

Review article

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Amaro vakeripe Roman hi – Unsere Sprache ist Roman. Text, Glossar und Grammatik der burgenländischen Romani-Variante. Dieter W. Halwachs. Disertacija in razprave, Slovenski inštitut za proučevanje prostora Alpe-Jadran, 43. Klagenfurt: Drava, 1998. 240 pp. ISBN 3-85435-266-2.

The assertive title of the work under review, 'Our language is Roman', immediately suggests that a special sociopolitical background was involved in the volume production. It was the acknowledgement in 1993 of Austrian Roms as a *Volksgruppe* (an officially recognized minority) which accelerated the scholarly work on the language. The linguistic description of Roman has been pursued within the 'Projekt Kodifizierung und Didaktisierung des Roman', or the Language Project, starting in 1994. The author emphasizes that scholarly description of the language, of which the book under review is a most representative result, is a by-product of the efforts to reverse the ongoing language shift and the loss of identity among the Burgenland Roms. The character of the terminology employed, quotations in English etc. make it obvious that the volume is a technical description designed for linguists. The title, which may suggest the opposite (that is, that the book is popular, intended for a general reader or designed as a handbook for the speakers), and the publication of the volume itself may thus be interpreted as a symbolic contribution to ethnic emancipation of the Burgenland Roms.

The name of the dialect, *Roman*, is a substantivized form of the adverb *roman* (< *romane* < *romanes*) 'in Romani', 'in a Rom way', and is used by the speakers themselves. The language has also been called 'Burgenland Romani' by linguists, as most of its speakers are settled in this easternmost Austrian province, especially in Wart—that is, the region around Oberwart (Hungarian *Felsőőr*, Romani *Erba*) in Southern Burgenland. Roman is a Vedic dialect of the Southern Central dialect group of Romani (see, for

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example, Boretzky 1999), its closest relatives being the languages of the Roms in Slovenian Transmuria (Prekmurje) and the 'Vend' Roms in South-western Hungary. Halwachs' book describes Roman as it is spoken in Southern Burgenland; Northern and Middle Burgenland varieties are not considered.

The volume consists of four parts: an introduction, a grammatical description, texts in Roman, and a Roman–German glossary. Introductory pages (pp. 9–32) provide the reader with historical and sociopolitical information on the Burgenland Roms, as well as with a detailed description of the Language Project, its ideology, aims, methods, and history. The introduction also contains valuable, although not systematic, data on language choice and linguistic attitudes, and an outline of the genetic classification of Roman. The description is basically synchronic and non-comparative in nature; occasional diachronic and dialectological notes are inserted when the origin of a salient Roman feature needs to be elucidated, Sampson and Boretzky often being cited as classic authorities. Frequent attention is paid to internal variation in Roman according to the age of the speakers, while notes on geographical or subgroup variants are rarer. The importance of structural variation due to age is evidently connected to the ongoing process of language death.

There are a few infelicities and mistakes in the paragraphs on classification: First, the author still uses the outdated conception of Romani as including the New Indo-Aryan languages of the Near East (pp. 29–30). Second, the Romani of Ajia Varvara by no means belongs to the Balkan branch (p. 31); it is Vlax, more precisely Southern Vlax. And finally, summarizing the existing sources on the dialect, Halwachs assumes (p. 20) that the tales related mainly by János Sípos, a Rom soldier in Vienna, and recorded by Friedrich Müller (1869) represent a variety of Roman. Although Sípos' dialect is admittedly close to Roman, it is *not* Roman, and not even a Vending variety. Several features make it clear that the dialect of the tales belongs to what we (Elšík *et al.* 1999) have, somewhat awkwardly, called the 'Northern subgroup of the Southern Central dialects', that is, to the non-Vending branch of the Southern Central dialects, also known as 'Romungro' and spoken in Northern Hungary and Southern Slovakia.

The grammatical part of the book (pp. 33–189) describes the phonology and morphology of the dialect. Although there is no separate section on syntax, significant information may be retrieved from the morphology section, especially from a chapter on 'particles', which is the author's cover

term for indeclinables. Taking into account the extent of the grammar, it is surprisingly comprehensive. The internal composition is well designed, and the reader is not burdened by extensive subsection numbering. On the other hand, one needs to browse through the whole book to be able to find a particular piece of information, as there is no subject index and the table of contents is only very general.

