



Classification and Varieties

Dieter W. Halwachs

From a linguistic point of view *Romani* may be described as a heterogeneous cluster of varieties without any homogenising standard. The division into seven dialect (see table) groups is a simplified graphical version of the description given in Matras (2002).

The terminology used for the individual varieties is primarily based on the denominations of the respective groups of speakers, which again are highly heterogeneous: Apart from the label *Romungro*, which is – sometimes pejoratively – used for settled → Hungarian Roma, and *Vend* "border" for small groups in the border regions of Austria, Hungary and Slovenia, the Central varieties show mainly geographic definitions. The same is valid a. o. for the southwestern Greek → Vlach varieties of Ajia Varvara, a suburb of Athens, and of Dendropotamos, a suburb of Thessaloniki, as well as the northern Vlach variety of the *Mačvaja*, a group originating in the Serbian *Mačva* which today lives in the USA – primarily in California. Some denominations name professions, e. g. *Bugurdži*, *Čurara*, → Kalderaš, → Lovara, *Sepečides*, with the meaning: "drill-makers", "sieve-makers", → tinkers, → horse-dealers, → basket-weavers. The denominations → Arli used for Kosovar and Macedonian Roma as well as *Erlj* for a group living in Sofia are indications of the long-lasting settled way of life of these Balkan Roma: the Turkish word *yerli* stands for "native". The name → Gurbet derives from the Arabic word *gharib* "strange" which has been transmitted via Turkish. *Rumeli* or *Rumelian Romani* stands for the variety of *Romani* spoken in Turkey which was recorded by Paspati (1870).

Because of shared conservative features, Northwestern, Northeastern, British and Iberian varieties are sometimes treated as Northern group of *Romani* (Bakker 1999). Denominations among these varieties range from geographical definitions to group names and even one language denomination is used: *Rómanes*, derived from an ethnonym adverb, is a widespread language name among → Sinte, a group denomination with unclear etymology. *Manuš* "human being" and *Caló* "black" both are self-designations among Northern groups. The geographical denominations define the current living space – *Lombard Sinte*, *Finnish Romani*, etc. – as well as the country of origin – *Estrexarja Sinte* which in the case of the Russian *Estrexarja Sinte* is the former Austro Hungarian Empire.

So called *Para-Romani* varieties are marked by brackets. These are varieties of the respective majority language with *Romani* lexicon and, if at all, only a few *Romani* structural features: *Errumantxela* is a variety of Basque, *Caló* is a variety of Spanish, *Angloromani* of English, *Scandoromani* summarises *Para-Romani* varieties based on various Scandinavian languages.

References

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