

¿Qët isch el Glheþ Talossán?

Ûn práimhoct àl Scúrzniâ Gramáticâ

“It is the languages which have the most active intellectual background (English, French, Chinese) that show the most rapid changes” -- W.J. Entwistle

The Talossan language, or *el glheþ Talossán* [êw LêT talosan]¹ is the official, national language of the Kingdom of Talossa. Technically speaking, it is an “artificial” language like Volapük, Esperanto, or Interlingua. However, unlike these projects, it was not dreamed up in advance with definite rules. Instead, it has evolved “naturally” over time, and will continue to do so as long as living people speak it.

This introduction is one man’s attempt at a comprehensive description of the Talossan language. It draws largely from an unpublished essay written in the spring and summer of 1997. Readers should note that words in **bold face** are Talossan language words; underlining indicates North African Latin. Words from other languages are in italics or, sometimes for English, in quotation marks.

Talossan as Patriotic Language

Once upon a time there was a country with no national language of its own. One writer selected a Romance tongue he was familiar with, and began to “enrich” it with words he culled from several other dialects and languages. Eventually others joined him in this task, but for a long time few people actually spoke their artificial “language”—about 2.4% of the population, according to one estimate. Nevertheless this fake language became a profound and powerful patriotic symbol for all the people of his nation, and eventually swept all its critics aside.

Ben Madison and Talossan? No—Dante Alighieri and Italian! Modern Italian is an “artificial language” almost as much as Talossan. Prior to its conscious concoction in the 13th century, not a single living soul spoke “Italian.” Instead, inhabitants of the Italian peninsula spoke (as they still do) a variety of local dialects descended from Latin—or they spoke German, Slovene, Greek, Albanian, or some other non-Romance tongue. No dialect had much more prestige than any other, and each region clung to its “mother tongue” with devotion, preventing any single regional dialect from taking over. To unify Italy, a single “Italian” language had to be created. To paraphrase what I once wrote about Talossan, “only an Italian language could be truly Italian.”

Dante took what was basically literary Florentine (the dialect of one city, Florence) and grafted onto it words from the rest of Tuscany, French, Latin, other Italian dialects, strange medieval Latin forms, bad Greek, even Sicilian (Migliorini, 125ff). Petrarch, Dante’s contemporary, also used “a composite kind” of Florentine, squished together with Sicilian, Latin, outdated dialectalisms, and even Provençal to create his own Dante-esque version of Italian. Six hundred years later, after their hybrid “Italian” had become the literary language of most of Italy, few Italians could speak it. When Italy was unified in the 1860’s, according to one estimate, as few as 2.4% of Italians could speak “Italian.” (Incidentally, Tomás Gariçeir and I comprise about 5.7% of the Talossan population today, which compares favourably with the precarious state of Italian in the nineteenth century!) Even today only 34.4% of Italians use Italian as their sole home language—and 40% *never* use Italian at home, after more than a century of political unity, mass media, and Mussolinian centralization (Maiden, 7f).

But did the world need one more language? Why did Dante—or Ben—do it? Because language is one of the most common expressions of cultural identity and national aspirations. As the French savant Volney wrote, “*le premier livre d’une nation est le dictionnaire de sa langue.*” And while it presumes the pre-existence of some ‘national’ language to start with, the remarks of R.L. Collison are also *à propos* here: “Scholars were quick to recognize that the compilation of a reliable and comprehensive dictionary was one sign of the achievement of their country’s maturity, just as the lack of grammars and dictionaries indicated the dominance of a foreign power or the weakness of a truly national feeling” (Collison, 18).

¹ All pronunciations in this book are given in the Talossan Phonetic Alphabet (APT). This system of phonetic transcription is described and explained at length in the 1997 *Treisoûr del Glheþ Talossán*.

Even before Talossa had its name, in mid-December of 1979, as I was plotting my little secessionist kingdom, I believed that the country would need its own language, distinct from American English. A basic fact of life in Talossa is that many (if not all) its citizens have *always* believed that the country is inherently non-American. (Which is not the same, of course, as anti-American.) When Talossa declared independence, I made sure that English was not the country's national language. Norwegian served in this rôle; hence a variety of words like **Støtanneu** (from Norwegian *støttanet*, "the tusk"), **televerket**, and **Dårliget Løgner**, joined our English and ultimately our Talossan.

But Norwegian—and the dozen or so other non-English languages which were 'official' in Talossa during 1979 and 1980—could never be truly Talossan.² Just as importantly at that time, the importation of existing national languages could not satisfy my own personal linguistic idiosyncrasy. As is well-known to students of Talossan history, my initial inspiration for Talossa grew partly out of the book *The Loom of Language* (see bibliography). That book, which introduced me as a high school freshman to the wonders of artificial languages like Esperanto and Volapük, also introduced me to such historical figures as Kemâl Atatürk, who waved his magic gun and converted Turkey from an Oriental to a European nation overnight, with the Roman alphabet, a secular constitution, and jazz. Given the importance of *The Loom* to my knowledge of statecraft in Talossa's first year, and the fact that I had already created an artificial language ("Bahecan," a Slavic-Icelandic-Finnish hybrid, in the summer of 1979) I find it remarkable in retrospect that it took as long as it did—about a year—before I decided to create an artificial "Talossan" language.

Talossan began as an "artificial" language based mostly on the Western Romance languages, but in its first few years of life it became a sort of grab-bag for my own personal linguistic fads. As I learned more and more about languages, whatever my 'language of the week' was would end up having some influence over Talossan that week. Especially in the frenetic year of 1981, words and grammar poured in from Icelandic, Spanish, German, Swedish, Albanian, Hungarian, Finnish, Estonian, Rumanian,³ Irish, Turkish, Russian, Greek, Latvian, and others—not to mention experiments in changing the orthography to the Greek, Hebrew, or Arabic alphabet or adding Greek, German and Icelandic letters. It was all rather quaint, but during this period, what was the Talossan Language? It was almost a different language from week to week. There was no guiding principle behind it, and yet that very lack of a guiding principle was in its own way a guiding principle. It is thanks largely to this early eclecticism that the Talossan language of today bears its unique features.

Talossan phonology is quite unusual and several people who have heard it spoken have likened it to the Slavic languages, while to others it resembles Icelandic, or Castilian Spanish. The auditory impression of Talossan conveys a very level, 'business-like' tone of delivery. The language has a decided preference for sibilants—[s], [ʃ], [z], [ʒ], [c], [ç], [j], [ʎ]—which lend it a very distinct "shushing" sound. Additionally, the language has undergone, from its generic Western Romance base, several peculiar sound shifts which give it its unique sound. The [h] sound became unstable in early 1981 and its phonemic position was saved only by a dramatic fronting to [tʰ], the sound of English "th" in "think," a change which had almost totally ousted [h] as a phoneme by the end of the year. This sound, now written with the Icelandic letter Þ, is observed in such cognates as *þonest* [Tɔnest] (honest) and *þotel* [Tɔtɛw] (hotel). Equally dramatic and distinctive was the contemporaneous shift of the infinitive ending -ar from [ar] to [aʃ], where the [r] sound was replaced by the "sh" of English "wash." This was observed as early as April of 1981 and may possibly have been influenced (subconsciously?) by the Portuguese infinitive ending, pronounced [ax] (as in German *ach*). Another interesting and widespread phonetic innovation was the massive infiltration of epenthetic [s] sounds, which seems to have begun in 1985. Originally limited to French loanwords which had lost an original [s] (French *prêtre* became Talossan *prestar*), the [s] has lately crept into areas where it historically did not belong.

Other peculiar phonetic features include the fronting of word-initial [l] to [d] (as in English "this") between vowels; *la livertà* ("the freedom") and *la divertà* ("the fun") are pronounced alike, [la Divertà]. This innovation has even crept into a few word-medial situations, e.g. *fodiclâ* ("follicle"). The unstable Talossan "l" sound has also, in one situation, devoiced. Before the sound [t], Talossan [l] devoices to [h], a sound which can barely be described in English. (Put your tongue in place

² Norwegian wasn't Talossan enough for Talossa, but ironically, it also wasn't Norwegian enough for Norway! A band of language enthusiasts had to create another artificial language, *Landsmål*, because they felt the Norwegian most Norwegians spoke was too Danish. Something about all this makes Norwegian a worthy first language for Talossa.

³ Despite my better judgement I will join the linguists and use the spelling "Rumanian" rather than "Romanian" in this paper, to avoid confusion between *Rumania* the Balkan country and *Romania* the linguistic term for the totality of Romance-speaking countries. I am reminded of John Jahn's dictum that **Roumania** was a country that fought in World War I, **Rumania** fought in World War II, and **Romania** was a member of the Warsaw Pact!

to say “l” and blow!) Thus a recognizable written word like *altreu* (“other”) becomes [aHtrjw] in speech. How this began is far from clear, but the same phenomenon is observed in Icelandic, a language I studied in the early 1980’s. Poor “l” can’t even escape at the end of a word; as in Portuguese, word-final “l” following a vowel becomes [w]; the last syllable in the word *naziunál* rhymes with the English word “now.”

The official orthography of Talossan is likewise eclectic, but a Talossan text is easily recognized by these frequent letters or graphemes: *c’h, tg, th, ð, þ, ē, ā, gñh, glh, tx, sch, s’ch, tsch, tz, xh, ß*; and common word endings in *-äts, -oûr, -eu, -éu, -â*. The language also bristles with diacritical marks (“accents”), more than in any other European language. There are seven such accents in all, the acute, grave, umlaut, tilde, circumflex, cedilla, and the Swedish ring as in *á*.

The values of some of these graphemes are unexpected. The sound of English “ng” (as in “sing”) is written *ñ*—which is definitely not the sound this letter has in Spanish. The Spanish letter represents the [N] sound (as in “canyon”), which sound is written in Talossan with the highly distinctive and unusual trigraph *gñh* (as in *vagñhâ*, “bath”). This grapheme is actually an amalgamation of the ways in which three different languages write this same sound: Spanish uses *ñ*, Italian uses *gn*, and Portuguese uses *nh*. Put all three together and you have *gñh*! (Likewise the trigraph *glh* represents the [L] sound similar to “ll” in English “million”; it is a fusion of Italian *gl* and Portuguese *lh*.) The final letter *-â*, which looks like it might be stressed, is in fact never stressed. The circumflex simply replaces an older mark, the breve, which was replaced since the breve sign was absent from the ASCII character set so important to modern computer printing.