My general impression is that Roman may inspire theoretical discussions on a number of interesting issues. To name just a few, the interplay of thematic and athematic morphology in inflection and derivation; the distribution of historical jotation (loss in some environments, retention in others); the paradigmatic expansion of phonologically salient markers (plural *-ča*, preterite *-č-*).

The phonology section (pp. 33–51) contains easy-to-survey charts of the Roman phonological inventory and clear and detailed commentaries on synchronic variation and diachronic drifts. The most pervading set of changes in the consonant subsystem are indirectly connected to the German-induced reinterpretation of the voiced/voiceless opposition into that of lenis/fortis. While the lenis sibilant fricatives have merged with the corresponding fortis (for instance, *zor* > *sor* ‘power’), the opposition is still phonological with affricates. In connection with a weak phonetic aspiration of phonologically unaspirated fortis stops, phonological aspiration has been limited to initial position. Vocalic quantity is not phonological; accent is prevalently penultimate. Borrowing of diphthongs from local German has taken place, while front rounded vowels are limited to recent borrowings from standard German.

I have only two comments here. First, I do not understand why the palatal *j* in an intervocalic position (in *goja* ‘sausage’, for example) should form part of a diphthong with the preceding vowel (p. 45). Second, the author believes (p. 49) that the preterite variants of the type *čorča* derive diachronically from variants of the type *čorja* ‘s/he stole’ in the same way as *čak* derives from *jak* ‘eye’. In my view, *čorča* clearly goes back to **čordja* (via **čordža* < **čordā*), and the variant *čorja* is a secondary form created after the variants *j* ~ *č*, developed through a sound change, started to be interpreted as a regular synchronic alternation.

The orthography of Roman, as used in the volume and in publications resulting from the Language Project, is based on, although not completely identical to, German orthography. The grapheme inventory contains a number of polygraphs and an acute accent is employed to indicate non-

penultimate stress. In this review all specimens of the language are rendered by a standard transcription used in Romani studies (for example *šučo* for Halwachs' *schutscho* 'empty').

The section on morphology (pp. 52–189) deals, respectively, with nominals, verbs, and indeclinables. It is organized around traditional parts of speech, while further division is either functional (for example, with numerals: cardinal, ordinal, multiplicative), or structural (with adjectives: declinable, indeclinable, comparison, for instance), or mixed—apparently according to which choice suits best the purpose of a clear, elegant, and accessible exposition. Forms, constructions and category semantics are richly illustrated through translated but un glossed examples, and these are often analyzed in a following text.

Most of the terminology is standard and unproblematic. The way the term *casus obliquus* is used (p. 52–3), namely, merely as a fanciful abbreviation for 'the stem from which oblique cases are derived' (my wording), shows that the author has not been misled by a widespread tradition in older and/or popular Romani linguistics which considers the oblique to be a surface case form. Nevertheless, my term of preference, to make things plain and clear, would be *oblique stem*. Further, I have slight problems with the broad use of the term *morpheme* (and consequently also *allomorph*, *suffix* etc.). What the author often means by a 'morpheme', especially in the sections on nominals, is a bimorphemic formant consisting either of a derivational segment and the base-form inflectional marker (for example *-aš-i* or *-al-o*, pp. 67 and 106) or, in case of genitive forms, of two inflectional markers (p. 56). Compare also the trimorphemic 'possessive morpheme' *-es-ker-o* on p. 118.

Unlike a number of descriptions of Romani, due attention is paid to noun and verb classification. The author distinguishes 26 regular noun classes and nine regular verb classes, organized in hierarchical relations (for example, the verb class 'e-3-2' is a subclass of 'e-3', which is in turn a subclass of 'e'). The primary criteria for classification are gender and nominative suffixes with nouns (p. 62), and present stem formation with verbs (p. 132). The classification is not strictly inflectional as some salient derivations (for instance, diminutives in *-or-*, agentives in *-er-*, *-ar-*, *-aš-*, *-oš-*, feminines in *-kij-*, or denominal transitives in *-ar-* and *-er-*) are granted a subclass status despite their non-deviant inflectional behaviour: for instance, the derivation *danderel* 'bite' (< *dand* 'tooth') of the subclass 'e-3-2' inflects exactly like *kerel* 'do' of 'e-1'. The class differences are easy to survey in most instances as forms are represented in table paradigms.

