’ according to the terminology proposed by Dorian (1977: 24). However, in the light of the metalinguistic clarification of the concept proposed by Grinevald Craig, who points out that the category can include speakers with different linguistic abilities (1998: 259), the linguistic competence of the informant is similar to that of ‘rememberers’, i.e. “speakers who may have been, at an early stage in life, native fluent speakers, or who may simply have learned only some elements of the language a long time ago, and who, in either case, have lost much of their earlier linguistic ability” (Grinevald Craig 1998: 259–260). As will be shown later, this condition will also affect the reliability of the linguistic data provided.

3.2 *The Cimbrian of Foza: Features in Common with Other Varieties*

In the data collected by Schweizer many similarities can be found between the variety of Foza and the others attested in the 7C.²⁶ The characteristics that we had considered before as being typical of this dialectal area are all present, including the regular maintenance of the final atonic vowels (e.g. Fo. *laita*, *düna*, *mano*), the coexistence alongside diphthongated forms in [ea] of variants with monotone [e:] (e.g. Fo. *érda*, *earda*; 2nd singular Present *6swerçt*²⁷ vs. Lus. *sbearst* ‘you swear’) and the preservation of the labiovelar MHG /v/ (e.g. *bendan* ‘find’ with *b-* < *v-, vro6 ‘frog’, *vaŋen* ‘take’). As far as the morphological level is concerned, the conjunction Fo. *wa*, *ba* ‘where’ (< MHG *wā*, *wō*) is typical of the 7C. (cf. [Pan], [Schm], [Vesc] *ba*), whereas 13C. and Lus. show a form

26 A precise examination of the numerous concordances is not possible here and would result in a somewhat repetitive task, since many data are already presented in the [ZGG] and [ZFS].

27 The spelling of Cimbrian makes use of the writing habits of 19th/early 20th century German dialectology. Specifically, <6> stands for [ʃ], <ç> for [z], while <x> as well <x̄>, which was created ad hoc, stand for [x] (although the possible phonetic difference between the two is not clear).

bo; the Participle prefix appears in the 7C. and Fo. as [ga-] (e.g. *gaxöt* 'said', *gaşlafat* 'slept', *gabeşť* 'been'), while [ge-] is attested in 13C. and generalized in the north-western varieties (cf. [ZGG]: 167–168); the plural of the diminutive is [-len] in 7C. and in Fo. (e.g. *xörten* 'grains'), while in the rest of the domain [-ler] dominates, with the sole exception of part of the western area that shows [-la] (cf. [ZGG]: 544–551, [ZFS]: 354–355). Finally, a number of specific terms of Foza appears in the 7C. but not in the other groups. Thus Fo. *kxöila* 'nail' deverbal of MHG *krallen* 'to scratch' is formally analogous to 7C. [R] *khřöila* 'nail', and different from 13C. *nâgl* and Lus. *négal* (cf. De. *Nagel*).

The Foza variety then shares some features which find correspondents only in other external varieties and particularly in those of the north-western area. Thus the diphthong MHG /uo/ (e.g. *bruoder* 'brother', *vuoz* 'foot'), which is preserved in 13C. [wo] (cf. [CC.] *pruodar*, *fuoz/vuoz*), transformed in [u:] in the 7C. (cf. [CC.] *pruudar*, *vuuz*) and rendered as [ua] in Lus. (cf. [Zb] *pruadar*, *vuaz*), appears in Fo. as [wi], i.e. *pbrüider*, *wüi*. This development finds correspondence only in the varieties of S.SeB./Carb. (cf. [NS] *pruidar*, *wuif*; cf. also [ZFS]: 172–173). Similarities with the north-western dialects can also be found in the comparative suffix Fo. [-ar] (cf. Fo. *voafarr* 'fatter', Lus. *voazar*, S.SeB./Carb. *kloandar* 'smaller') vs. 7C. [-or] and 13C. [-ur] (cf. [ZGG]: 198), or in the nominative masculine singular Article and agentive morphemes Fo. [der] 'the' and [-er], S.SeB./Carb. [NS] [der], [-er] (vs. Lus., 7C., 13C. [dar] and [-ar]) which are probably the result of influences from modern German.²⁸ On the other hand, there are no clear connections outside 7C. from a lexical point of view. The syntagmatic calque Fo. *tsüniş6te* (Lus. [R] *tznicht*, 13C. [R] *tznichte*), labelled on the Italian *da niente*, or the secondary meaning 'weak' acquired by Fo. *kranjk* and 13C. *krank* are probably due to independent innovations.