The dental central fricative sounds [T] and [D] (as in “thick” and “this,” respectively) are written with the Icelandic letters Þ and Ð in Talossan. (Between 1992 and 1996 these were written, respectively with the ASCII-friendly digraphs *tg* and *th*, but popular opinion was always on the side of the “Icelandic” letters and these were restored by popular demand.) *Tg*, incidentally, was taken from the Rhaeto-Romance of Switzerland (where it has a different pronunciation, however.) Some graphemes (*sch, tsch, ß*) were taken from German. The use of *tx* to represent the [Z] sound (English “g” in “rouge”) was inspired by Basque and Catalan, which use *tx* to represent the related sound [C]. The distinctive *c’h*, and the sound it represents, [x] (as in German *ach*) both entered the language in 1984, as Talossan adopted several Celtic (in this case, Breton) elements. The combination *xh*, representing [J] (the “j” sound in “joke”) comes from Albanian—remember Enver Hoxha? Some of the elements of Talossan come from the most bizarre sources; for instance, the noun ending *-äts* which is so common in Talossan originated in one word, *päts*, a word meaning “country” which began to be used in late 1981. Originally Talossan had used a variety of words for “country,” some based on the French root *pays* or Spanish *país*, but when I was reading a history of Estonia and ran across the name of its inter-war President, Konstantin Päts, I simply fell in love with the word and decreed then and there that it would be the Talossan word for “country.” Since then dozens of words have adopted the *-äts* ending as distinctively Talossan.

The presence of several dictators’ names in the matrix of the Talossan language should come as no surprise, since my initial inspiration for the Kingdom of Talossa was my own discontent and boredom with politics and life in the USA, and my fascination with other countries, cultures and languages. In the fall of 1983 I had the opportunity to study in London. Upon my return to Talossa, my love of things European merged with that discontent and boredom to produce, in 1984, an all-encompassing, embarrassing and fortunately temporary loathing of the United States, which thrust the language quite unexpectedly into the next phase of its existence.

Talossan as “Restored” Language

My first interest in language had revolved largely around *artificial* languages, where one man or group of men (women don’t do this sort of thing; I wonder why?) sit down and crank out the grammar and vocabulary of a new language. It was not a long step from that to my discovery, in 1983 or 1984, of the phenomenon of “language restoration,” where a determined band of geeky enthusiasts decide to breathe new life onto the dead or dying embers of their ancestors’ language, and consciously choose to speak and write in it rather than in the more ‘useful’ language of some foreign conqueror. The best known instance was the restoration of Hebrew as a spoken language in Israel in the late 19th and early 20th centuries under the guidance of an amateur linguist, Eliezer ben-Yehuda. Behind such flights of impracticality there usually lies patriotism and simple love of the culture that the language represents. In the famous words of Henry Jenner, who helped revive the Cornish language, “*Why should Cornishmen learn Cornish? There is no money in it, it serves no practical purpose, and the literature is scanty and of no great originality or value. The question is a fair one, the answer is simple. Because they are Cornish.*” (Ellis, 153)

Now while some people—again I’ll pick on the Italians—had invented artificial languages to hold their nation

together, at least they had a nation to start off with. At least by the 19th century most people in Italy felt sort of like Italians and didn't really mind when Garibaldi's armies toppled the microscopic old dynasties which had kept the Peninsula divided for a thousand years. But that wasn't really an appropriate model for Talossa. The trickle of people immigrating to Talossa by 1984 didn't really have much in common, except that they were Friends Of Ben. But "we met in high school" was not the kind of rallying cry I felt Talossa needed if it were to be a "real nation."

Enter Henry Jenner and the Cornish. According to Ellis, while the Cornish language revivalists were getting organized at the turn of the century, Cornishmen—often the same individuals—were moving to revive such things as Celtic sports, festivals, clothing, and other aspects of their culture. This was, indeed, just one of many such operations going on at the same time in Europe. Language revivals, to one degree or another, took place among the Albanians, Armenians, Czechs, Estonians, Faeroese, Finns, Latvians, Lithuanians, Norwegians, Poles, Rumanians, Slovaks, Slovenians and Ukrainians. And of course, the most dramatic case was that of Hebrew—a dead language for nearly 2,000 years (Ellis, 147-152). Language restoration always goes hand in hand with *national restoration*. When people insist on bringing their languages back from extinction, or the brink of extinction, these are rarely folkloristic 'cultural' events. They are political events—they are a way of telling outsiders "We are not you."

Reviving the language is a means of reviving self-identity, but it can be even more extravagant than that. According to the (in)famous "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis," the language we speak affects the way we look at the world. When a person changes languages, he exchanges one perception of the world for another. One study (which I've long since misplaced, alas) reports that bilingual speakers of German dialect in French Alsace change their entire demeanor and even the tone and pitch of their voices when they change over from French to German in conversation. In a sense they become new people, and in that sense this is what Talossan is all about: a linguistic tool to enable people to 'become Talossan' in a way that is profoundly, psychologically, and subconsciously more Talossan than English can ever aspire to. If bilingualism allows a person to inhabit two different worlds, then bilingualism in Talossan lets one whole entire world be Talossa.

I read and studied all this at a time in my life when I was yearning deeply to connect with 'ancient' things that transcended my own achievements, just like the language revivalists; but I also sought to put my own stamp on whatever that something 'ancient' was—again, just like the language revivalists.⁴ And it was that desire that killed the idea of Talossan as a purely artificial language. In its place, in 1984 and 1985, Talossan became swept up in my romantic quest to lend Talossa (and myself) an ancient and respectable pedigree—if Berbers are respectable, that is—as part of a movement we can best leave with the name "Berberism."⁵

The whole 'Berber thing' can be seen as a kind of Talossan secession in time to top off Talossa's earlier secession from (American) space. It is no coincidence that the great flourishing ages of Berberism were 1984-1985 and 1995-present—both times when immigrants were swelling the country. Berberism was and is a cultural rebellion aimed at the de-Americanization (or de-whateverization) of immigrants and natives alike. At least in my mind, Berberism conjures up images of middle-aged Cornishmen dressed up in supposedly Celtic robes and thereby 'resisting' the pressures of Anglo-Saxon modernity. Of course this kind of thing can provoke laughter from outsiders. ("For goodness sake, who do these people think they are, druids?") Cultural revivalists grab symbols and icons from their past and thrust them into a modern context where they can often look goofy, or at least inappropriate, but the issue is one of *boundaries*, and anyone excluded from any boundary is going to call the other side nasty names.

⁴ Interestingly, at the same time I was exploring Christian history as a result of my recent conversion, and here too I sought to put my own stamp on things—in 1985 I created a one-man "Benite Church" which taught things the way I felt they should be taught! Like Talossan, "Benism" was a weird hybrid composed of Mormonism, Catholicism, liberal Protestantism and Judaism.

⁵ Originally my putative ancient Talossans were supposed to be Celts, not Berbers, and the whole universe turned on the French city of *Toulouse* (which, by the way, I've never visited). In the earliest (1984) version of my hypothesis, that was supposed to be the 'ancestral homeland' of the ancient Talossans. Ironically, 12 years after I announced that the ancient Toulousians were Berbers, not Celts, it came to my attention that Toulouse (Latin: *Tolosa*) probably is a Berber name after all! According to Alfred Holder, *Tolosa*—also spelled *Tolossa* in ancient times!—is a North African word after all, and the Gaulish tribe it's named after, the *Tolosati*, can be compared to a *Tolote* tribe of Berbers in North Africa (Holder, 2:1875). So I was right all along.

Of course, these things are often hopelessly subjective because the “boundaries” just aren’t all that clear sometimes. For instance, the majority of Celtic enthusiasts exclude the Galicians of Spain from the brotherhood of Celtdom because the Galicians don’t speak a Celtic language any more—but on those grounds the vast majority of Irishmen aren’t Celts either. And there is in all these revival experiments a certain arbitrary but conventional unreality. For instance, today, there seems to be no small overlap between Celtic revivalists and so-called “pagans,” when in fact in the good olde days of healthy Celtic languages, it was largely the Celts who were Christians while the pagans were their Anglo-Saxon tormentors, whose culture the Celtic revivalists claim to be rejecting. We all read what we want to into cultural history for purposes of cultural revival; it’s the nature of the enterprise. And if a grey line between fact and rose-coloured fiction characterizes cultural-linguistic revivalism, that makes cultural-linguistic revivalism a worthy pursuit for Talossa!

Revivalists, in a sense, hitch modern wagons to ancient stars. For the Cornish, who picked up the Cornish language where it died in the eighteenth century, it is as if the intervening years never happened; the revivalists have travelled in time. More dramatic still is the case of Israel, where a small, mostly European religious minority decided to colonize they hadn’t seen in almost twenty centuries because their ancestors used to live there once, and deciding that only in the Land of Israel and in the (extinct) Hebrew language could Jewish thought and culture be truly Jewish. This “Zionist” image of reclaiming the buried past, and leaping over the fence of time, was one of the most exciting things I had ever read about. It was the very sort of “cultural revolution” I had pined for in my pre-Talossan adolescence, when I founded a “political party” dedicated to changing the national language of the USA to Finnish and destroying American culture. I was so fired up with this vision of Cornwall and Israel thumbing their noses at history, that I dragged Talossa over the fence with me. Talossa was transformed from just another flimsy ‘micronation’ into a kind of spiritual Zionism. I wrote in April 1985:

*“The Talossan Language (known as **An Glhep Talossán** in Talossan) is a dead language, like Latin. Since December of 1980, the ‘restoration’ of the Talossan language has continued unstopped. King Robert single-handedly leads the drive to restore Talossan as the one official language of the Talossan people, and can speak the language better than any other person can.... [The ancient Talossans’] language was originally an African Berber language, but over the centuries it evolved.... Modern Talossan—an approximate restoration of the Talossan spoken around 500 ad—has taken many words from English. Talossan died out as a spoken language around 1000 ad, but has been revived by King Robert, much as Hebrew was revived in the 1800’s by Eliezer ben-Yehuda, a Jewish patriot, and as Cornish was revived around 1900 by Henry Jenner, a Cornish enthusiast.” (Tú Phäts #2, 20 April 1985, p. 1)*

This complex mythology was enshrined in the 1985 edition of my *History of the Kingdom of Talossa*, which was the first and most elaborate defence of Berberism prior to the 1996 publication of *The Berber Project*. This quest for a Talossan national spirit led me to my Berberistic researches in the first place, and propelled the Talossan Language from an artificial experiment into (at least in my Berber world-view) a “restored” language. At first I added Berber words and grammar to Talossan in an effort to create “their” lost Romance language, but I quickly found out that Berber was grammatically too unfamiliar to really use as the basis for Talossan. However, in August of 1985 I completed my epic *History of the Kingdom of Talossa* which laid out the first draft of my ancient Berber history hypothesis. According to this version, the ancient Talossans—who were Berbers living near Toulouse, in France—had been “Romanized” but never gave up their Berber identity. My explanation was that French was Latin spoken by Gauls, while *Occitan*—the Romance language of the south of France—was Latin spoken by Berbers. Books on Occitan were readily available, and I was able to use Occitan to “Berberize” the Talossan language in ways my linguistically untutored 20-year-old brain could handle. I consciously drew upon the analogy of the aforementioned Galicians of Spain, who believe themselves to be Celts while speaking a thoroughly Romance language. Likewise, I inferred, Talossans were free to think of themselves as Berbers while also speaking a Romance language, Talossan.