The section on nouns (pp. 53–82) provides the reader with general structural characteristics of Roman nouns, functional and formal description of individual cases, and a detailed analysis of noun classes, class-specific forms, and form variation. Pages on the decline of synthetic case marking (pp. 57–61) present a clear picture of a complex development (cf. the four variant constructions for ‘from Vienna’ on p. 59: *Bečistar*, *fa Bečistar*, *andro Beči*, and *andro Bečiste*), touching on a number of sociolinguistic as well as structural hierarchies involved.

I have some reservations regarding the traditional case analysis of direct object forms, which the author replicates (pp. 54–5). Direct object noun forms are generally equated with the accusative; and the accusative of animates is said to be always equal to the oblique, while the one of inanimates is homonymous with the nominative. As for the inanimates, I have argued (Elšík 2000) that it is the nominative itself which is used in the direct object rather than an accusative homonymous with it, since—unlike instances of a morphological nominative–accusative homonymy—all modifiers show nominative rather than oblique agreement. There is a completely parallel instance with an animate object in the book (*i daj pri čauri ledžel* ‘the mother brings her daughter’, p. 84), where no accusative-homonymous-to-nominative analysis is attempted by the author. As for the animates, the general derivability (through an identity derivation, phonotactic rules, or morphological deletion) of the accusative from the oblique stem may be true for most dialects, but it is not for Roman. Paradoxically, Roman is the *only* Romani variety I know of where, with some noun classes, the accusative is paradigmatically independent of the oblique: cf. oblique *grofos-* (and rarer *grofes-*) ‘earl’ vs. the accusative *grofe* (**grofo*).

The description of noun classification is detailed and, in my opinion, completely justified. I wondered, however, why (underived) masculines in *-j* (such as *rašaj* ‘priest’) represent a separate subclass with regard to nouns such as *murš* ‘man’, provided inflection paradigms of the two respective classes (pp. 62–3) are presented as identical. Things become clearer on p. 78, where feminines in *-j* are discussed: optional contractions in some forms (for example, *phaba-* beside uncontracted *phabaja-* ‘apple.OBL’) make the *j*-classes inflectionally distinct. There is no mention in the book of the irregular abstract noun formation in *-be* (but cf. *ha-be* ‘food’ or *pi-be* ‘drink’ on p. 163).

The section on pronouns (pp. 85–101) provides an overview of personal, possessive, reflexive, demonstrative, relative, interrogative, and indefinite

pronouns. The author rightly states that there are no regular genitive forms with personal pronouns, the irregular possessives being employed instead (p. 85). With reflexive pronouns, however, both specific possessives (singular *pr-* and plural *pumar-*) and regular genitive forms (singular *pesker-* and plural *pumenger-*) are given (p. 90). There is no example containing the latter in the book, nor any explanation of the functional difference between the differing formations. In addition to Roman, both genitive and possessive forms of reflexives are attested only in the Pilep Romani and the dialect of Sepečides (singular *peskVr-* beside *pindr-*).

The principal functional distinction in demonstratives is characterized as anaphoric vs. emphatic (p. 91). The system of indefinites proper (pp. 97–100), that is, if one excludes the universal quantifiers treated under the same heading, is characterized by the negative series in *ni-* (a marker borrowed from South Slavic) and the non-emphatic series *vala-* (from Hungarian). There is no information on free-choice indefinites, which may mean that there is no morphological free-choice marker in Roman. Nevertheless, one may find two such markers, *-godí* from South Slavic and *kar-* from Hungarian (< *akár-*), at least in some indefinite adverbs (cf. *kajgodí* ‘anywhere’ and *karsar* ‘anyhow’, Halwachs and Ambrosch 1998: 31). It is certainly not true that the negative indefinite *nisavo* derives from the demonstrative *asavo* ‘such’, ‘like this’ (p. 100). Rather, it is derived, as most indefinites in Roman, from an interrogative of the corresponding ontological category, namely, from *savo* ‘which’. The author might have been misled by his gloss of the indefinite, viz. ‘no such’, ‘none like this’, which suggests a composition of a negative and a deictic element. In the glossary (p. 225) the pronoun is glossed simply as ‘no’, ‘none’, which is likely to be its more basic meaning.

