

Gernot Windfuhr, "Gypsy Dialects"

ii. GYPSY DIALECTS

The languages and dialects popularly called "Gypsy" (< *Egipcien* < *qebṭi* "Coptic, Egyptian") constitute three major groups: Asiatic or Middle Eastern Domari, Armenian Lomavren, and European Romani, technical terms now used to reflect the speakers' self-designations: *Dom*, *Lom*, and *Roma*, respectively. For Gypsy in Iranian-speaking areas the most common terms are *Kowli* (presumably < *Kāboli*, lit. from Kabul) and *Ġorbati* (stranger); mostly western groups such as the *Karači* of Azerbaijan have retained the term *dom* "man" (see listing of names and groups below). While traditionally oral, there are now written forms for some European varieties.

The three groups as a whole originate in Indo-Aryan (Indic) languages, most likely the central and northwestern branches. Individually, they reflect three distinct historical layers of Indo-Aryan innovations, which suggests three successive westward migrations, rather than a single one (Turner, 1926, 1927; Sampson, 1923, 1926; overview in Hancock, 1988, also *idem*, 1995, pp. 25-32). With Iranian-speaking territories as their first staging area and linguistic contact, the earliest layer is reflected in the diverse Middle Eastern group which most likely dates from the second half of the first millennium C.E. It includes most dialects from Central Asia to Anatolia and to North Africa, and is distinct by the absence of later Indo-Aryan changes found in the other two groups. The subsequent layer is represented by the European group, first reported in the southeastern Balkans by 1100 C.E. It is here, in the Greek language context of the Byzantine Empire, where the constituent varieties evolved into a relatively unified language from which all European varieties derive. The latest layer appears to be the Armenian group, which may have established itself in Armenian-speaking northeastern Anatolia separately. The following examples illustrate major historical sound changes which serve to define the three groups, but also exemplify the blurring of the distinctions due to dialect mixture and admixture (Near Eastern examples are Domari from Syria and *Fiuj-Ġorbati* from central western Persia; for "brother," cf. English *pal* "friend").

The phonological diversity is partially reflected also in the Indo-Aryan core vocabulary, including some common terms such as *juklo* "dog" (< Sk. *jukṣa-*) in European vs. reflexes of Sk. *ṣunaka* in Middle Eastern Gypsy dialects (e.g., *Fiuj-Ġorbati sonofā*).

English	Sanskrit	Syria	Iran	Rom.	Lom.	
hair	vāla-	val	vāli	bal	valis	late: initial <i>v</i> > <i>b</i>
brother	bhrātar-	ba	brānk	phral	phal	- <i>r</i> > <i>l</i> ; late: devoiced aspirates
hand	hasta-	xast	xat	vast	hath	late: assimilation of <i>st</i> > <i>th</i>
ten	daśa-	das	daṭ	deš	las	palatal <i>ś</i> > <i>s</i> , <i>š</i>
Gypsy	ḍomba	dom		rom-a	lom	retroflex <i>ḍ</i> > <i>d</i> , <i>r</i> , <i>l</i>

The Gypsy dialects in Iranian speaking areas by and large constitute a continuum from Central Asia and Afghanistan through Persia to parts of Transcaucasia, Mesopotamia, and eastern Anatolia. The exception are two: (a) Two related European Romani dialects, one spoken in two villages near Qazvin (Windfuhr, 1970), the other near Qučān in northern Khorasan (Djonedī), of which Zargari has fully retained the highly inflectional morphology of European Gypsy. Both probably originate in southern Bulgaria and were deported a century or more ago. (b) The dialect of the Seb-Seliyer, literally "tin-workers," which is spoken in a cluster of mountain villages near Firuzkuh (Sotuda). While largely adapted to local Māzandarāni, its small but distinct core vocabulary has remained a linguistic isolate, except for a few terms such as *kūr* "horse." Often, the distinction between Gypsy as a dialect and the use of Gypsy terms and features in the argot and jargon of other marginalized groups is blurred (see below).

LEXICON

Extra-Iranian Gypsy. The loan component in European Gypsy has been an important factor in the attempts to trace the course and time of migrations. While the largest loan component is Greek, the Persian component in European Gypsy as a whole amounts to some 100 items, of which about 60 are found throughout. It clearly reflects Early New Persian, evidenced by the long mid-vowels *ē* and *ō*, e.g., Romani *amrol* "pear" (< *amrōd*), *zōr* "power," *zēn* "saddle"; but also *bi-* "without" (rather than *bē*, cf. Indic *vi-*), which in Romani is a highly productive prefix. Very few loans are from other Iranian languages. The absence of any Arabic loans later adapted by (spoken) Persian, as well as the absence of Turkish loans, reflects the pre-Ottoman and pre-classical Persian date of this migration. Most Middle Eastern Gypsy dialects outside Iranian territories have rather few Persian loans, varying from sub-group to sub-group, and by distance from Iran (Hancock, 1995).