The point is, I packed Talossan full of hundreds of Occitan words not just because I thought Occitan was “cool,” but also because the idea of *restoring* Talossan seemed to force it in that direction. If there were Berbers in the south of France, Occitan is what they would have spoken; and to pack Talossan full of some *other* language would have been historically indefensible. The process of language restoration is driven by some sort of objective reality *which we do not control*, underlying the appearance and nature of the language. It presumes there is some “Talossan language” *out there*, waiting to be uncovered and restored. The only power *we* have is that of refining our historical methodology in search of that objective reality.

There’s a story told about an Eskimo soapstone carver who was busy carving a block of stone into the shape of a bear for some tourists. One of the tourists, impressed with the man’s skill, asked him, “What is your secret?” The Eskimo carver explained simply: “Well, if you want to carve a bear, you take a block of stone, and you chip away everything that doesn’t look like a bear.” “Restored” Talossan is like that bear. We can start with all the languages of the world as our medium, and to arrive at the Talossan Language we just chip away everything that doesn’t look like Talossan. This presumes of course that Talossan itself “looks like” Talossan—that there is something out there waiting to be restored and that we can’t just ladle on the

language-of-the-week the way we used to.

Talossan as Artifact

What happens if we look at the Talossan language as an artifact? Let's pretend that we know nothing about its origins; we've simply come across this weird language and we want to figure it out. Let's also pretend, for the sake of argument, that Talossan is a "natural" language, as best we can tell. Given the grammar and vocabulary of Modern Talossan, what sort of language is it? What does it tell us about its speakers' origins? Where would such a language be spoken? How close is it to French and the other Romance languages?

By examining a vocabulary of English, for instance, we could tell many things about its speakers—that the core of their language is German, for one; but that most of their words are French, for another. Knowing what we do about dialects, we could also tell that many French words in English come from Norman French, spoken along the English channel—and that the Germanic words in English most closely resemble the dialects of the Frisians along the North Sea. Simply by looking at the English language, with no knowledge of its history, we could figure out that such a language "must" be spoken somewhere on the North Sea in an area where Frisian and Norman French could have a place to meet and mingle—a place like, for instance, Great Britain.

Can we do the same with Talossan? Can we 'fool the machine' by plugging in Talossan—phony, unneeded, utterly useless and fake Talossan—and see what kind of people would have spoken it, and where they would have lived, if it *were* a natural language? It's a tantalizing experiment!

It is clear that the ultimate basis for Talossan was French, but in a consciously archaizing and Latinizing way, which was influenced early by Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Catalan and Rumanian, giving the language a kind of "Mediterranean" bias long before I began to do my Berberistic research on the *Tolosati* tribe of pre-Roman inhabitants in France. Early Talossan showed two main sources of influence: Rumanian and Portuguese, at first glance an odd combination, since these two languages lie at opposite ends of the Latin-speaking world. But from our meta-perspective it's not as peculiar as it seems. In his history *The Spanish Language*, William J. Entwistle points out that "*There are some instances of agreement between the [Iberian] Peninsula and Eastern Romance which have been argued to imply an original contact between the two. The lost Latin of Africa, the latinity of Sicily and Calabria, and the now lost Romance of Dalmatia doubtless bridged the distance between Spain and the Balkans.*" He goes on to enumerate a host of features held in common between the Iberian Peninsula on the one hand, and Rumania on the other, and demonstrates that Spanish/Portuguese and Rumanian retained certain common characteristics from Latin which were obliterated in France and Italy. The reason why? France and Italy were more innovative, linguistically, than the backward "periphery" (Entwistle, 56ff).

Our investigation of Talossan also reveals a number of 'peripheral' features. Abstract nouns ending in *-r* like Talossan **el coloûr**, were originally masculine in Latin, and remain so in Spanish and Rumanian; but French has converted most of them to the feminine gender (Elcock, 59). They remain masculine in Talossan. Our word for *this*, **acest**, is formed on the basis of Vulgar Latin **acc'iste*, which is another conservative southern form (demonstratives with *accu* are found in Spain, Rumania and, interestingly, Occitan; Elcock, 91ff). Talossan **nihil** *nothing* is incredibly archaic; Latin *nihil* survives nowhere else in the Romance languages (except possibly for one disputed case in Provençal; Elcock, 100). The Talossan verbal infinitive **irë** *to go* is another very conservative feature; this descendant of Latin *ire* survives in Spanish and Portuguese, but has been replaced elsewhere by other forms like French *aller* and Italian *andare*. Talossan has also reduced the Latin verbal paradigm by eliminating "irregular" forms and basing new forms on the present-tense stem. Spanish and Portuguese do the very same thing (Entwistle, 111).

A cute trick we can pull here is to subject Talossan to the terrifying-sounding process known as Glottochronology. This controversial historical-linguistic technique uses word lists in related languages to calculate, approximately, the date at which those languages diverged from a common ancestor. What happens when we compare Talossan (with its artificially-concocted hodgepodge of vocabulary) with the 'real' Romance languages? Leaving out some obviously anomalous results, the answers are rather interesting.⁶ Comparing Talossan with Classical Latin we find that if Talossan were a 'real' Romance language (and

⁶ Talossan's vocabulary is closest to French, but this can be attributed to my own over-reliance on French words when I created Talossan in high school with no familiarity with any Romance speech other than French. We will see the effects of this below in greater detail.

if Glottochronology were that accurate, which is a bit of a stretch by itself) then Talossan would have separated from Classical Latin around 174 BC. This is an impressive time-depth; it indicates that Talossan 'is' one of the oldest Romance languages, the likes of which might be spoken by the descendants of a rather isolated and conservative Latin-speaking colony planted outside Italy in the days of the old Republic.

Talossan is closer to modern Italian than to Classical Latin. The numbers indicate, again only on the basis of vocabulary, that Italian and Talossan were in some sense 'one language' until about 396 AD. Perhaps some catastrophic event in this period severed the ties between Talossan and Italian and sent each language off on a separate course. One last number is obtained by comparing Talossan with Occitan, the Romance language of the south of France which is itself a wild tangle of dialects that reflects both French and Spanish influence and can pretty well stand for an undifferentiated Western Romance. Vocabulary counts indicate that Talossan and this Western Romance speech separated from one another around the year 506 AD.

Having thus fooled the machine into calculating these numbers and analyzing Talossan as a real language and not the product of one man's creativity, what can we tell about its hypothetical speakers? When and where did they live? By way of illustration, let me offer one plausible scenario.

Talossan as an Ancient Language

1. *The Substratum: Berber and Punic*

The dominant peoples of North Africa in the second century BC were the Carthaginians and the Berbers. The Carthaginians—masters of what was at that time the greatest empire ever known to the Western Mediterranean—were Semitic-speaking colonists from Lebanon who had settled in what is now Tunisia around 800 BC. Their language, Punic, was very similar to Hebrew and was the vehicle for a great literature, none of which survives. The native Berbers toiled under Carthaginian rule and often sought opportunity for advancement by 'going Punic' and assimilating somewhat to the culture and lifestyle of the conquerors. They were the indigenous people of the region, and spoke a variety of languages, usually called "Libyan" in this period. *The Berber Project* treats them in arduous detail, but for now we can summarize by saying they were quarrelsome, litigious, and they were Talossan's "spiritual ancestors" in the same way that George Washington and the Pilgrims are my American "spiritual ancestors" even though my ancestors didn't move to the United States until long after Washington and the Pilgrims were dead in the ground.

Back in North Africa, everything changed in 146 BC when the rapidly expanding Roman Republic destroyed the city of Carthage, put an end to the Carthaginian Empire, and annexed most of the former territory of the defeated rival. Immediately the region was flooded with Roman administrators and soldiers who brought with them the Latin language. Latin is an Indo-European language quite unrelated to Berber, but quickly established itself over Africa. The first official colonization of North Africa by Latin-speakers came in 123 BC (not far from the date 'predicted' by glottochronology). Six thousand settlers, Romans and Latins, were given expropriated lands in Carthage and numerous smaller towns, mostly in the vicinity of the Bagradas, the largest (but still non-navigable) river in northern Tunisia. For political reasons, many of the earliest colonies failed; the settlers were "humble and impecunious folk and rarely of peasant stock." The failure of systematic colonization allowed rich Roman senators and knights to carve vast estates out of North Africa (Mokhtar, ch. 19). Nevertheless Latin quickly became the language of commerce and administration in Africa.

Africa was one of Rome's earliest overseas colonies, it was a rather old-fashioned Latin that was introduced; the first colonies were planted less than a century after Rome colonized what is now (linguistically) hyper-conservative Sardinia (Harris & Vincent, 315), and the bulk of our vocabulary, despite its reliance on "odd" and exotic sources, has always been Latin or Romance. This is visible in the basic vocabulary of the language: **tú** *thou*, **eu** *I*, **cînt** *one hundred*, **aici** *here*, **pâts** *country*, **patreu** *father*, **matrâ** *mother*, **fratreu** *brother*, **sorôr** *sister*, **féu** *fire*, **çéu** *sky*, **porâ** *hour*, and so forth.

Many attempts at systematic colonization in Africa used non-Romans as settlers. Some of these were unofficial "outlaw" ventures, and at other times "private migrations" (Salmon, 114; 166). The presence of comparatively few colonists, in the face of the local Punic—a language of a great (if defeated) civilization—and Berber, the language of the overwhelming majority of the natives, offered plenty of opportunity for the Latin language to become corrupted or mix with native elements. African Latin was thus a typical Romance language, permeated by influences from outside. To use the vivid analogy of Dr. Mario Pei, "each Romance tongue would appear to be a sort of linguistic sandwich, with Latin forming the meat, but peculiar development brought about by the nether and upper slices of bread." (Pei 1954, 13)

Assuming that Talossan is African Latin, such influences would account for the large number of Berber words in Talossan: several hundred, at last count. These would include such exotic looking loans as **altahál** *bodyguard*, **ehamarén** *quorum*, **guaiôt** *evil spirit*, **itri** *star*, **punapál** *stepson*, **sadart** *small house*, **tamarcoúr** *kilt*, **tinsirtâ** *nostril*, and **páscheschurp** *altar*. The dying star of Punic would also have cast some light on African Latin, and modern Talossan obliges by including such words as **emanepás** *credentials*, **münschüdâ** *stela*, **nadorar** *to take a vow*, and **malac’hiun** *slave labour*.

At the time the latinization of Africa began, in the middle of the second century BC, Latin was far from having ousted its competitors (Etruscan, Oscan, Umbrian, etc.) from Central and Southern Italy; there is evidence of the use of Oscan until at least the first century AD. And since it seems likely that many Roman soldiers and settlers who came to Africa were drawn from areas of Italy where Latin was spoken bilingually with these languages, they present us with another possible source for Talossan loans.