In the section on adjectives (pp. 102–13) the author describes adjective classes and inflections, and patterns of adjective derivation. An outstanding syntactic feature of Roman, is the optional use of what Halwachs calls a ‘neutral adjective form’ in predicates (p. 103). In most Romani dialects as well as, optionally, in Roman a predicate adjective takes the nominative case, while agreeing with the subject in gender and number. The neutral form, on the other hand, does not mark either of these categories (due to German influence). It is important that the neutral form is not consistently homonymous with any of the attributive adjective forms, being instead equal in form to a de-adjectival adverb (such as *nasvale* ‘ill’, *pharikan* ‘difficult’, or *sik* ‘fast’). Thus the concept of a neutral adjective form could be avoided, if one recognizes an adjective/adverb alternation in the predicate.

The author feels that the question of whether the neutral adjective form really *is* an adverb—although it always *looks* like one—should be left open (p. 104).

This issue has also some relevance for a specific Roman dichotomy in adjective loans. While pre-German borrowings are fully integrated into a thematic adjective class, adjectives borrowed from the current contact language are not. Instead they do not inflect for agreement categories in attribute position, being synchronically adapted by an *-i* (for example *o grau-i mački* ‘the grey cats’). In the predicate, however, the German loan is *not* morphologically adapted (as in *o mački grau hi* ‘the cats are grey’). There are two possible analyses of this split. First, the unadapted borrowing in the predicate is an adverb rather than an adjective, and so the adapted adjective may be considered indeclinable. Or second, the former is a predicative form of an adjective, and so loans from German are declinable, showing two inflection forms (such as *grau* and *grau-i*). The author is not explicit about this theoretical problem; he uses the term ‘indeclinable’ adjectives and, at the same time, speaks of ‘predicative use of adjectives’ (p. 111).

Another issue of potential theoretical interest is the morphological status of the superlative marker *lek*, a loan from Hungarian. The marker is a bound morpheme in the source language. However, Halwachs considers it to be a free particle in Roman, and stresses the ‘analytic’ character of the superlative formation (p. 112). Thus he implies that the morphological status of a marker has been reinterpreted in Roman in the direction towards greater independence. Although I do not intend to say that the author’s analysis is not correct, it is not self-evident that it is: a brief justification of the analysis would certainly be welcome.

An etymological problem is posed by the presence of the rare superlative marker *maj*. Together with the other rare variant *naj*, *maj* is suggested to be a loan from Slavic (p. 113). However, in the function of a superlative marker a homophonous element occurs only in Transcarpathian, Galician, and Dniestr dialects of Ukrainian, which have borrowed it from Rumanian (Kopečný 1980: 422)—and obviously there was no contact of Roman ancestors with either of these languages. Nor is independent grammaticalization of Bulgarian *maj* ‘almost, probably’ likely. Thus one is left with the hypothesis of an interdialectal borrowing into some Roman varieties from Burgenland or Hungarian Lovari. It would certainly be revealing to see the geographical and/or social distribution of the three superlative markers (Hungarian *lek*, South Slavic *naj*, and unclear *maj*) in a future study.

In the section on numerals (pp. 114–19) one can find almost any detail on inflectional, derivational, and compositional morphology of the Roman numeral system. It is characterized, among other things, by an extensive use of the vigesimal principle (for example, *trinvalbiš* ‘60’), and by strong variation (as in *epašél*, *panžvardéš*, and *dujvarbiš taj deš* for ‘50’).

The verb section (pp. 120–70) is the longest, consisting of description of tense and mood semantics and inflection, non-finite forms, verb classification, and copula inflection. The term ‘preterite’ is used as a cover term for both ‘perfect’ and ‘imperfect’, and the functional difference between these two tenses is conceived as aspectual. Apart from the four recognized Romani inflectional moods, modal verbs and other expressions (of permission, possibility, ability, necessity, demand or requirement, and wish) are dealt with in some detail. One finds, for instance, oppositions like *na pekal mange* ‘I do not need’ (literally ‘it does not need to me’) vs. *na pekamav* ‘I need not’. The inflection of the verb *pekal* ‘need’ shows interesting irregularities, some of which are not explicitly accounted for (for instance, the third person plural present *pekan* vs. imperfect *pekamnahi* rather than **pekanahi*, pp. 158–9).