3.3 *The Cimbrian of Foza: Specific Features and the Problem of Data Reliability*

In any case the data elicited by the informants show a series of linguistic features too, which are not attested in other varieties. These could represent dialectal peculiarities of the dialect of Foza, although the assessment of their authenticity is not always straightforward for many reasons.

Firstly, the informants are siblings. Their acquisition of Cimbrian, together with the Veneto language, took place at an early age and from the same input. For a long time they used Cimbrian only in conversation between them and

28 According to Schweizer (ZGG: 436, *passim*), many similarities between S.SeB./Carb. and modern German depend on the influence that the German school exerted in the past. However, the same cannot be claimed for Foza where no German school was ever active.

with a third brother, who was not recorded by Schweizer because, as recognised also by the other family members, his long stay in Germany had led his idiolect to be influenced by modern German dialects. Therefore, it would be naive to believe that in the interaction between them some German influences originally belonging to the idiolect of the third brother had not spread to the varieties of the others. As consequence some elicited data could not belong to Foza variety at a level of 'langue', but merely pertain to the familiar idiolect.

On the other hand, it should be emphasised that the informants, as 'rememberers', had not used the language for a long time. Their scanty competence is proved by the few speech samples provided, which show strong phenomena of 'attrition', i.e. erosion or loss of linguistic structures at the level of the bilingual speaker.²⁹ The linguistic impoverishment, already noted in V₁, led Schweizer to wonder whether the siblings could communicate each other exclusively in Cimbrian. In addition to Schweizer's statements their semi-speakerness clearly emerges in the following passage, where phenomena such as the paratactic syntax, the lack of the auxiliary (e.g. *in treno saiŋ gabešt ogni stazióŋ gahabat ótaše* 'by train have been, each station had something'), the distorted syntax of the clitics³⁰ and the numerous non-integrated borrowings confirms that the informants were 'rememberers':³¹

Brandre alje dain gaŋet ka mačán un da dai gačtanjat an djār. un dopo is xemet der xojer ha xót kxe miar müačan gian dahí. alje alje gaŋet dahí. i han xót kxe ma ne gian i han s haje sovil kxloan, juŋkx. im ... ič kxen guita čait, alora i pin gaŋat dahí. ačt tãge han galēgat su gian a Palermo. in treno saiŋ gabešt ogni stazióŋ gahabat ótaše: ojer, proat, o xies an glas bái. barandre a Palermo sái gačtandet tredici mónate. ma haba nia sofferto ničt. alje guita löite. sái xemet hia per salvare laip dopo tredici mánote ič kaŋan auŋar hoam a pruidar.

29 For the concept of 'attrition' see Scaglione (2000), Köpke (2004: 1342–1343).

30 In sentences such as *e dopo is xemet der xojer* or *alora i pin gaŋat dahí* the pronominal explication of the subject in enclisis to the inflected verb is missing. When the position in front of the finite verb is occupied by elements other than the pronominal subject itself, this inverts with the finite verb (cf. Bidese 2008; Tomaselli & Bidese 2019). Similarly, sentences appear with the implied subject in *ačt tãge han galēgat su gian a Palermo e sái xemet hia per salvare laip*, according to a pattern not accepted in Cimbrian, but possible in prodrop languages such as Italian.

31 As shown by the studies of Cognola (2011) and Cognola & Bidese (2016: 337–369) on pupils in the Mocheno valley, the presence of code-mixing of morphologically non-integrated verbs and of aberrant miss of clitic pronouns are clear evidences of semi-speakerness.