Modern Talossan has a few strong Celtic words that are not easily explained by a look at the history of North Africa. However, it is possible that there were some Celtic settlers in North Africa. We know that Celts, or “Celtiberians,” lived in nearby Spain, and it’s possible that some of these folks migrated to Africa during the centuries when both regions were part of the vast Carthaginian Empire. In Roman times, one “centre of Romanization” in the area was the former Numidian capital of Cirta, where several Roman colonies were planted in the first century AD. The population here consisted of Romans, Greeks, Syrians, Jews, and others; the name of one large settlement, *Castellum Celtianum* (“Fort of the Celts” or “Celtic Fort”), close to Cirta, may indicate the presence of Celtic colonists, most likely from Gaul or Spain. We should remember that North Africa began to be romanized at almost exactly the same time as Northern Italy, which at the time was considered part of Gaul (“Gallia Cisalpina”) rather than Italy—and where the native language was Celtic (Gaulish or ‘Lepontic’). And Celtic speech was alive and well in Italy for “some centuries” after Romanization began (Russell, 5). So in the centuries of Roman settlement in Africa, “Italian” colonists might actually have been Celtic-speaking.

Over the centuries there were repeated movements of people from Gaul to Africa. Starting in AD 297, the Emperor Maximian and an army from Gaul spent 18 months marching from one end of North Africa to the other, beating up on rebellious Berbers (Warmington, 8). Doubtlessly, some of the Gaulish troops remained behind as veterans or married native women and took up residence in North Africa after the war. At other times, African cavalry units were assigned to duty in Gaul, where Berber troops would have married Gaulish wives and carried them home to mum (Warmington, 11). Enormous numbers of Gauls were brought in to repress a Berber rebellion at the close of the 4th century (Warmington, 17). Tying Gaul to Africa works well for Talossan, since most Celtic words in Talossan come from the so-called “P-Celtic” branch of the family (Gaulish, Cornish, Breton and Welsh) as opposed to the “Q-Celtic” branch (Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Manx; see Russell, 16ff). In fact more Celtic words have entered Talossan from Cornish than from any other source, although the bulk of these were first published in the 1993 **Treisoúr** and they were not marked as being Cornish. This is all the fortuitous result of my own linguistic preferences, of course; I’ve always found Cornish and Breton to be the most interesting Celtic languages, much more than the flabbergasting Welsh with its flabbergasting orthography and unspeakable words (*Nghaerdydd, oeddwn, morgrug, gwrthban, Ffrancod, crwca!*) The Irish/Scottish/Manx Gaelic words in Talossan are a bit harder to explain except for the fact that the language just looks gorgeous (*seanchaí, Gaeltacht, taoiseach, tánaiste, an t-iascaire, Dáil Éireann, Ceann Comhairle*). For now I’ll leave it to President Gariçéir to advance a credible theory. But the influence of these various Celtic migrations might explain the presence in Talossan of such Celtic words as **aiceantâ** *artistry*, **va** *my*, **ár** *our*, **hüveglhorp** *condescension*, **cir** *land*, and of course **glhep** *language*.

Of course, we could pull some linguistic sleight of hand and argue that some of these words aren’t Celtic at all. The possessive adjective **ár** could come from Latin *re* ‘back,’ which became *ar* in Old Portuguese, with the meaning ‘back here’; from there it’s a short shift of meaning to ‘around here’ and then ‘of ours’—and besides, it never did quite oust the pure Latin **noastra** (‘our’). As for **va**, this can be derived from Latin *ibi* (‘there’) > *ive* > *vē* (orthographically **va** in Talossan); the form *ive* is actually found in Old Aragonese. The cognate *bi* means ‘us’ in Sardinian but shifted to the singular in Talossan and became ‘my.’ **Cir** ‘land’ is easily explained as a reflex of Vulgar Latin *cara* ‘face’ cognate to Italian *ciera*. The meaning ‘face’ shifted to ‘surface’ and then ‘land.’ Finally, even **glhep** can be tortuously explained in this fashion as a derivative from *laīnus* ‘Latin’ itself, given the famous African Latin tendency to mispronounce the letter *l* (Sittl, 68f). And the vowel change from *a* to *e* can be compared to the vowel change in Latin *annis* > *biennium*. We would have *laīnus* > *llätin* > *ljeđē*⁷ > *ljeþ* (spelled **glhep**). And so our word for “language” would really mean “Latin”—simply *the language par excellence* in the Roman Empire!⁷

⁷ The word **glhep** is one of the most identifiable yet also one of the most silly in the Talossan language. It is a hybrid of the earlier word **glhimbâ** (still found in Talossan, with the meaning “tongue,” but pre-1985 it also meant “language”) with a

During the centuries from the first Roman colonization in 123 BC until the Vandal invasion of Africa in 429 AD, the Latin language established itself as *the* language of cultured and educated persons everywhere in Roman Africa. But as happened to Latin wherever it was planted, the language grew apart from the imperial standard and took on a dialectal life of its own with its own unique characteristics. Unfortunately, what those characteristics were exactly is often hard to tell. The Romance language of Africa was completely submerged following the Arab invasions of the seventh century; there is evidence of a Romance survival in North Africa as late as the eleventh century, and possibly as late as the sixteenth; but the written records of this lost Romance language are very sparse (Lewicki, 430f). We don't know what the speakers of African Latin called themselves or their language, but Arab records refer to the language as *Latīnī* and the people as *Ruman*. Because the word *Latīnī* is ambiguous (it simply means 'Latin') we might use the distinctive word *Ruman* to refer to "North African Romance" more economically. Of course, we must be careful not to confuse *Ruman* with its distant cousin *Rumanian*, but if linguists can handle the distinction between Rumania and 'the Romania,' or between Latin and Ladin and Ladino, they can handle anything. We can compare the few surviving remnants of African Latin—some glosses in mediæval Arabic documents, and numerous Latin loanwords in Berber—to get an idea of the nature of this lost Romance speech. We can only draw a handful of direct conclusions as to the nature of *Ruman*, given what sparse records remain. But what we find is remarkably Talossan.

2. North African Latin and Ruman

The early date at which the latinization of Africa began (the middle of the second century BC) implies that the Latin carried to Africa represents an earlier phase in the development of Latin than that represented by the language carried to other areas. The latinization of most of Gaul did not begin until a century after the Roman annexation of Africa, for instance, while that of Dacia (approximately modern Rumania) does not begin until the second century AD. The idioms of the separate Roman provinces represent a varying degree of conservatism, in the order of their dates of conquest. On the hypothesis that colonized areas often retain features of speech which are abandoned in the parent-state (a hypothesis that finds support in the history of English in America), then it is predictable that African Latin will find some features of second-century BC Latin which were then abandoned in the Latin of Rome and other, more recently Latinized, provinces.

Surviving records of African Latin can best be compared to pre-Classical Latin; even into the 4th and 5th centuries AD African Latin "presents so many striking analogies with the language of Plautus," (Cooper, xxvii) a Roman author who died in 184 BC. As has been pointed out, the dialect of Sardinia—the earliest acquired territory outside of Italy (including Sicily)—possesses the greatest number of archaisms of all the Romance languages, while Spanish, Portuguese, Occitan-Catalan, French, Alpine Romance and Rumanian show—in that order—successive states of the popular language of Italy, the *sermo plebeius*. Finally Italian, representing the vulgar speech in its native land where its ultimate development was attained, is furthest removed from the classic Latin (Cooper, xxviii). Of course, the Latin language was spoken in Africa for more than a thousand years, but because of the fragmented nature of its surviving records, it is difficult to really trace its evolution from a conservative Latin dialect into a *bona fide* Romance language—Ruman—which died out under pressure from Arabic sometime around the turn of the last millennium.

During its long history, African Latin and 'Ruman' left records from which we can divine something of the local characteristics of the great regional dialect which grew up there. Because of its economic importance, its eminent place in Roman history with its name so closely linked to Carthage, the Vandals, the Byzantines, and the Arabs, its primacy in the early stages of Christianity with outstanding names like Tertullian, Arnobius, Cyprian, and Augustine, its pagan writers like Apuleius and Terence who contributed to popular Roman literature, North Africa occupies a unique place in the history of those areas that once spoke Latin but no longer do—what Tagliavini calls "*la Romània perduta*." And as such, North Africa has been the recipient of far more scholarship than any other such area, including Britain (Omeltschenko, 54ff).

The Latin which was carried to Africa by the first colonists was still highly archaic, and as a result, even in the narrow literary circles which sprang up in that province, the language remained many degrees behind that of Rome and preserved far more of its native vigour and spontaneity. Their vocabulary "contained a curious mixture of archaic, poetic, and vulgar elements" (Cooper, xxxvi). Africans used—or abused—prefixes and suffixes to create new words in ways that startled the Latin purists (Sittl, 140f; Cooper, xxxvi). However, at least in the 2nd and 3rd centuries and again in Augustine's day, North Africa held "the intellectual leadership of the Western half of the Empire" and left its marks all over the Latin language of the age

Celtic word for "language," *yeth* (Breton *yez*, Welsh *iaith*). So why tack the initial Romance *glh-* onto the Celtic *yeth*? Very simple: I had already created an organization called **CÚG** and although I was changing the word for "language," I didn't want to change the acronym! So Celtic or no Celtic, the Talossan word for "language" had to begin with the letter G. Hence *glh* + *yeth* = **glheþ**. So now you know.

(Warmington, 103). Cooper lists throughout his book hundreds of “Africanisms” which eventually passed into common or ecclesiastical Latin and from there to English. Just a few of these African Latin terms now used in English are: *Adorable, culpable, acceptable, nullification, sanctification, clarification, fortification, populous, compress, constrict, obstruct*, etc. Each one of these words was created by an African Latin writer; they are all in common use by Talossans today—in English!

African authors became infamous for their supposed ‘excitability.’ They were addicted to the overuse of the Latin adjectival suffix *-issimus* (c.f. Italian *bravissimo!*) In these and other ways North Africa became what Karl Sittl calls “*die enfant terrible der klassischen Zeit*” (Sittl, 132). Africans also attracted attention for what became known as the “Tumor Africanus,” *tumor* retaining its Classical Latin meaning of “an inflamed state of mind.” The “Tumor Africanus” was an overused regional rhetorical device which consists of piling together roughly synonymous substantives to create such monstrous redundancies as “*lechery of lust*,” “*boastful arrogance*,” “*obscurity of darkness*,” “*arcane mysteries*,” “*tranquility of peace*,” “*chrismatic unction*,” “*avaritious desire*,” “*deadly downfall*,” “*inane vanity*,” “*charity of benevolence*,” “*drunken bacchanalia*,” “*languid womanly laziness*,” “*sleepy sleep*,” and “*chaste virgins*” (Sittl, 92ff). The overall effect is similar to John Jahn and appears to come from Semitic and Biblical precedent. Like the Middle-Eastern authors in the Empire, Africans drew little distinction between poetry and prose, or rather, as Sittl writes, they had a “poetic prose” which went hand in hand with their “prosaic poetry” (Sittl, 84).