The particles of possibility and impossibility, *šaj* and *naštig*, are claimed to combine with verbs in the indicative (p. 156). There are no examples of the particles with the copula/existential verb. In the Central dialects indicative forms are homonymous to subjunctive forms with all verbs except the copula/existential verb, and so I suspect that in fact *šaj* and *naštig* might require subjunctive rather than, or alongside, the indicative (cf. *šaj ol* vs. *šaj hi* ‘maybe, it can be true’). The subjunctive forms of the copula/existential verb are not accounted for, and only the infinitive *te ol* ‘to be’, which derives from the third person singular subjunctive in Roman, is mentioned (p. 145).

Roman is one of the dialects with both active participle and finite forms in the 3rd singular preterite, sometimes even showing variation within one lexeme (for example, *gelo* ‘he went’ and *geli* ‘she went’ vs. *geja* ‘s/he went’). The distribution of the active participle forms is not described consistently. While on p. 129 they are said to occur with verbs of motion and mediopassives, elsewhere (p. 133) the author mentions intransitive verbs in general, exempting borrowings. It is also unclear whether the irrealis forms like *gelojahi* ‘would have gone, 3SG’ (p. 138) stand for both genders, or whether a regular feminine counterpart *gelijahi* should be assumed.

Primary verb classes are named after the unstressed vocalic element which precedes the non-first person suffixes of the present-stem set. Apart

from the traditional classes of *kerel* 'do' (termed *e*-verbs) and *džal* 'go' (termed *a*-verbs), the author rightly establishes—on synchronic basis—a dialect-specific class of so-called zero verbs. This class has arisen from a set of contractions, which have shifted the stress position (for instance, *garúl* 'hide' < **garúvel*, *pil* 'drink' < **píjel*, *pijál* 'give to drink' < **pijável*, and *siklól* 'learn' < **sikhljóvel*). Within each class a subclass of irregular verbs is distinguished; it is not clear to me why *bučól* 'to be called' is classed with irregulars of the zero verbs, rather than with regulars of the type *siklól*.

A further criterion for verb classification widely employed in Romani linguistics are the preterite and/or participle markers. Here, the author's presentation is occasionally somewhat confusing. Classification based on preterite markers (-č-, -l-, and -j-, for example) is introduced on pp. 130–1. These preterite classes, however, do not make their way into the main classification scheme (pp. 134–43) in a consistent way. Thus *e*-verbs with base stem in *k g s š č* (velar/sibilant stems), which use the preterite marker -l- (as in *ač-l-om* 'I stayed'), are considered to be irregular on the ground of their low number (p. 136). This argument is theoretically untenable as limited membership in a class does not imply its irregularity (cf. Wurzel 1990). Moreover, the solution is not applied consistently throughout the book (on p. 164, for instance, the velar/sibilant stems are considered to form a subclass of a regular class, rather than being irregular). Further, it is not clear why the preterite marker in mediopassives should be -j- (p. 141) rather than -ij- (cf. *sikl-ij-om* 'I learned' vs. *sikl-oj-av* 'I learn', etc.).

One would also welcome an explicit account, synchronic or diachronic, of the relation between allomorphs of the preterite markers, one of which is limited to the third person plural in Roman. Indeed, the information on the third person plural allomorph is not always retrievable from the description, although the author states that the third person plural preterite form is actually a plural form of the passive participle (p. 129), that is—one deduces—that the third person plural allomorph of a preterite marker equals the participle marker. However, it is not clear from the context whether this equation is meant to be a general rule in the dialect, and once the reader discovers that the rule indeed does not work without exceptions (cf. the preterite *pisinde* 'they wrote' vs. the participle *pisime* 'written.PL'), then there is really no secure clue. How, to take but one example, should the third person plural preterite of *ačel* 'to stay' be formed? Should it be (a) *ač-l-e*—parallel to another č-stem *phučle* 'they asked', or (b) *ač-in-e/ač-il-e*—based, respectively, on the participles *ačino* (p. 165) and *ačilo* (p. 166), or even (c) *ač-im-e*—based

on a quasi-athematic participle variant *ačimo* (p. 166)? And, do all of these variants occur, only some, or just one of them?

