

Reportative constructions with inanimate subjects: The role of Latin and of genres in the evidential development of Italian *volere*

Francesca Dell’Oro, University of Bologna

This paper focuses on the underinvestigated emergence of inanimate evidential sources in Italian in a specific construction featuring the verb of volition *volere* ‘to want’ used to report the speech or thought of a third/absent speaker/writer, as illustrated in example (1):

(1) *La leggenda vuole infatti che le prime vignette di ‘Sturmtruppen’ siano state disegnate su una tovaglia [...].*

“Legend has it (lit. wants) that the first cartoons of ‘Sturmtruppen’ were indeed drawn on a tablecloth [...].” (CORIS: STAMPA, 2017).

Adopting a corpus-based methodology, this study addresses two questions:

- 1) What is the distribution of evidential uses of *volere* with inanimate sources in Italian, in terms of frequency and genre?
- 2) To what extent are these Italian constructions influenced by the evidential uses of Latin *volo* ‘to want’, the diachronic antecedent of Italian *volere* (Dell’Oro 2025a, 2025b, in press).

This investigation demonstrates that Italian, influenced by Latin usage, also gave rise to new developments of the construction, which are linked to the deontic uses of *volo/volere*.

Selected references

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