

LEXICAL VARIATION ACROSS ASTURIAS AND THE 'DOMINO ASTUR'

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IN THIS PAPER¹ we present the *Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica* (ALPI) as a source of data for research on the dialects of Spain, as well as examining the Asturian language, and the 'Dominio Astur' as a linguistic entity. We also present some new maps of lexical variables, based on ALPI data from the Asturian region.

1. THE ALPI PROJECT. The *Atlas Lingüístico de la Península Ibérica* (or Linguistic Atlas of Iberian Peninsula, here ALPI) was a project begun in 1930 and almost concluded by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. In 1939 the project's director Navarro Tomás took the fieldwork notebooks with him into exile in New York. In 1951 the materials were returned to Madrid, on the condition that the project be completed by members of the original fieldwork team trained by Navarro Tomás. By the mid-1950s the surveys were completed, but it took until 1962 for Manuel Sanchis Guarner, Lorenzo Rodríguez-Castellano and Aníbal Otero to complete the editing and cartography for the first and only volume to appear in print (ALPI 1962). The project was discontinued by the mid-1960s; in 1975 Navarro published a *Noticia Histórica del ALPI*, and nothing much more was heard about the materials until they were unearthed in 2001 (Heap 2002, in press). In all, more than 36,000 pages have been preserved: two notebooks (Cuaderno I, *Fonética y gramática*; Cuaderno II, *Vocabulario*) for each of 527 survey points across the Iberian Peninsula.

The most complete collection of ALPI notebook materials is currently housed in the Theoretical and Applied Linguistics Laboratory at the University of Western Ontario, where since 2002 we have been publishing the data electronically on the internet (see <http://www.alpi.ca>). Scanned facsimiles of the original fieldwork notebooks can be accessed via an interface which allows users to select a province or provinces, then survey points and finally questionnaire pages which are of interest to them. The data are freely available for scholarly purposes (teaching and research): To access them, users are simply required to register and agree to the terms of use. There are currently over 450 registered users, who have downloaded thousands of pages of data like the one shown in **Figure 1** (overleaf), available in both jpg and pdf formats.

While it is still not an 'atlas' in the traditional sense of linguistic forms being projected onto maps, the current online ALPI format makes available to the scholarly community a wealth of unique linguistic data which were otherwise unavailable for decades. The flexibility of the internet publication format also allows for the pages to be made available as soon as ready and for corrections to be made whenever necessary. Future aspects of the project include the possibility of automatic mapping on the internet (as had been done with data from the Varilex project, see Ruiz Tinoco 2001), but this requires the retranscription of the



Figure 1. Sample notebook page from the online ALPI, from one selected survey point.

notebooks into relational databases (Kretzschmar 1999), a massive undertaking which will only be possible with international collaboration involving teams of scholars from different institutions.

Currently, only phonetic and morphosyntactic data (Cuaderno I) are available online; while the lexical material (Cuaderno II) are being prepared for internet publication, there are technical difficulties yet to be resolved (Cuaderno II exists in two versions, General and Extended, each with different pagination, which make the interface for accessing the data more complex). The variables we have selected for presentation in this study are drawn from these as yet unpublished lexical data.

The links shown in **Figure 1** allow users to scroll backward or forwards through the pages of a given notebook.

2. THE ASTURIAN LANGUAGE (*ASTURLANU*). One of regional languages of Spain which does not have co-official status under the 1975 Constitution, Asturian counts some 605,000 speakers according to the 1994 census, mostly in the current Principality of Asturias Autonomous Region in northern Spain. Virtually all speakers of the language are Asturian-Spanish bilinguals. Since 1980 Academia de la Llingua Asturiana (see <http://www.academiadelalingua.com>) promotes language revitalisation and education, with the support of the regional government. These speech communities were considerably more vital in the 1930s and 1940s when the ALPI data were collected and when there were both a larger proportion of native speakers and more Asturian monolinguals.



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|----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 221 Rio de Onor (Bragança) | 317 Cima la Villa | 337 San Ciprián de Sanabria (Zamora) |
| 224 Vimioso | 318 Nozaleda | 338 San Martín de Castañeda |
| 225 Duas Igrejas | 319 Pintueles | 339 Cubo de Benavente |
| 300 Salgueiras (Asturias) | 320 Sames | 340 Padornelo |
| 301 Las Campas | 321 Los Carriles | 341 Hermisende |
| 302 Freal | 322 Cimiano | 342 Otero de Bodas |
| 303 Boal | 323 Cuantas | 343 Mahide |
| 304 Busmente | 324 Ponte de Rey (León) | 345 Villarino tras la Sierra |
| 305 Navelgas | 325 Lillo de Bierzo | 346 Losacio de Alba |
| 306 Santa Eulalia | 326 Páramo del Sil | 347 Fariza |
| 307 Soto de la Barca | 327 Omañón | 349 Villarino de los Aires (Salamanca) |
| 308 Pola de Somiedo | 328 Torrebarrio | 400 Valle de Cabuérniga (Asturias de Santillana) |
| 309 Villanueva de Teberga | 329 Folledo | 401 Yermo |
| 310 La Mata | 330 Pontedo | 404 Espinama |
| 311 Santiago del Monte | 331 Cofiñal | 405 Vega de Liébana |
| 312 San Martín de Podes | 332 Pió | 406 Tudanca |
| 313 Llantones | 333 Castroquilame | |
| 314 Cenera | 334 Lucillo | |
| 315 Felechosa | 335 Laguna Dalga | |
| 316 Malveda | | |