Adverbs (pp. 171–80) are described in some detail according to semantic groups (local, temporal, modal, causal, and interrogative) and derivation patterns. A number of adverbial affixes have been borrowed from Hungarian (for example, *-val* as in *tikneval* ‘as small’), some of which are not identified as such in the book (*-kor* in *avrikór* ‘once earlier’, for instance). The author assumes that the suffix *-on* in de-adjectival adverbs like *dilin-on* ‘in a stupid way’, *čač-on* ‘on the right’, or *telutn-on* ‘down there’ is a loan of one of the allomorphs of the Hungarian superessive/adverb-deriving suffix (p. 172). I propose a different explanation (cf. Elšík *et al.* 1999; Elšík 2000). Consider the three stages in Table 1.

1. On the basis of dialect comparison it appears that there was an Early Romani suffix *-on-*, which was used in the oblique forms of athematic adjectives as well as in adverbs derived from these adjectives (diachronically, the Romani de-adjectival adverbs are accusative adjective forms). This distribution of the suffix has been retained, for example, in most Northern Central dialects (cf. East Slovak Romani *rosn-on-e manušenca* ‘with bad people’ and *rosn-on-es* ‘badly’).
2. In the Southern Central dialects the athematic adjectives, having been fully integrated, started to inflect exactly like their thematic counterparts, and thus lost the suffix *-on-* in inflection. However, the suffix has been kept in athematic adverbs (cf. Šoka Romungro *erdāv-e manušenca* ‘with bad people’ vs. *erdāv-ōn-e* ‘badly’), and, in some varieties, in the quantifier *sako* ‘every’ (cf. Zohra Romungro *sak-on-eha* vs. Roman *sak-eha* ‘with everyone’).
3. Finally, the suffix was reinterpreted as a marker of de-adjectival adverbs in general and started to spread to thematic adverbs, affecting different

Table 1.

Stage	Thematic		Athematic	
	Oblique	Adverb	Oblique	Adverb
1	–	–	+	+
2	–	–	–	+
3	–	±	–	±

lexical items in different Southern Central varieties (cf. Šoka Romungro obliques *tāt-ōn-e* ‘warmly’, *šūž-ōn-e* ‘in a clean way’). The influence of Hungarian, in my view, can be limited to the reinterpretation of the suffix’s function, as the indigenous Romani *-on-* was identified with the (allo)homonymous Hungarian adverbial suffix.

My hypotheses regarding the origin of *-on-* thus also differs from the author’s in that I would reconstruct **dilin-on-e* as a form from which *dilin-on* ‘in a stupid way’ developed within Roman, through the very same phonological process which gave rise, for example, to *pharikan* ‘in a troublesome way’ from *pharikane* (p. 172). The phonologically developed variation of *pharikan/pharikane* has had far-reaching morphological consequences. It has been copied to pairs like *hamišan/hamišane* ‘falsely’ (cf. p. 172), of which—unlike the pairs of the first type—the former member is primary (< Hungarian *hamisan*), and the latter one secondary. By further analogy adjectives like *hamiš-an-o* ‘false’ have been created, and are used beside the regularly adapted borrowings like *hamiš-n-o* (< Hungarian *hamis*) (cf. Halwachs and Ambrosch 1998: 26). The identification of the Hungarian superessive/adverb-deriving allomorph *-an* in borrowings with the indigenous Romani adjective-deriving suffix *-an-* has led to extending the functional range of the latter (cf. innovative formations like *dilin-an* ‘in a stupid way’). For the author’s differing explanation of *dilinan* see p. 173.

Borrowing of whole adverbs into Roman, both from Hungarian and German, is also attested (for example, the proximate deictic *ere* ‘here’ < Hungarian *erre*). The distal deictic *ore* ‘there’ (p. 174) appears to be a Roman innovation, as the Hungarian pendant is *arra* (rather than **orre*), and no substitution of Hungarian *a* to *o* has been attested in Roman (cf. Purr 1996). In my view, the *e-* in *e-re* was reinterpreted as an allomorph of *a-*, the marker of proximate local deixis (cf. the indigenous *adáj* ‘here’), and then a form with *o-*, the marker of distal local deixis (cf. the indigenous *odój* ‘there’), could be created. Significantly, Roman is the only Romani dialect and the only language I know of which has borrowed the local interrogative: *mere* ‘where’ (< Hungarian *merre*). The derivation of the ablative interrogative *mer-ól* ‘from where’ might have been facilitated by phonological similarity to its Hungarian equivalent *merr-ől*. It is interesting to note that *lek*, a superlative marker with adjectives, is not used with adverbs (p. 179).