[We have all gone to Bassano and stayed there a year. and then the policeman came, said we had to leave. all left. I said can't go I have the baby so small, young. in ... a better time came, so I left. eight days I stay to go to Palermo. by train have been, every station had something: eggs, bread, or cheese, a glass of wine. in Palermo have stayed thirteen months. but have never suffered anything. all good people. have come here to save the skin after thirteen months has come home a brother].

Finally, the ways followed by Schweizer during his research could have also influenced data reliability. As will be seen, especially with regard to the lexical level, the author did not passively record the forms elicited by the speakers. On the contrary he submitted a pre-printed questionnaire with a list of German words, whose correspondents in Cimbrian were asked, presumably after Albert's translation into Italian. The scholar's insistence and pressing requests meant that often, not remembering the appropriate word the informant would elicit the one in their Romance variety or the Cimbrian word that came closest to it.

In conclusion it is not always easy to define whether a linguistic datum can be considered structurally part of the variety of Foza or whether, on the contrary, it reflects the informant's idiolect or represents the result of the semi-speaker condition of the informants.

3.3.1 Phonetics

The authenticity of some phonetic data can clearly be assessed basing on a comparison with the scanty forms collected in the past by Schmeller. Thus the occasional tendency to generalise in [z] MHG /s/, /tz/ (e.g. *fo* vs. *tso* 'to' < MHG *zo*; *rof* vs. *ros* 'horse' < MHG *ros*) had been already pointed out by Bonomo "Kāsälüppa, Caglio in Asiago Kāsälüppa col s e non col z, e così per lo più sono tutti i termini, addoprono il *zitta* in vece dell'*esse*, e per questo suona più dolce. Questa è la grande differenza fra Asiago e Foza" (cf. Zuin & Bidese 2022b: 175) and Schmeller ([1938] 2020: 141). Surely the occasional realization of the mainly word-initial 7C. [z] (< MHG /s/, /z/, /tz/) as Fo. [d] is also authentic (e.g. *dain* 'to be' < MHG *sīn*, *desan* 'to put' < MHG *setzen*, *diela* 'soul' < MHG *sēle*, *gledar* 'galsses' < MHG *glezar*). Although this sound change is the result of the Alto-vicentino dialect influence, where Ven. *verzare* 'to open', *zenocio* 'knee' sound like *verdare*, *denocio*, it is doubtless systemic in the Foza variety, since a century earlier Schmeller (1855: 142) already noted the confusion between etymological MHG /z/ and /d/, e.g. *snaizer* 'tailor' < MHG *snaider*. Similarly, the presence in Schmeller (1855) of the form *puiwe* 'guy' besides *puibe* (< MHG *buobe*) confirms the authenticity of the partial defonologization of MHG /w/ and /b/ in

[β]³² observable in Schweizer's data, e.g. *haw^ben* 'have' < MHG *haben*, *wbaif* 'white' < MHG *wīz*, *traiwbat* '(he) leads' < MHG *trīben*.

In other cases, however, the assessment of the phonetic data's reliability is not easy. Schweizer's notes show besides the Cimbrian development [e:] and [e] from MHG /ë/ an allomorph [je], which is not attested in the earlier collected forms, e.g. *xjes* 'cheese' (vs. [Pan] *kheese*), *gjel* 'yellow' (vs. [Pan] *geel*), *vjestar* 'window' (vs. [Pan] *veestar* [Schm] *vestar*). On its authenticity Schweizer himself ([ZGG]: 23) raises some doubts: "Freilich ist auch m.A. dieses Wenige an Belegen aus Foza nicht genügend beweiskräftig, aber wie wollen wir mehr Material von dort bekommen, da doch der Dialekt inzwischen ausgestorben ist?" ['Of course, even this little evidence from Foza is not sufficiently conclusive, but how can we get more material from there, since the dialect has died out in the meantime?'].