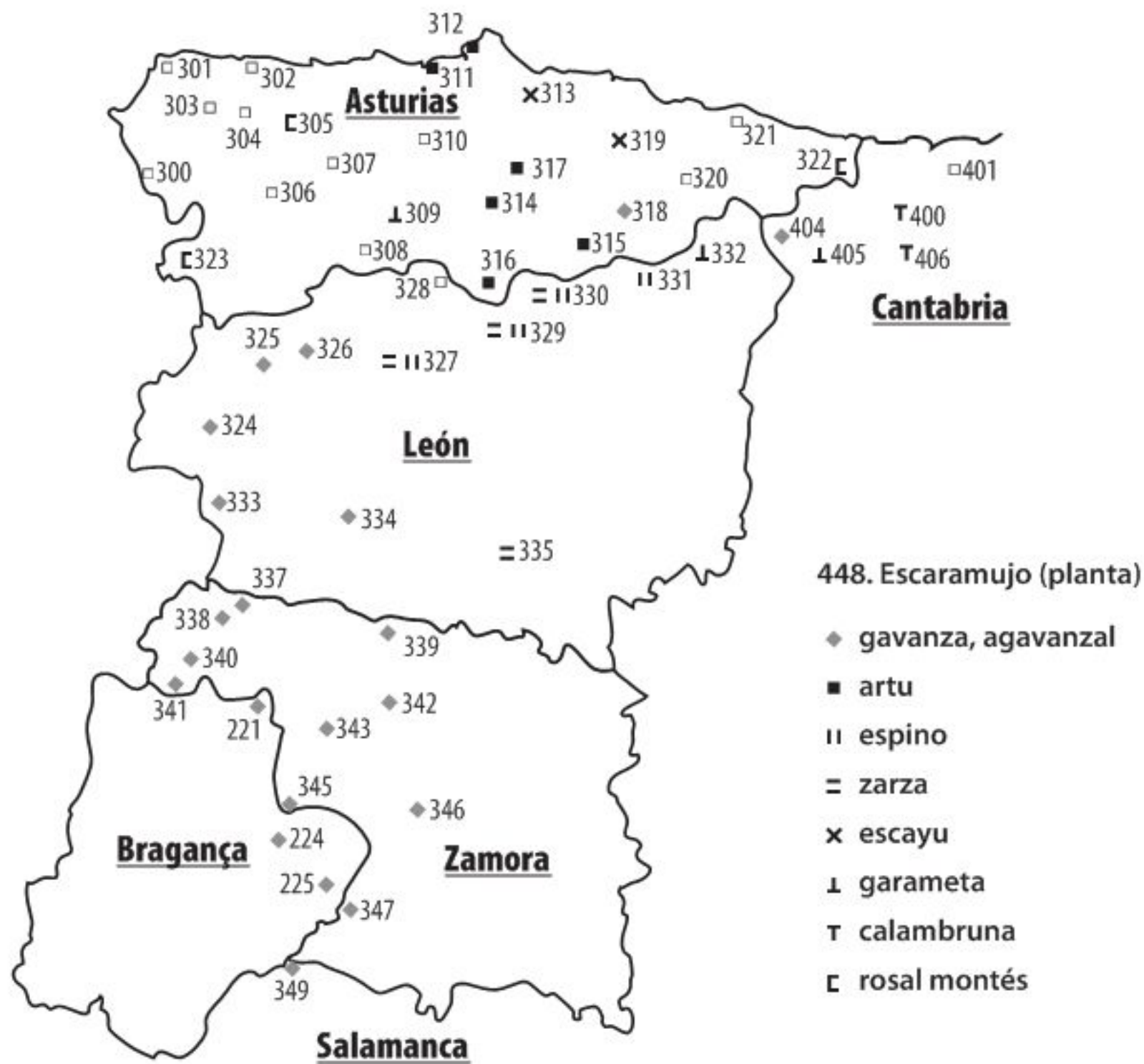
Map 1. ALPI points in the historical 'Domino Astur'



Map 2. Distribution of 'Margarita'.

2.1. THE 'DOMINIO ASTUR'. Asturias is traditionally divided into three major dialect areas: western, central and eastern Asturian, without any one variety being seen as a 'prestige norm' or standard. Historically, what some call the 'Asturian Domain' ('Dominio Astur') extended further south than the current administrative boundaries of Asturias, covering much of the former Kingdom of Leon. For the purpose of this study we have included all the *ALPI* points from Asturias (24), and selected points from the provinces of Cantabria (5), León (12), Zamora (10) and Salamanca (1), as well as the Portuguese region of Bragança (3), for a total of 55 points as shown in **Map 1**, on the previous page.