Finally, I do not believe that the form *adí* ‘today’ in Roman (and in Vedic dialects in general) developed from *adá di* ‘this day’ (p. 176). Instead it prob-

ably derives directly from Proto-Romani **av-dives*, preserving an archaism which has been lost in all other Central dialects (cf. non-Vendic Southern Central *ada-dive* or *ada-di* and Northern Central *ada-d'ives*).

In the sections on prepositions, conjunctions, and various particles (pp. 180–9) the author lists a significant number of these function words, classifies them, illustrates their use, and comments revealingly on a few interesting issues, including the variation between the privative prepositions *bi* and *oni* (< German *ohne*) ‘without’. Beside a few prepositions of Croatian and German origin one also finds the obscure *mere* ‘next to’ (is it connected in any way to the homonymous interrogative *mere* ‘where?’). Conjunctions, on the other hand, derive widely from Hungarian. Interestingly, Roman sometimes shows different borrowings of identical functions compared with other dialects in contact with Hungarian: for instance, the contrastive *ham* (< *hanem*) ‘but’ and the causal *mint* ‘because’ in Roman vs. *de* and *mer* in Šoka Romungro. The remaining function words are divided into negative, modal, degree, conjunctive, comparative, narrative, interrogative, and verb-modifying or co-verbal or ‘verbal’ particles. Among the verb-modifying particles, similarly to German, ‘separable’ and ‘inseparable’ ones are distinguished. The latter are all borrowed from the current contact language, while indigenous markers prevail with the former.

The text section (pp. 191–207) consists of five narratives, each of which is translated into German. The texts appear to be edited to the extent that they do not contain rectifications, anacolutha, etc. The author mentions that some proper names as well as names of localities have been changed in order not to trespass upon the narrators’ and referents’ privacy.

The Roman-German glossary (pp. 214–32) comprises over a thousand entries, including phonological variants of some lexemes, which are not cross-referenced. Each word is characterized as to its word class, and gender is specified with nouns. Verbs are represented in their first person singular form, although the dialect does not lack an infinitive. Combinations of a verb and a co-verbal particle are given separate entries. There are no etymological notes and no phraseology in the glossary. The selection of entries is based on the lexemes’ occurrence in the texts and/or the grammatical part of the book, so that one may find here the words for ‘pearl chain’ or ‘smuggle’ but not those for ‘word’ or ‘understand’. Thus, the glossary is more of an index than a vocabulary, and it is not very suitable for cross-dialect lexical comparison. The limitations of the glossary are explicitly

mentioned in the author's introduction to the lexical section (pp. 209–13). They appear to be partly motivated by volume considerations; in the very same year a more complete Roman–German vocabulary of 4,700 entries was produced as an internal publication of the Language Project (Halwachs and Ambrosch 1998). As an index, however, the glossary would be more useful if it referred to the relevant pages in the book. Also, not all words which do occur in the grammar found their way to the glossary (such as *habe* 'food', p. 163).

There are only very few typos in the book. Potentially confusing are the following: the second person plural preterite ending is *-an* not *-a* (p. 129, table), and the past analytic negated copula should read *na sin* rather than *na hi*, which is the present form (p. 146). The irrealis *-an-ahi*, originally a second person plural formant, appears also in the third person plural as a result of a Common Vedic take-over homonymy. In the table on p. 153 the same form is given for the third person singular as well, and I suspect this is a typo; however, it might also be a result of number neutralization in the third person, which is documented in a few other Central dialects (cf. Elšík *et al.* 1999).

Detailed commentaries on minor issues have been presented in this review. However, I want to emphasize that there is no serious error in the book and that insightful, original, and precise analyses and comprehensive presentations prevail in number as well as significance. The book is to be welcomed by linguists as one of the best descriptions of a Romani dialect in the 1990s, the most productive decade in the field of Romani linguistics.

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