In terms of its grammar as well, African Latin often led the way into Vulgar Latin. Even in Tertullian’s day—he wrote in Carthage around 200 AD—the African Latin language was tending towards modern Romance usage, with the prepositions *de* and *ad* replacing the genitive and dative cases, *plus* being used in a comparative rôle, and the analytic future in *habeo* tending to oust the synthetic inflected forms of Classical Latin (Sittl, 126). Oddly for a Romance language, African Latin often formed its nouns on the basis of the Latin nominative form as opposed to the accusative (which was more common in Vulgar Latin). Talossan, which has derived many words from Latin using English-Latin dictionaries in which the nominative form alone is listed, shares this trait. So does Sardinian. Perhaps the most important feature of Ruman is the demonstrated fact that it, like Talossan, forms most of its plurals in *-s* (or *-s*) like French, Spanish, Occitan, Sardinian, and Portuguese—but unlike Italian and Rumanian, which form plurals by changing or adding a vowel at the end of a word. This demonstrates conclusively that African Latin was part of the Western rather than the Eastern (Italian/Rumanian) Romance sub-group (Lewicki, 480; for debate about this, see Omeltchenko, 39f).

Phonetically, the Latin spoken in Africa took on a number of interesting regional features. Latin *b* and *v* [w] sounds tended to be confused in Africa; most authors speculate that both letters were pronounced [ʃ] as they are today in Spanish. Africans tended to resolve the ambiguity by writing *h* in all cases: *birtus, boluntas, bita* for *virtus, voluntas, vita* (Schuchardt 1:97f). In Talossan, the same ambiguity is resolved in favour of *v* (**vagnhâ, valançâ, vepaviôr**). It is worth noting that this confusion is not only present in African Latin, but in northern Portuguese, Gascon, southern Italian, Old Rumanian, as well as Sardinian (Grandgent, 133f; Wagner 1941, 95ff). An exceptionally peculiar sound shift in African Latin is the change of *di* to *zi* as in African *zies* (Latin *dies*), or *ziaconus* (Lat. *diaconus*). The same feature is seen in Rumanian, and it’s Rumanian that inspired the same fortuitous sound-shift in Talossan: **ziuâ** day, **zizarë** to say, **zéu** god, etc. (Coincidence? Ha!)

Like Talossans, Africans always turned double consonants single (Lewicki, 479). Talossan and African Latin also share a penchant for sibilants such as **sch, xh** and **tx**. This was noted as early as classical times; according to Roman writers, Punic was rich in sibilants, “like the Slavic languages,” and one modern author claims that Latin in the mouths of North Africans must have sounded something like German when pronounced by Slavs! (Sittl, 77) A hint of this may be present in African inscriptions, in which the letter *x* is often replaced by *xs*. We don’t know how *xs* was pronounced, but it seems an odd way to represent the sound [ks]. Perhaps it stood for the sound we write **sch** in Talossan. (*X* became [ʃ] in other Romance languages, such as Rheto-Romance.) It appears in such words as *exemplo, uxsor*, and *Alexsandria*. If so, then we should write these words in Talossan: **eschempleu, uschôr, Aleschândriâ**. The same sound may be represented in cases where Africans wrote *x* instead of *s*: *fidelix, milex, xacti, xanctissimo*. These could have been pronounced *fidelisch, milesch, schacti, schanctissimo*; the letter *x* represents this sound in modern Portuguese and Catalan, as well as in old Spanish. And although there is no way to actually tell what was meant, some African writers placed an accent mark (‘apex’) over the letter *s* in some inscriptions; perhaps this indicated the [ʃ] sound as well: *annîs, manibus, duobus*. A different sibilant sound occurs in the Latin ending *-tia*, which became *-zia* in Italian. The same pronunciation [tsia] seems to have prevailed in African Latin, where we find words like *Vonifatzia, Pretzios* and *Vincentzia*.

Again as in Talossan, Africans vacillated over how to pronounce *c* before *e* or *i*. Sometimes they would use the English ‘ch’ sound, as in Italian; at other times they would use a *ts* sound, and at still other times they retained the hard [k]

sound, as in Sardinian.⁸ But, again as in Talossan, Latin *g* before *e* or *i* always became [dʒ] or, as Talossans write it, **xh** (Lewicki, 477ff). Africans are also reported, like Talossans, to have had ‘problems’ with their *l* sounds (Schuchardt, 1:97f).

Interesting changes occurred in African Latin vowels as well. Some authors have argued that the vowels of African Latin “remained closer to classicity than other dialects” and that Africa appeared to follow, more or less, the so-called “Sardinian” vocalism in which the vowels of Classical Latin lost all distinction in terms of length, but did not change in quality (Omeltchenko, 23f). However, looking at the inscriptions, this does not seem always to be the case. For instance, Latin *i* (short) often became African *e* exactly as in the Balkan and Western Romance language, but *not* as in Sardinian, where it remained *i*. More oddly, Latin *e* shifted to *i* in many African words: examples include timpus, Calcidonia, Homirum, divota. This phenomenon is known only in Rumanian—and of course Talossan (**timp**). Latin *u* sometimes evolved into African *o* (example: volontatis) as in Western Romance and unlike Sardinian. On a more Talossan note, African Latin appears to have shared with our own language rounded front vowels. The Latin vowel *u* was frequently written *i* in African inscriptions; in all likelihood this *i* represented the intermediate [ü] sound: Hadrimeto, monimentum, reciperati. The use of *y* in the African inscriptions where we should expect *u* may also indicate the [ü] sound: Emiliys, Astyria, inclytus (Omeltchenko, 102f). Finally, we also find cases where Latin *o* is written *e* and again this probably implies an intermediate [ö] sound, e.g. Honerata for *Honorata*, perhaps pronounced [honörata].

A document which may or may not tell us much about the state of African Latin is the famous *Appendix Probi*. This is a wordlist dating from the third century, whose author lists several “wrong” forms found in the vernacular speech of ordinary people, and ‘corrects’ them by listing the proper Latin equivalent. Scholarly opinion is divided on whether the *Appendix Probi* comes from Carthage or Rome, and thus whether it represents the speech of Africans or Romans (Pei 1976, 61). Tilting the balance in favour of Africa, at least for me, is the presence in the list of the names of two relatively obscure North African towns with their vernacular and ‘proper’ pronunciations.

There are other elements among the relics of African Latin which resemble Talossan. The first person singular pronoun *ego* was reduced to eo (Talossan **eu**), while the word *femina* was clipped to femna—identical with Talossan **femnã**. The word *plus* was clipped down to pus in at least one African inscription—clearly heading towards Talossan **pü**. And the uniquely Talossan phenomenon of double ‘n’ becoming **dn** in Talossan (which was really inspired by Icelandic) is mirrored in an African inscription where Latin *annis* is written adnis! Clearly, African Latin is about the best Romance analogy we can draw for modern Talossan, and it is my desire to exploit any similarities to the maximum possible degree. Beyond the meagre sources at hand, however, we really know very little about Latin and, especially, Ruman—the post-Latin Romance language of Africa. Fortunately, we can get closer to a knowledge of it by investigating its closest relatives.

3. Our Closest Relatives: Sardinian, Mozarabic, and Lucanian

African Latin, Sardinian, and Mozarabic form a trio of Romance languages with much in common. This comes as no surprise; the three areas in which they were spoken⁹ have much in common as well. North Africa, Sardinia, and southern Spain were all inhabited in prehistoric times by Berbers, and then colonized by Punic-speaking Carthaginians. All were conquered by the Romans within a 92-year span in the age before Christ (Sardinia in 238, Spain in 197, and Africa in 146). All were subject to Roman rule for roughly the same amount of time, and then all were conquered by Gothic-speaking Germanic tribes within a 45-year span in the Christian era (Spain in 411, Carthage in 439, Sardinia around 456). Later, after the close of the period which concerns us, all were reconquered by the Byzantines (Carthage 533, Sardinia, 553? southern Spain, 554) and then by the Arabs (Carthage 697, Sardinia 711, Spain 711-718). At that point, the three territories go their separate ways. Africa remains Arab, Sardinia was recovered by Italians around 915, and Spain was reconquered for Christianity after a series of bloody wars lasting almost seven hundred years—the last Muslim territory was only liberated in 1492.

⁸ Interestingly, Dale Morris of CÚG was encouraging me to use hard [k] sounds in this very way, even before I discovered that this was a characteristic of North African Latin!

⁹ “Are spoken,” in the case of Sardinian, though its current state is precarious. Because of its hyperconservatism, Sardinian is an exceptionally cool language, which lots of Talossan sounds like *þ*, *ð*, and a devoiced *L* (in some dialects). It has a bunch of odd features like using Latin *ipsus* rather than *illus* as the basis for its definite article (unlike all other Romance languages). Also, Sardinia has the distinction of being the only place on earth where Catalan—another way-cool Romance language—functioned as a colonial language! As a result there are lots of Catalan loanwords in Sardinian.

The pre-Punic, pre-Roman inhabitants of Sardinia were in all likelihood Berbers. Ancient tradition considered them immigrants from North Africa, and Roman sources comment that their dress and way of life was indistinguishable from the Berber peoples 300 miles away to the south. Physically the two peoples are identical and form a type called “Sardo-Libyan” (Wagner 1951, 7ff). Beginning in the sixth century BC the Carthaginians planted colonies on Sardinia and reinforced its Berber population by importing many Berber slaves from Africa; the resulting mixed Berber-Punic population became the “Sardinians” (Wagner 1951, 13f). But the island became an impoverished backwater in the far-flung Roman Empire after its conquest by the Romans in 238, and virtually dropped off the historical radar screen. Starting with the Vandal conquest around 456, Sardinia was plunged into “*immiseramento*”; Education and Latin culture dried up. Exactly how depressing things were can be gleaned from the fact that the name of the island inspired the word “sardonic”! The language retreated into a hard conservative shell, and today the Sardinians speak what is agreed on all hands to be the most archaic Romance language in existence (Wagner 1951, 39). When Dante went rummaging through Italian dialects, he had the chance to use Sardinian as the basis for his artificial ‘Italian,’ but unfortunately he misjudged its similarity to Classical Latin and concluded that the Sardinians had no language of their own but rather “imitated Latin... the way monkeys imitate men” (Elcock, 474f).