Finally, some features surely belong just to the idiolect of the speaker. The scanty forms which show [o] for etymological /a/ (e.g. *kxrö* 'crow' vs. [Pan] *khraa*; *glos* 'glass' vs. [Pan] *glas*) are probably the result of the influence of Bavarian dialect, probably transferred in the familiar idiolect by the brother who worked in Germany.

3.3.2 Morphology

The same doubts about authenticity arise in morphology. The form of 1st plural nominative pronoun *miar*, *mar* 'we' is probably genuine, as opposed to the other varieties that unconditionally show *biar*, *bar* < MHG *wir*. The morphemes *miar*, *mar* find parallels exclusively in Timau [GG.] *miar* and more generally in Carinthia (cf. Lexter 1862), although it is not clear whether an influence from these places can be advocated to explain them.³³ Probably it is also authentic the paradigmatic levelling, which led the form of 1st singular Present *han* 'I have' to appear as 3rd singular Present besides the regular form *hat*, since the same development took place independently in Carb. 3rd singular Present [NS] *hon* too.

32 Most probably [β] of Fo. is not a direct development of MHG /w/ but presupposes an unattested phase [b] as in the other German varieties in Italy (cf. Kranzmayer 1956: 74).

33 Since in 7C. varieties an etymological /m/ sometimes appears as [w] ([ZGG]: 335), e.g. *bet*, *pet* 'with' < **wit* < MHG *mit* it is not unlikely that *mar*, *miar* of Foza could represent the result of hypercorrection that would have led to the interpretation of Fo. **w^biar* as deriving from *miar*. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that also the preposition 'with' in Foza appears as *met*. A similar change in the 1st plural pronoun can be found outside the Cimbrian domain in Moch., where besides the tonic form *biar*, the atonic allomorph is *dar* (cf. Rowley 2003: 180).

Instead, the authenticity of the 1st singular Present *habe*, which appears only in one case in place of the regular form *han*, is more uncertain. If the latter allomorph is typical in all Cimbrian ([ZGG]: 481) and Bavarian varieties in Italy (cf. Moch. [BB] *hon*, Sap. [BK] *òn*, Sau. [DG] *on*, Tim. [GG] *hon*),³⁴ *habe* without the realisation of the etymological /a/ as [o] and with the preservation of the final vowel cannot be traced back to Bav. *hob*, but has to be interpreted as the result of the influence of standard German on the idiolect of the speaker.

Some data are then clearly inauthentic and caused by the informant's status of semi-speaker. Again, in the paradigm of the verb 'to have', the form of 3rd Present *ha* which appears many times besides the regular *hat* (e.g. *ha gamaxt*, *ha gatant* 'has done', *ha gaport* 'has stung') is the result of the influence of the Italian 3rd Present *ha* on the informant's idiolect. The influence of Veneto dialect's Infinitive forms marked by [-ar] (e.g. *magnàr* 'to eat', *catàr* 'to find') explains then the odd forms Fo. *lofar* 'to run', *benar* 'to find' (vs. [Pan] *lóofan*, [Pan] *vénnan*).

3.3.3 Lexicon

As far as the lexicon is concerned, although the majority of lemmas both of Germanic or Romance origin find parallels in the other varieties (e.g. *pom* 'tree', [Pan] *poom*; *amosa*, *amosa* 'ant', [Pan] *àmaza*; *vampa* 'flame', [Pan] *vampa*), others are only attested in Foza.

The verb MHG *sprechen* 'to speak', for example, is absent in all Cimbrian varieties, which replaced it with MHG *reden* (cf. [R] 7C. *rédián*, 13C. *rédián*, Lus. *rédián*), but appears in Fo. *sprexar*, *sprexan* and in the noun *z gasprochet* with the meaning of 'to pray' and 'the prayer'. The presence of such lexical-types can only be explained through the influence of a non-Cimbrian Germanic variety, but nevertheless the semantic metaplasm prevents them from being considered part of the informant's idiolect.³⁵

In other cases, the belonging of a certain lemma to the Foza variety can only be assessed probabilistically. Thus *vröttel* 'lizard' is undoubtedly of Germanic origin and probably authentic, although it finds no formal parallel in Cimbrian, which show the parallel of German *Eidechse* (cf. [R] 7C. *égaséga*, 13C. *éisedek*). With regard to linguistic borrowings one criterion for assessing authenticity is the level of formal integration, since it is likely that the more integrated a form

34 The only exception appears in the old German dialect of Roncegno and Torcegno in Valsugana (TN), which shows in the only linguistic evidence the 1st singular Present *hab* (cf. *Bibliothèque Municipale de Rouen*, Ms. Mbt. 489 o.N.).