3. LEXICAL VARIATION ACROSS THE 'DOMINIO ASTUR'. We examined a large range of lexical variables from *ALPI* (Cuaderno II, Vocabulario), specifically terms for flora and fauna, from line #442 (*niscaló* 'wild mushroom') through line #575 (names for swine), and chose the ones shown below to investigate whether terminological distributions might reflect regularities in the classification and naming of plants and animals among peoples of traditional, nonliterate societies (cf. Berlin 1992). Some botanical lexical items had too limited a range to be mapped: This was the case of line 470. *Nispero* 'medlar', [< *Lat.* MESPILUM/NESPILA], which showed the variants *mispero* / *niéspero*, but only appeared at a handful of points, since this fruit-tree was apparently not well-known at the time in most of the



Map 3. Distribution of 'Escaramujo'.

area studied. The selection presented here show different geographical distributions across the 'Dominio Astur.'

Map 2 shows the distribution of lexical variants for line 444. *Margarita* (daisy), with three main variants which we can divide by etyma: *magarza*, *amargaza* < *alharma* 'ruda, silvestre' [< *Ar.* *hármal*], *manzanilla* [< *Moz.* *massanèlla*], reflecting culinary uses, and *artemisa* < *Artemisa* (Diana), reflecting medicinal uses. Here the lexical variants seem to line up primarily with the administrative boundaries between Asturias and Cantabria to the north, as opposed to all points to the south of the Cantabrian mountain range.

Forms corresponding to 448. *Escaramujo* 'rosehip' are shown in Map 3, with a wider range of etymological types: *agavanzo* / *gavanza* / *agavanzal* [< *Moz.* *gabânso*], *escaramujo* [< *Lat.* *ESCARIUS MULLEUS* 'edible + fleshy'], *zarza* [< *sarza*], *espino* [< *Lat.* *SPI-NUS*], *garameta* [< *ganzaba*] 'rosebush', *calambruna* [herba bruna], *escayu* 'bramble, thorn', *rosal* [< *Lat.* *ROSA*] 'rosebush', *artu* 'bramble'.

The distribution here is a bit of a patchwork, with different forms characterizing different sub-areas, with only the southern *gavanza* variant having currency beyond one province.

Map 4 (overleaf) shows the distribution of an important staple foodstuff, line 458. *Guisantes* 'peas', which has as a main variant the same form as in the standard language: *guisantes* [< *Lat.* *PISUM SAPIDUM* 'tasty pease'], as well as other variants attested elsewhere in the



Map 4. Distribution of 'Guisantes'.

Iberian Peninsula, *arvejas* / *arveyos* (Old Spanish *arveja* / *arbeja* / *arbeya* [*< Lat. ERVILIA* 'dried peas'] and *grabanzos* [*< garbanzos*]).

In this case we see what appears to be the intrusion of *guisantes* in the centre of León and Zamora and in Cantabria, with *arbejas* remaining to the north (on both sides of the Cantabrian range) and to the south (western Zamora and Bragança).

In **Map 5** we see the distribution of lexical variants for line 481. *Bellota* 'acorn', where alongside the standard form [*< Ar. ballūṭa*] we find a paragogic form *abellota* and *landa* / *alanda* [*< Lat. GLANDEM*].

Here it is the vernacular variant *abellota* which dominates both north and south of the Cantabrian range, with standard *bellota* concentrated in a compact area to the south and in a band across the modern-day principality of Asturias and Cantabria. The small number of *landa* / *alanda* forms are concentrated in eastern Asturias, in the area of Galician-Asturian influence.

4. CONCLUSIONS. The exploratory approach adopted here examines regional variation in 'the vocabulary of the intimate everyday life of the home and farm.' (Kurath 1949:9–10) on



Map 5. *Distribution of 'Bellota'.*

the hypothesis that use in traditional lifestyles may influence why some concepts exhibit a greater amount of lexical variation than others.

We have not found clear evidence for or against Berlin's (1992) contention that plants that have the greatest cultural importance as food and medicine have the fewest different names, while plants that are (believed to be) less useful may have names that vary more from region to region. While the contrast between the rich lexical variation for an item like *escaramuzo* vs. the relatively few variants for terms like *guisantes* (common human food) and *bellota* (a common animal fodder) is evocative in this regard, much more careful mapping work needs to be undertaken before any conclusions can be drawn regarding the nature of lexical variation in the area (see also Pato, in press).

In the future, we also hope to exploit the *ALPI* data on informants, which will allow us to explore correlations of linguistic variables with such demographic factors as age, gender, occupation, mobility and literacy level of speakers. We hope that future collaborations with dialectologists in Spain and elsewhere will help develop geolinguistic databases using the *ALPI* fieldwork notebooks which will allow us to map not just lexical but also phonetic and morphosyntactic data for this linguistic area for which no overall geolinguistic survey has yet been published.

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