This is not the place to detail every bizarre feature of Sardinian; an adequate description is at hand in Harris and Vincent (see bibliography). We will note, however, that Sardinian is apparently close in many respects to African Latin. The first Sardinian writer of any note, Lucifer of Cagliari (d. ca. 370) writes in almost the exact same style as the African writers Tertullian and Cyprian (Wagner 1951, 37). A number of phonetic innovations are shared between Sardinia and Africa, which Terracini ascribes to “a Mediterranean and more particularly a Libyan fact” (Wagner 1941, 271). The so-called African confusion of B and V was in fact common to Sardinia and Spain as well (Wagner 1951, 37). The most famous phonetic feature of Sardinian is its preservation of the hard [k] sound before *e* and *i*, e.g. Sardinian *kera* “wax” (Spanish *cera*), *kirkare* “to search for” (Italian *cercare*), *kelu* “sky” (French *ciel*; Elcock, 53). In Ruman too, some words preserved the [k] sound: Ruman *kentinar* (Talossan **chentenáir**) from Latin *centenarius*; Ruman *kellas* (Talossan **chelàs**) from Latin *cellas* (Lewicki, 478). In the realm of vocabulary, Wagner points out that the distinctive ‘Sardinian’ word for ‘Friday,’ *kenápura*, was actually current in Africa and came to Sardinia from there (Wagner 1941, 271)! Sardinians and African Berbers today refer to the Milky Way as the “way of straw” (Wagner 1951, 303). African inscriptions of the third century and modern Sardinian share the same word for “to know,” *iskire* (Wagner 1941, 72; Adams, 106). Virtually the entire system of noun declension in modern Sardinian can be reconstructed from African Latin inscriptions, and one scholar concludes with certainty, “The Latin of African inscriptions, although classical in nature, conforms closely to Sardinian even in its deviations” (Omeltchenko, 281f, 376ff, and 312).

A variety of other words and collocations, unique to the Africa-Sardinia-Spain area, prove that these three regions formed a single linguistic ‘zone’ in Roman times (Wagner 1951, 125-130). At least for the relationship between Sardinian and African Latin, Frederick B. Agard comments that the Romance languages form three distinct groups—Eastern, Italo-Western, and Southern—and links African and Sardinian together: “Common Romance splits three ways into Southern, Eastern, and Italo-Western Romance. Southern comprises those dialects of lower Italia (mostly in Lucania) which ultimately prevailed in Sicilia, Sardinia, Corsica, and North Africa” (Agard, 61; Omeltchenko, 23ff and 59f).

A separate source which modern Talossan can plunder for ideas, on account of its similarity to African Latin, is Mozarabic—the former Romance language of southern Spain, eliminated by Castilian in the wake of the *Reconquista*. (Mozarabic was, as its name implies, heavily influenced by Arabic; below when we discuss “Mozarabic” it is the *Romance* features that we will draw attention to.) Many features of Mozarabic were quite close to Portuguese, which was of course one of the most profound and early influences on the young Talossan language (Entwistle, 59). That Latin of Spain, we are told, bore great resemblance to African Latin (Cooper, xxxv), and its Mozarabic offspring bears an eerie resemblance to Talossan, with its predilection for diphthongs (*Pampaneira*, *yenáir*, *plantáin*), and the ‘oily’ L sound represented by **glh** in Talossan (*medalya*, *velyo*). The letter *c* before *e* or *i* was *sometimes* pronounced as ‘ch’ as in Italian (*Turruçel*, *Conçel*, *Conçillos*), but, as in Talossan, not always (ELH 1:314f). The Mozarabic past participle in *-at* (*enfilyat*; Tovar 1977, 71ff) is also familiar. Like Talossan (and also Catalan) Mozarabic had a penchant for dropping final vowels so that words ended in consonants (Entwistle, 119). The Latin [j] sound often became [ʃ] in Mozarabic, as in Talossan and Ruman (Entwistle, 122; Lewicki, 478). Word-final *l* in Mozarabic—as also in African Latin, and Talossan—often weakened or velarized; c.f. Talossan words like **naziunál**, **utúl**, and **pol** (Entwistle, 110f). 13th century Leonese, which was quite close to Mozarabic, featured diphthongs such as in *muarto* and *nuastra*, which almost exactly match Talossan **moart** and **noastra** (Entwistle, 140 and 115). Mozarabic *ēs* “is” was virtually identical to Talossan **isch** (Entwistle, 116). Compare this substandard but valuable Mozarabic ditty (Entwistle, 116) with Talossan:

<u>Mozarabic:</u>	<i>Albâ, albâ ês òa luğ an ûna ðÿyeh.</i>
<u>Talossan:</u>	Alvoradâ, alvoradâ, isch da lux în ünâ ziuâ.
<u>(Translation:</u>	“Dawn, dawn, is of the light in a day.”)

Another curious feature of Mozarabic was the confusion of *m* and *n* sounds. Latin *colomba*, “dove,” is recorded as *colonba* in one Mozarabic text (ELH 1:324); compare Talossan **cunfirt** to English *comfort*. The same feature is attested from Africa: anfitheatri. We can be fairly certain that African Latin sounded very similar to Sardinian, Mozarabic, and Talossan.

A third and final source of potential inspiration for modern Talossan are the so-called Lucanian dialects of Southern Italy. Scholars have also discussed the mutual relationships between Southern Italy and Africa to shed light on factors that were important in the development of the Latin of Africa (Omeltchenko, 472). In his pioneering study on the history of the Romance languages, Robert A. Hall demonstrates that the earliest separation from common Romance was a group he calls “Southern Romance,” which would have included the lost Latin of Africa as well as the languages of Sardinia, Sicily and the Lucanian dialect of the ‘toe’ of the Italian ‘boot’ (Hall, 24). This is a particularly screwy region of Italy, insofar as it contains a complex of odd dialects which are more reminiscent of Rumanian and Sardinian than Italian. The work of Mazzola (see bibliography) and others demonstrate that Sicilian, although heavily Italianized, is closer to Sardinian—and thus to African Latin—than to Italian, which might inspire Talossans eager to clothe their national identity with the unique customs of the Sicilian *Dons*.

As for the Lucanian dialects themselves, these are not well studied; but an important article by Clifford S. Leonard (see bibliography) reconstructs proto-Lucanian on the basis of several modern dialects. The one that is closest to Sardinian is the dialect of Nova Siri (with ‘Sardinian-style’ vowels), but other dialects, such as that of Castelmezzano (with ‘Rumanian-style’ vowels) and Matera (with ‘Italo-Western-style’ vowels) are, at least according to Hall, closely related to African Latin (Hall, 24). These dialects, which are very much alive today, have some peculiarly Talossan (and un-Italian) features, such as rounded front vowels—*lunëdü*, ‘Monday’; *døndë*, ‘tooth’—and reduction of final *a* to schwa (Latin *captiva* > Matera *kattübë* ‘widow’). The relationship between African Latin, Sardinian, and Lucanian can be seen in the numerals from 1 to 10:

LATIN:	<i>unus, duo, tres, quattuor, quinque, sex, septem, octo, novem, decem</i>
AFRICAN:	<i>unu, duo, tres, qator, ceqe, seks, sebtima, oto, nobe, bisuuiq</i>
SARDINIA:	<i>unu, duos, tres, battor, kimbe, sès, sètte, òtto, nobe, dèke</i>
LUCANIA:	<i>unë, dujë, trë, kwattë, cüngë, søjë, söttë, gottë, nobë, dəsë</i>

The Lucanian dialects (as well as South Italian generally) contain a large percentage of loans from Greek—a characteristic of North African Latin as well (Cooper, xlv). In an exhaustive synthesis of the whole big picture, as noted above, Frederick Agard concludes that Sicily, Sardinia, Lucania and North Africa form a common group which he calls Southern Romance (Agard, 61). The relationship of Mozarabic to this complex is more distant but no less certain (Omeltchenko, 472).

3. African Latin vs. Germans and Indians

Broadly defined, African Latin is a remarkably clever analogy for Ben’s Talossan. A real “crossroads” language, lying almost at the very geographic centre of the Latin-speaking world but, unlike Italian, without the prestige of Rome to bolster its conservatism, African Latin often seems like a hodgepodge of elements. Here or there it resembles French, Occitan, Sardinian, Spanish and Portuguese, even Rhaeto-Romance.¹⁰ And where Talossan shows some ‘progressive’ tendency here or there, this can be ascribed to the simple fact that Carthage was but three days’ sail from Rome and thus open to a variety of innovative influences! Today, what little we can find in the scholarly record about African Latin is ruthlessly exploited to increase and in some cases replace the older vocabulary of Talossan. Hundreds of words of proven or likely African Latin derivation are now given prominence in modern Talossan. These include ‘popular’ words recovered from their surviving reflexes in Berber, such as **tärfä** *truffle*, **amnáir** *doorstep*, **imeruì** *rue (plant)*, **snäps** *mustard*, **telenti** *lentil*, **schpartél** *esparto grass*, and **almâ** *lawn*—plus a host of ‘learned’ words extracted from the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian and other African writers, many of which can be found in the 1997 edition of the **Treisoûr**.

Men and women who spoke those words of African Latin in the fourth to the eighth centuries AD also created a distinctive script in which to write them. This is the so-called *uncial* script, which is best known in its distinctive and decorative Irish varieties but which originated in fact as a Roman hand in Africa. It is characterized by its very steep pen angle. Uncial was a popular script used in the text of books from the fourth to the eighth centuries, and the earliest surviving uncial manuscripts have their origins in North Africa. The oldest datable uncial script is from Hippo Regius and was written some time between

¹⁰ For specific and pointed resemblances between African Latin and the scattered Romance languages listed here, see the following sources: French (Adams 1994, 96ff), Occitan (Lewicki, 440f), Sardinian (Adams 1994, 106; Lewicki, 478), Rhaeto-Romance (Lewicki, 473), Spanish and Portuguese (Schuchhardt 1866, 279), and Mozarabic (Tagliavini, 177).

396 and 426 (Daniels & Bright, 311f). The title of this article is written in ‘Oncial,’ a modern computer font adaptation of this unique North African uncial script.

This, then, was the language spoken by educated Africans in 429 when Africa was invaded by the Vandals. Nothing could have been more unexpected in North Africa than these conquerors of Germanic origin. Under their kings and their military aristocracy the Vandals seized Carthage in 438, and soon they had control of the seas and were raiding Rome itself. Linguistically, the Vandals tossed another piece of bread on top of the sandwich. Looking at Talossan as a restored language, one can argue that many of the words Ben Madison created for Talossan from Icelandic or English actually entered into the ancient Talossan speech from the Gothic spoken by the Vandals. For instance Talossan **ërbhët** *work assignment* can be ascribed not to German *arbeit* but rather to its own parent, the Gothic *arbáip̃s*. Other Germanic loans in Talossan (which may or may not have defensible Gothic cognates) include **holmoũr** *islet*, **iburðaláiçeu** *homely*, **hreßar** *to invigorate*, **sotreinsadar** *to disinfect*, and **sámbánd** *connexion*. Definitely Gothic are **ándahaft** *captivity*, **gac’hláiva** *companion*, **vrugñhã** *breastplate*, **faðréins** *paternity* and **gavárpic’h** *at peace*.

The Vandal period marked almost a century of intense Germanic influence on the language of the Latin-speaking Berber population of North Africa comparable to the first century of French impact on English following the Norman conquest of 1066. But according to *The Berber Project*, there was a small exodus of Donatist (heretical Christian) refugees from North Africa around the year 502, recorded in Catholic Church records. These individuals—Latin-speaking Berbers from North Africa—are said by *The Berber Project* to have settled in prehistoric Wisconsin, where they left some artifacts and contributed to the so-called Effigy Mound culture of Talossa and its hinterland. All the historical evidence for this is presented in *The Berber Project*, and will not be repeated here. Here we are concerned exclusively with the *linguistic* implications of that putative migration.