35 Similarly in Moch. the modern German verb *sagen* 'to say' appears only in the variety of Palù del Fersina *zong*, whereas in Fierozzo and Roveda only *kein* is attested (cf. [BB]).

is, the more it was adopted in ancient times. Thus probably genuine are forms as *grüpel* 'hump, rump' from It. *groppa* (vs. [R] 7C. *pukkel*, 13C. *pukal*, Lus. *pukl* < MHG *buckel*), or *çliçolarn* 'to skate, to slide on the ice' from Ven. *slissolâr* with the insertion of the indigenous morpheme of Inf. [-n].

In the light of what has been said about the manner in which the Schweizer's investigation was conducted, it is impossible to define beyond any reasonable doubt whether a formally and/or functionally ambiguous lemma or construction is authentic, whether it can be traced back to the idiolect of the speaker, or whether it is clearly erroneous and the result of the informant's desire to provide at all costs a counterpart to the term requested. Sometimes it is clear that the speaker, under request and unable to remember the original term, elicited the concept closest to it. Thus the phrase *maxan hoasat*, composed with the Germanic verb for 'to do' (cf. [Pan] *machan*) and the word for 'marriage' (cf. [R] 7C. *hoasant*, 13C. *hoasat*, Lus. *hoasat*) is found as a counterpart of De. *feiern* 'to celebrate'. Again, for the concept De. *arbeitslos werden* 'to remain unemployed' the informant provided the phrase *dũ vaxen ane proat*, which has the literal meaning of 'to remain without bread' (cf. [Pan] *vangan* 'to take', *proat* 'bread') and represents a structural calque from Ven. *ciâparse sensa pan* 'lit. stay without bread'. On other occasions the impossibility of remembering the correct term has led to the elicitation of the non-integrated Romance word, which has to be considered as 'casual', i.e. occasional and non institutionalised borrowing, that results in a speaker's single act of speech (cf. Gusmani 1986: 18; *passim*). Such examples can be found in *festa* 'party' (< It. *festa*) for De. *Feiertag* (vs. [Pan] *vaartakh*, *vairtakh*), or *ajo* 'garlic' (< Ven. *ajo*) for De. *knoblauch* (cf. [Pan] *khnòvaloch*).

However, the assessment of data reliability is by no means straightforward. Sometimes constructions formally attested in other Cimbrian varieties show a different meaning. Some of these fall into the category of semantic calques, like *gawbçrmat* 'warmed, angry' elicited for De. *wärmen* 'warmed' and *wutend* 'angry', with the second meaning derived from It. *scaldato* 'warmed, angry'. Others are structural calques such as *de çait kxomodart six*, for the concept of De. *sich richten (Wetter)* 'the weather settles down', borrowed from Ven. *el tempo se comoda*. Other constructions, however, find only limited semantic solidarity at the comparative level. One of these is *plüima*, indicated as counterpart to De. *Ähre* 'ear', while in other repertoires it has the value of De. *Blume* 'flower'; or *çũ derran* (vs. 7C. [Pan] *roochan*) with the value of De. *räuchern* ('selchen') 'to smoke', while in 7C. the verb means only 'to dry'.

