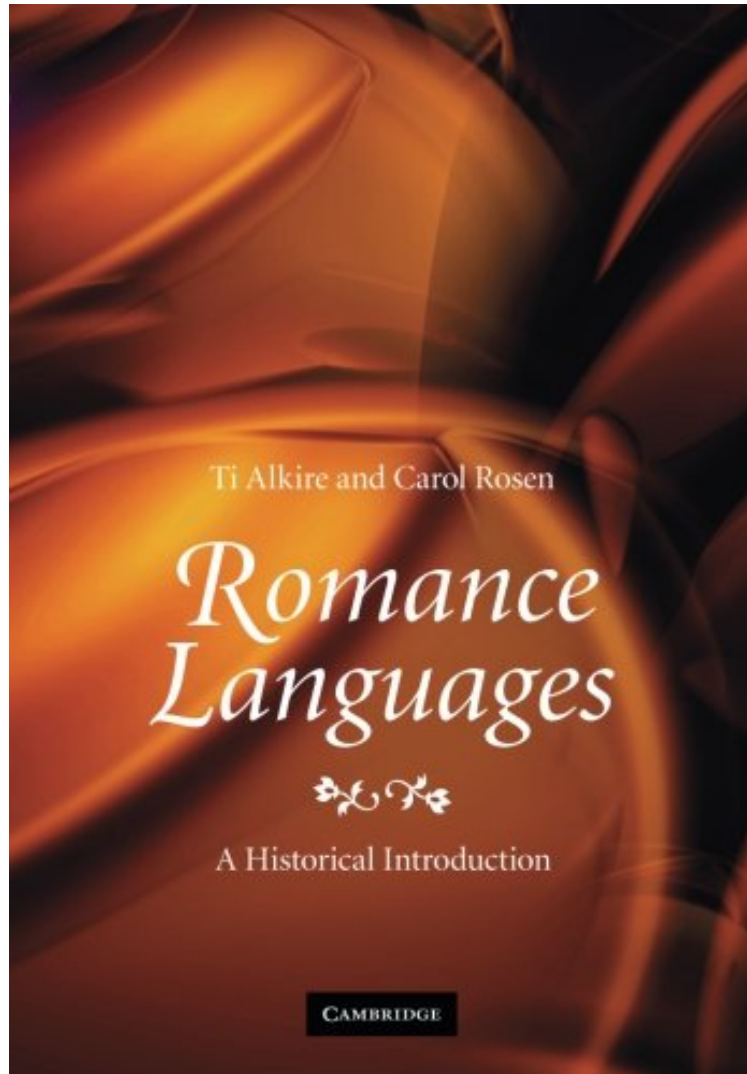


Romance Languages: A Historical Introduction

Ti Alkire, Carol Rosen
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Ti Alkire, Carol Rosen : Romance Languages: A Historical Introduction before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Romance Languages: A Historical Introduction:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Very satisfying insights into the origin and evolution of the romance languages By Ulfilas Authors Akire and Rosen provide the reader with very satisfying insights into the origin and evolution of the romance languages. This book opens with the reduction of the nine-vowel system to the seven-vowel system, using Italian, Spanish, and French as examples (pp.9-15). With this discussion, the focus continues on these three particular romance languages through the first half of the book. A very interesting example of consonant weakening is seen to correspond to the initial f in Spanish taking on the value of a silent h. In this way the Latin ferro

(iron) transforms into hierro. This change is explained in terms of the claim that h and f were considered allophones (i.e. variants of the same basic sound) by early Spanish speakers (p.51). French is given as an example of some of the most surprising and far-ranging changes. The palatalized labials *via*, *vie*, and *bia* that terminate Latin words are transformed into *ge* in French. In this way *serviente* (assistant) becomes sergeant and *rabia* becomes rage (p.71). The authors also provide the solution to a puzzle that had commanded my attention when I first started learning Italian: that of the third person singular and plural endings brought on by the conditional tense. It is shown that what began in Latin as *cantare habebat* (would sing) collapses into *cantarebbe* in Italian (pp.171-172). The second half of the book discusses the evolution of Portuguese and Romanian as well as a brief narrative on the emergence of the Romance vernaculars. An index of linguistic terms is also provided. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Book that Has Changed the Way I See Romance By John T Having Ti as my professor was fantastic. The information on the book opened a new door in my world of Romance, and has led me to truly value the Romance language and its history. The book offers an in depth linguistic approach on predicting the phonological and morphological changes that occur in languages like Italian, Spanish and French. He does admit to having made a few mistakes in the book, though he plans to fix them soon. Also, the book could use an answer section to his end-of-chapter exercises. Yet again, as a college textbook, it would not be beneficial to do so. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "Romance Languages: A Historical Introduction" MORE LIKE "Historical Languages: A ROMANTIC Introduction" By Daniel J. Macarro As a student of historical linguistics, I find this an invaluable resource. It presents charts and tables for every major and minor language since Vulgar Latin and shows the development of their vowels and consonants. Most importantly, while sound change is systematic, it can show the step by step changes that allowed for development with consideration of Post-Romance, West/East Split, Germanic/Arabic Influence, and, of course, diphthongization of stressed short vowels!!! ...lol, you know what I mean right?

Ti Alkire and Carol Rosen trace the changes that led from colloquial Latin to five major Romance languages, those which ultimately became national or transnational languages: Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian. Trends in spoken Latin altered or dismantled older categories in phonology and morphology, while the regional varieties of speech, evolving under diverse influences, formed new grammatical patterns, each creating its own internal regularities. Documentary sources for spoken Latin show the beginnings of this process, which comes to full fruition in the medieval emergence of written Romance languages. This book newly distills the facts into an appealing program of study, including exercises, and makes the difficult issues clear, taking well motivated and sometimes innovative stands. It provides not only an essential guide for those new to the topic, but also a reliable compendium for the specialist.

'This attractive textbook is a great opportunity to bring the unique historical and typological richness of the Romance languages to today's students of language and linguistics and empower them to continue its exploration on their own. In its carefully gradated approach at complex issues of phonology and morphology, the authors provide readers with an analytical in-depth investigation of the diachronic developments in Spanish, French, and Italian, complemented by coherent sketches of Portuguese and Romanian. The book sets a new standard for focus, relevance, and accuracy of data as well as broadly informed and open-minded assessment of competing explanations offered in the literature. Readers who work their way through the book will come away from it with a structured picture of this fascinating language family spanning 2000 years of varying divergence and convergence.' Dieter Wanner, The Ohio State University 'A user-friendly and straightforward approach to the topic, which cuts through much of the excessive and dense detail of traditional treatments.' Adam Ledgeway, University of Cambridge About the Author Ti Alkire is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Romance Studies at Cornell University. Besides historical Romance linguistics, his research interests include stylistics, translation theory, and current variation in French and Italian.