The Donatist migration cannot have been very large. The Effigy Mound culture, which they helped create on Wisconsin soil, only numbered some 3,000 individuals at its peak. We are talking about a maximum of a few hundred people (or survivors) who made it to the shore of Lake Michigan in the early sixth century. In a ‘normal’ speech-community, such as that of the Anglo-Saxons, the linguistic influence of a single individual must always be extremely insignificant. In English, we can hardly point to an example of such a thing other than brand-names (*kleenex*, *xerox*, etc). Lewis Carroll’s *chortle* (made up from *snort* + *chuckle*) affords one of the very few examples of a word created by an individual becoming part of the normal language. But, at the birth of ancient Talossan in the New World, matters would not have been at all like this; in such a tiny community the speech of every individual must have been of vital significance. One could compare it to the birth of the Pitcairnese language, spoken on Pitcairn Island by the descendants of the famous *Bounty* mutineers—nine British seamen and eighteen Polynesians (see Ross and Moverley, in bibliography).

Nevertheless, these Latin-speaking Berbers were able to impose their language on at least a portion of the native people of Wisconsin, and it would appear that African Latin—we will henceforth call it “Talossan” to save space—was the everyday language of the Effigy Mound culture and of its later stage, known as Oneota to the archaeologists. The Talossan-speakers entered into a totally new environment. They were probably city folk, who brought few skills with them that could sustain them on the frontier. Little they had or knew was of practical value; perhaps the migration included a substantial component of clergy. At any rate they had little technological impact on the remnant Hopewell population they found in Wisconsin, aside from a profound and dramatic importation of African Berber artistic motifs which quickly made their way into Effigy Mound and Oneota pottery. But they survived, thanks to the native peoples whom they married, dominated, or converted. The Talossans quickly became an *American* people, totally cut off from North Africa—where the Latin language and the Donatist religion both eventually withered and died.

On Talossan soil the Talossan language continued to evolve, but slowly. Colonial languages are often markedly conservative; witness the examples of Sardinian, Icelandic, and American English. But Talossan was permeated with new words from Native American languages—especially from Hokan, the language of the Moundbuilders—for concepts, tools and animals unfamiliar to the North African colonists. These loans add yet another strange layer to the Talossan vocabulary, including terms such as: **c’haquã** *arrowhead*, **pucjà** *basket*, **samuquirar** *to be jealous*, **aimôglh** *bighorn sheep*, and **cevággh** *bluejay*. Perhaps it is to this period that we might attribute some of the “strange” features of Talossan. For instance, its radical simplification to a single verbal conjugation (down from the four of Classical Latin and most Romance languages alike), or the loss of any distinction in the verb between the 1st and 3rd person plural.

This is not the place to outline the 1,500 year “history” of Talossan in American; *The Berber Project* does that, and if you don’t own a copy, you should. This is, however, because of a lack of written records, the “mystery period” for the Talossan language and as such, can be fertile ground for all sorts of speculation. (How *did* all those Icelandic words get into

Talossan? Well, maybe the Vikings brought them when they were putzing around the Midwest, carving the Kensington Rune Stone!) Suffice it to say that the Talossan language survived, on the lips of one documented individual, as late as the 1840's. William Pidgeon, an American archaeologist of sorts, recorded a phrase in what he called "the ancient Elk language," or the language of the deposed Moundbuilders of Wisconsin, which is self-evidently a Romance language. The phrase, which Pidgeon wrote as "*Ala sha-lah lu-lah; ala sha-lah me-nah*" was translated by Pidgeon as "God save the King; God save the people." A lengthy defence of this is found in *The Berber Project*. The man who spoke these Romance words, an elderly Indian named De-coo-dah, was the last known speaker of Talossan prior to its 'restoration'; he was, if one can make the preposterous comparison to Cornish, the Dolly Pentreath of Talossan. We can claim that the last "native speaker" of Talossan died around 1840, and we are reviving "his" language.

Conclusion: What Do I Want Talossan to Be?

Talossan can "be" any one of a number of things:

- ' An expression of Ben Madison's personal linguistic idiosyncracies
- ' A linguistic grab-bag of ideas proposed by its various speakers
- ' A linguistic restoration of an ideological past ("*The Berber Project*")
- ' A combination of all of these

Since Talossan is a "planned language," its course can *and must* be directed "artificially" by external authority, in this case, CÚG. The question facing us is, in which direction should we direct it? Clearly the dominant model today is firmly 'Berber,' whatever that means in Talossa. Most if not all devotees of the Talossan language are enthusiastic about the underlying ideology, or mythos, of *The Berber Project*, and feel comfortable with the job of "restoring" Talossan not so much as "the language they spoke," but *the kind of language they would have spoken*—not African Latin alone, but African Latin after 1,000 years of evolution in the New World. Aside from its fanciful underpinnings, we appear to be engaged in the same kind of revival project as Hebrew or Cornish, and therefore we should add 'distinctive' African Latin words to Talossan. For example, though Talossan uses the words **piovâ** and its derivatives (Latin: *pluvia*) to mean 'rain,' we now know that the word *pluvia* was never used in Africa. Instead, Africans consistently used the word *imber* (once again, this shows their tendency to exaggerate; *imber* means 'a heavy or violent rainstorm' but Africans used it to describe any rain at all!) So, we ought to add *imber*—Talossanized as **imbreu**—to our vocabulary.

Unfortunately, it is with cases like *imber* that the 'language revival' aspect of Talossan gets hairy, and maybe even controversial. From a purely linguistic viewpoint there are 'problems' with seeing Talossan entirely as an offshoot of *The Berber Project*. There are numerous elements in Talossan which bear 'looking into' from a North African point of view. If you list a series of features in which Gallo-Romance differs from the rest of Romance, not infrequently you find Talossan on the Gallo side of the line. Words like **frumátx** *cheese*, **tréi** *very*, **plörar** *to weep*, and **arivar** *to arrive* are all Gallicisms; they would not have existed in any Romance language spoken in North Africa in the sixth century AD. In his books *Die lexikalische Differenzierung der romanischen Sprachen* and *Romanische Sprachgeographie*, Gerhard Rohlfs outlines over a hundred words in all the Romance languages which are 'diagnostic' of the subdivisions of Romance, and tells their history in some detail, with maps illustrating the geographic distribution of each word. Comparing each word with its Talossan equivalent (I just scribbled the Talossan word over the North African parts of the map, which were blank!) we find that Talossan fares moderately well as a representation of African Latin. Words such as **nipil** *nothing*, **vitricôur** *stepfather*, **orp** *blind*, **pestar** *to beg*, **cjár** *oak*, **müridoûr** *mason*, **câps** *head*, **comprar** *to buy*, **vucul** *uncle*, **obliar** *to forget*, **xháirâ** *goat*, **tirë** *to have*, **nuxheddâ** *hazelnut*, **côstigâ** *maple*, **soviâlâ** *awl*, **falscheu** *distaff*, **pircutar** *to play a musical instrument*, **schocrâ** *mother-in-law*, **amar** *to love*, **mariar** *to marry*, **titeu** *small*, **pol** *rooster*, **mál** *bad*, **sinistrâ** *left*, **asineu** *donkey*, **tempâ** *temple (of head)*, **menar** *to drive cattle*, **captiu** *captive*, **Natál** *Christmas* are of the right conservative type—including several Berber loanwords—that we would expect to find in Africa, but other words are more problematical.¹¹

A few words on the list are just mysterious; Talossan **aglhôrc** *then* is clearly related to French *alors*, but the final "c"

¹¹ The word **mariar** was used by Augustine, so it had currency in Africa, though there were other words for *to marry* in African Latin. By fortunate coincidence it also exists in French, which is where we got it from. **Titeu** originally came from French *petit*, but Talossan **titeu** somehow lost its first syllable—and ended up identical to the word *titu* which means "small" and is found in several S. Italian dialects that Restored Talossan is 'supposed to' be related to after all!

is a mystery; perhaps it can be blamed on Latin *hæc* ‘this’ and the whole word put down to Vulgar Latin **ad illa hora hæc > a ll’ó’ra’c > allórac > aglhôrc* (roughly “at that there time”). Other ‘problems’ can be taken in stride; these include Talossan’s use of **pü** (from Latin *plus*, ‘more’) to form the comparative, when Latin *magis* (‘more’) was actually the more common term in Africa (c.f. Spanish *más*, Rumanian *mai*, Portuguese *mais*). However, *plus* was used by African authors such as Tertullian and so its use in Talossan is defensible. Talossan **mênxhar** *to eat* also appears to be a Gallicism, but its etymon (Latin *manducare*) was found occasionally in the classical language and so this, too, is defensible in Talossan.

Several of Rohlf’s basic terms are Germanic loanwords in Talossan: **apál** *apple*, **brenar** *to burn*, **gariçar** *to heal*,¹² **frù** *lady*, **zueria** *war*, **schpiun** *spoon*, **frozuâ** *frog*. These can all be explained (or at least explained away) by ascribing them to Gothic influence, even though not all the words are actually attested from the limited surviving Gothic corpus. Another word on Rohlf’s list is *mare* (female horse) which has no Latin derivative in Talossan; our word **taimartâ** is a loan from Berber *2a(mar2)*. Other interesting terms appear when good Latin words change their meanings in Talossan or new words are formed. Thus the word for “belly” in the Romania is universally based on Latin *venter*. But Talossan uses Latin *stomachus*: **stomác** (probably a calque on English, which uses ‘belly’ and ‘stomach’ more or less interchangeably). However, Latin *venter* does survive in the Talossan word **baßvâintrâ** *abdomen*. Another curious example is the word for “calf” (young cow) which is **toriteu** in Talossan, literally “little bull” from Latin **tauritus*, attested nowhere else in the Romania.