4 Summary

The so-called Cimbrian language actually represents a linguistic diasystem that in the past was spread over a relatively vast area and is composed of a series of varieties differentiated according to various parameters. First of all, with regard to vitality, the language today is spoken exclusively in the municipality of Luserna and remembered in those of Rotzo, Roana and Giazza by very few elderly people. Secondly, with regard to the quantity and quality of documentary evidences. If for the dialects of Roana, Rotzo, Asiago and Giazza we deal with 'Kleincorpusssprachen', with a relatively long documented history that has continued until recent times, others such as those of Foza and a majority of the north-western ones are to be considered as 'Restsprachen' transmitted by only a few or even a single document, and others have disappeared at different times without leaving a trace except in onomastics and toponymy. Finally, the different Cimbrian varieties, while sharing a number of common characteristics, likewise show a marked dialectal differentiation, both between the three main Cimbrian subgroups and between varieties belonging to the same subgroup. Underlying this differentiation are two main dynamics. On the one hand, the more or less intense relations that each variety historically maintained with neighbouring Romance varieties, which led to significant influences on phonological, morphological and lexical levels. On the other, the movement of settlers from Germany into the various areas of the dominion, continued with varying intensity until at least the 15th century, brought different diatopic and diachronic varieties to overlap with the original ones and contributed to shape them.

In the analysis of the Cimbrian dialect of Foza, another difficulty is represented by the impossibility of working with the historically elaborated tools of linguistics, due to the nature of the available evidences. Indeed, apart from a handful of forms collected by Schmeller in the 19th century, this Cimbrian dialect is only attested by the unpublished notes written in the mid-20th century during B. Schweizer's research. However through the analysis it is possible, on the one hand, to frame some characteristics of this variety from a comparative point of view, underlining how, although sharing a series of linguistic traits also typical of the other dialects of the Sette Comuni, it shows at the same time significant similarities to the north-western Cimbrian area. On the other hand, however, the semi-speaker status of the informants makes it necessary to question the authenticity of the data elicited, when these do not find comparative values in other Cimbrian dialects. In fact, an attempt has been made to demonstrate how, at all linguistic levels, phenomena authentically part of the Cimbrian of Foza can be identified. Others, peculiar to the idiolect

of the speaker and due to his condition of ‘rememberer’, remain manifestly inauthentic. And finally, between these two poles lie a series of intermediate situations for which authenticity or non-authenticity can only be defined probabilistically.

Abbreviations of Dictionaries

[B]	Bacher 1905
[BB]	<i>Bersntoler Beirterpònk</i> (Bernstoler Kulturinstitut/Istituto culturale Moche- no)
[BK]	Benedetti & Kratter 2010
[CC]	Cipolla & Cipolla 1883
[Cp]	Cappelletti 1956
[DG]	Denison & Grassegger 2007
[GG]	Geyer & Gasser 2002
[L]	Leck 1884
[NS]	Schweizer 2002
[Pan]	<i>Dizionario cimbro dei Sette Comuni</i> (Panieri)
[R]	<i>Cimbrisch-deutsches-Online-Gesamtwörterbuch</i> (Resch)
[Schm]	Schmeller 1855
[Vesc]	Vescovi circa 1880
[Z]	Zingerle 1869
[Zb]	Nicolussi Golo & Nicolussi 2014
[zFS]	Schweizer [1951–1952] 2012
[zGG]	Schweizer [1951–1952] 2008

Abbreviations of Varieties

13C.	Tredici Comuni (varieties)
7C.	Sette Comuni (varieties)
As.	Asiago (variety)
Bav.	Bavarian
Bos.	Bosco (variety)
C.Rov.	Camporovere (variety)
Carb.	Carbonare (Folgaria)
De.	German (language)
Fo.	Foza (variety)
Fol.	Folgaria

Germ.	Germanic
It.	Italian
Lat.	Latin
MHG	Middle High German
Moch.	Mòcheno (variety)
NHG	New High German
OBav	Old Bavarian
OHG	Old High German
Ro.	Roana (variety)
Rtz.	Rotzo (variety)
S.Seb.	San Sebastiano (Folgaria)
Sap.	Sappada (variety)
Sau.	Sauris (variety)
Tim.	Timavese (variety)
Ven.	Veneto (dialect)

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