The most difficult are the numerous Gallicisms in the list. These are words of French origin which arose or became popular long after the presumed AD 502 migration of Talossans from Africa to Wisconsin; these words simply would never have entered their language.¹³ Talossan may have started out in 1980 as a split-off from French in many ways, because Ben Madison studied French rather than Spanish at Riverside High School. (It is fascinating to imagine what Talossan would look like today if Riverside had not offered French!) But Restored Talossan dare not acknowledge the debt too openly. “The Latin of Gaul is undoubtedly the most innovative variant of Latin... and differs fundamentally from the Latin of Africa” (Omeltchenko, 464). But if we look at Talossan vocabulary we quickly find a number of Gallic intruders. Under this heading we can include Talossan **soléigh** *sun*, which is a diminutive form (more or less ‘cute little sun’) found only in French. Africans, most likely used the root form **sol* but, given their penchant for overusing diminutives, it is not impossible that **soléigh** or something like it would have been spoken in Africa. Another example is Talossan **boghar** *to boil*. The older Latin word was *fervere*, from which we might expect a Talossan **fiervar*. Another questionable word is **demâ** *tomorrow*, from the Latin *de mane* (which first appears in the Vulgate translation of the Bible in the 4th century). It is barely plausible in Talossan although Sardinian and S. Italian dialects retain the older Latin word, *cras*, which no doubt had currency in Africa as well. A plausible Talossan reflex of this would be **crái*. The Talossan word for ‘to arrive,’ **arivar**, is another French import; Spain and Sicily retain the older Latin *plicare* ‘to arrive’ while the French *arriver* has spread over France, Italy, Catalonia and Sardinia. While it’s conceivable that *arriver* could have arrived in North Africa before 502, more likely some reflex of *plicare* should be the Talossan for ‘to arrive.’ **Cicar*, attested from Sicily, is suggested.

Our word for ‘grape,’ **razignheu**, is a particularly transparent and egregious French import. North Africa probably used something based on Latin *acinus* or *uva* (both: ‘grape’). The latter is now widespread in Spain, Portugal and Italy, while the former and much older word, in the form *ákina*, is still current in Sardinia. Perhaps **áchinâ* would work in Talossan. Talossan **spaglhâ** *shoulder* is also a Gallic intruder. Spanish retains the original Latin word *humerus* (as *hombro*) as does Rumanian (as *umăr*); Talossan would most likely have used **pumbreu* if it had existed in North Africa. Likewise the word for “cradle,” **barçeu**, is a particularly late Gallicism, not widespread until the Middle Ages. The older Latin term *cuna* remains

¹² This is a rather interesting word, not the least reason being that it forms part of the name of Tomás Gariçéir (lit. “healer”). It appears to be a hybrid of Germanic *warj-* (‘to heal’) with the Latin suffix *-izare* (English *-ize*), the overall meaning being something like “to heal-ize.” Use of this suffix was extremely common in African Latin (Cooper, 321).

¹³ “Never” may be too strong a word. In their last recorded period (ca. 1630-1840) the bulk of the relict Donatist Berber Moundbuilder folk were known as the Mascouten (‘Elk nation’) and were in regular contact with French missionaries and *voyageurs* for about 200 years. It is quite probable that they would borrow French words during this time, although the *Romanitas* of their language seems to have gone quite unnoticed by the blundering French. This all raises the question of exactly what period of Talossan language history is being “restored.” For a European analogy, contrast the restoration of “Unified Cornish” (based on the medieval manuscripts) and “Kernewek Kemmyn” (a rival Cornish restoration project, based on a later period in the language’s history)!

in Spain and parts of Italy; ***cünâ** is the expected Talossan word. Even such a basic term as **trovar** *to find* is a Gallicism; North Africa almost certainly used the delightful expression *afflare* ‘to sniff out,’ attested in Spanish, Portuguese, Sicilian, south Italian, and Rumanian. The Talossan would then be ***aflar**. Likewise Talossan **tavâl** *table* is a French-inspired word; Latin *mēnsa* was the form current in Africa (c.f. Spanish *mesa*, Rumanian *masă*) and we can expect to find a Talossan ***mâisâ**. Another basic word is **tréi** *very*. It is another French interloper; indeed, Elcock calls this word “one of the most distinctive features of French vocabulary” (Elcock, 71). Fortunately, in this case we already have an alternative, **mült**, used in Talossan since 1985 and much in use in Africa as well. Similarly we find Talossan **çaoben** *how many*, which comes from French *combien*. However, here too we can dip into Talossan itself and find **quanceu** *how much, how many* which was first used in November, 1981 and even has a good Sardinian pedigree!

“Cheese” presents us with another French import, **frumátx** (though this one is appropriate as a loanword, given the special relationship between French and cheese). But in point of fact Latin *caseus* (whence Spanish *queso*—and German *Käse*!) was current in Africa and ***cáisch** should be the modern descendant of that word. Another obvious Gallicism is **taglhéir** *tailor*—unfortunate in that it’s the name of a once prominent Talossan, Iác Taglhéir (Jack Schneider). This word only appeared in the 14th century—far too late to credibly have a place in Restored Talossan, though it’s acceptable in the modern language as a French loanword. Spanish *sastre* preserves the original Latin term, whence ***sastreu** in Talossan. Our traditional word for “many,” **belacop**, is another transparent Frenchism (*beaucoup*). African Latin inscriptions provide an authentic form, ***muiteu** (c.f. Portuguese *muíto*). Another particularly absurd French interloper is **renart** *fox*, which comes from the German personal name *Reinhard*—it replaced the native French word for ‘fox’ because it was the name of a fox in a popular fairy-tale! Fortunately the Latin word *vulpes* was retained in Mozarabic, and can form the basis of a Talossan ***vupéglh**. The traditional Talossan word for *cup* is **taßâ** from French *tasse*, but this is ultimately a loan from Arabic (Elcock, 285). As such it is an impossibility in Restored Talossan, and can be replaced by ***poc** (from Latin *poculum*, which survives in Sardinian).

In the 1997 **Treisoûr**, I have added all these alternative words—**fiervar, crái, cicar, áchinâ, þumbreu, cünâ, aflar, mâisâ, cáisch, sastreu, muiteu, vupéglh, poc**—to the vocabulary. They do *not* replace the existing French words, but are provided as alternatives for people who want their Talossan to be a bit more ‘realistic’ from a Restored Language point of view. And, of course, we can freely accept “modern” loanwords for concepts that Latin-speaking Africans in Wisconsin would never have possessed, since this does no violence to the purity of ‘their’ speech.

Serious questions arise when it is discovered that *fundamental* vocabulary in Talossan differs from that in the few surviving African Latin records. For the most part, Talossan and African Latin use the same fundamental words; both are, after all, Romance languages. For instance the African inscriptions record **eo** for “I” which is **eu** in Talossan. The object form of the same word, Talossan **me** is African Latin **me** as well. But more problematic are the numerals, several of which survive in African Latin inscriptions. Here they are from 1 to 10:

LATIN:	<i>unus, duo, tres, quattuor, quinque, sex, septem, octo, novem, decem</i>
AFRICAN:	unu, duo, tres, qator, ceqe, seks, sebtima, oto, nobe, bisuuiq
TALOSSAN:	viens, douâ, tres, qator, simcâ, sex, seifet, vuit, nouâ, bisquinc

At the time of the first draft of this paper in 1997, three Talossan numerals were actually singled out for replacement because they weren’t sufficiently “African.” From 1981 to 1997, the numbers **trêves** *three* (named after the French name of the German city of Trier), **ceatháir** *four* (from Irish Gaelic) and **deþu** *ten* (named after the Dehu tribe, who live in the Loyalty Islands near New Caledonia!) were stable and consistent, but reminded Talossans of the “goofy” nature of early Talossan. After much debate within CÚG, these three numerals were replaced with their present forms, **tres, qator** and **bisquinc**, all taken from North African Latin. The remainder of the numerals all have respectable Romance pedigrees.

Almost as bizarre (from a North African perspective) are the various Albanian, Slavic, and Baltic elements present in Talossan. They are totally unexplained, and yet they give the language much of its unique charm: **marôtxenâ** *ice cream*, **txlédnizâ** *freezing rain*, **viens** *one*, **utxasnéu** *awful*, **vatrâ** *hearth*, **värtaiôt** *helicopter*, **viens** *one*, **ciovec** *man*, and **és** *and*.¹⁴ But while I can see providing more ‘realistic’ alternatives for these terms, I would never want to purge these inexplicable

¹⁴ The word **viens** originated in Latvian, but can be derived *ex post facto* from Latin **unus** as follows: *unus* > *Anēs* > *vuins* > *viens*. The epenthetic initial *v* also appeared sporadically in other Romance languages (e.g. Latin *octo* ‘eight’ > Catalan *vuit*; Friulan *vot*). **Ciovec** *man* is from Croatian *čovек*, but we can imagine it as actually being cognate to *čufeko*, a word of

and weird elements from the language on the grounds of linguistic or historic ‘purity.’ They can remain as reminders of the modern “harmonic” emphasis in Talossan, as we treasure equally all strata of the language’s actual evolution from 1980 to the present. They can be set down as “modern Talossan” words, each symbolic of the fact that for the purposes of creating models for modern Talossan, the modern Romance languages are just about “mined out.”

Nevertheless, if Talossan is to have some sort of internal coherence, or a guiding principle behind it, I believe we should approach it as a restored language. We should assume that within that block of soapstone there is something that looks like a bear, and seek to carve it out by consciously massaging whatever African Latin we can find and combining it with elements from other *Berber Project* languages to (re)create the kind of language that the people described in this paper would have spoken after their Latin was transformed by contact with Berbers, Phoenicians, and American Indians. When adding new words to Talossan, we should be scrupulously careful about where they come from, so that they reinforce the image of a Restored Talossan language. The days of the grab-bag approach are behind us.

However—and this is vitally important—we are in the “Harmonic Period” of the Talossan language. (I know that’s true, because it says so on my website!) This means, from my point of view at least, that we not only have a better appreciation of what I want Talossan to be, but also, a better appreciation of what Talossan actually is. Making use of real words that have formed part of the corpus of our language since 1980 is necessary and must be balanced with our (my) revivalistic fervour. From a harmonic perspective, the task of “revival” includes examination of all genuine Talossan manuscripts, to try and find or save words that have actually been used in the past, but which eluded past dictionaries. Most of this work, however, has already been done—it was the principle under which the 1993 **Treisoûr del Glihetg Talossán** was put together.

At the end of the day, Talossan is a planned language with its own intrinsic identity which serves as a culturally defining force for the population of the Kingdom of Talossa. Talossan has performed this role for more than fifteen years, since the very infancy of the state. It will continue to give Talossans a sense of identity as long as there are Talossans who find it interesting. The stamp we put on the Talossan language today will help determine Talossan identity for future generations. There are very good grounds for saying that Talossan will continue to enrich the lives of those Talossans who have made the hard effort to make the language their own and cherish it as perhaps the most distinctive badge of Talossanity it is possible to wear. Indeed, as long as Talossan culture remains, it can be fairly certain that succeeding generations will never fail to provide a small number of enthusiastic speakers and users of the Language, thus assuring its survival for centuries to come. The more people there are using Talossan, the harder it becomes to change Talossan. And so, the stamp we put on the Talossan language today will help determine Talossan identity for future generations.

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unknown origin common in South Italian dialects, where it means (among other things) ‘stupid man’ or, as it is glossed in Meyer-Lübke’s dictionary, ‘*Dummkopf*.’ This would be a clever instance of our ancestors’ self-deprecation, as the word for *stupid man* was transferred to *man* in general. *És* is actually Hungarian, unless of course we close our eyes and derive *és* from Latin *et* ‘and’; in Provençal, the form *ez* is found, and in Old Lombardic *et* actually did become *es*.

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