Gypsy in Iranian-speaking areas. The lexicon of all dialects has at least three basic components: Indic, Persian, and loans from various later contact sources. While there is heavy borrowing from local languages, most dialects have retained a substantial Indic core, though varying with the dialect, including everyday words such *kām* "work," *nāk* "nose," *lō* "iron," *rāt* "night," and *gorā* "horse," all with local variants. The latter term, from Sk. *ghōṣā-*, is most widely retained and serves as a ready initial clue to identifying a dialect as Gypsy.

The Indo-Persian/Iranian core has been supplemented to various degrees by a distinct component of Arabic terms other than those found in the Persian varieties, together with a few terms of Hebrew or Syriac and of obscure origin. This has led to doublets, or the loss of the Indic term; e.g., inherited Indic *jewed* "woman" vs. *dena/neda*; Indic *dg* "fire" vs. *nḍrak*; Indic *pāni* "water" vs. *mīā(w)*; Indic *āk* "eye" vs. *nukur* < *nūr* "light." Most of these terms entered Gypsy via marginal groups, such as mendicant darvishes, Sufis, *qalandars*, also artisans and musicians, as shown in pioneering studies of their probable origin, the social mechanisms, and their typical linguistic manipulation, not unlike anagrammatic play, *ta'miya*, often with semantic shift, by Vladimir Ivanow (1922, 1927); Alexandr Romaskevich (1945); and foremost Anna L. Troitskaya (1948); and, in a larger context, Clifford E. Bosworth (1976).

In fact, in addition to vocabulary as such, a typical feature of most recorded Gypsy dialects is the distortion of words, which may also serve to distinguish related sub-groups. This aspect was systematically discussed by Moḥammad Moqaddam in the context of Fijj-Gorbatī, and includes metathesis, phonemic substitution, extensions (e.g., *kāle* > *lāk* "maternal aunt," *sib* > *lib* "apple," *amu* > *lāmu* "paternal uncle,"), and combinations thereof and other concealing means.

GRAMMAR

All Gypsy languages are typologically hybrids, and reflect the results of contact with successive host languages through centuries. This includes major restructurings in morphology and syntax. The final stage of this process is the loss of the inherited grammar, while retaining a significant part of the hybrid lexicon, a type called Para-Romani in studies of European Romani. Romani in Europe, and to some extent in Anatolia, has increasingly been the subject of systematic linguistic research during the last quarter century, in particular with regard to the dynamics of language contact, interference, and linguistic typology (cf. Hancock 1988; Matras 1995; Matras et. al.; for Gypsy in Iran, cf. the typological study of Zargari by Windfuhr, based on data collected with the assistance of Sülo, who recognized the dialect as Romani).

In the Middle East, those Gypsy dialects which were or are in contact with inflectional languages such as Turkic, Arabic, Armenian, and Iranian Kurdish and Pashto have tended to retain the inherited morphological distinctions to various degrees, including masculine and feminine gender, two-level case marking with direct and oblique

The following examples illustrate the hybrid features of Iranian Gypsy (cf. similar features in the hybrid language of the Jewish communities of Persia, discussed by Yarshater; upper case = Gypsy); a Zargar-Romani example is added for comparison:

DIALECTOLOGY.

It has been difficult to establish the internal dialectology of Middle Eastern Gypsy. This is partially due to the inadequate data, some of which date to the early 19th century. Donald Kenrick (1976), who included a number of Iranian dialects, did the first systematic comparative study, but did not aim at a dialectology. Aparna Rao (1995) presented an overview of Gypsy in Afghanistan.

har ki-RIZ	a	REŠKĀ?	bo-	TŌV	-a,	mī-	MEYT	-a
har ke	rā	mār	be-	zan	-ad,	mī-	mār	-ad
each that		(dir.obj.) snake	(subj.)-	hit-	s	(impf.)-	die s	(present)

"Whoever the snake bites, he dies."

<i>rosta</i> m	<i>ke</i>	<i>KĀLUTA</i>	<i>mē-</i>	<i>NAŠT-ak,</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>kal-UR</i>	<i>-iṣ</i>	<i>zōr-ak wa-rī</i>
<i>rosta</i> m	<i>ke</i>	<i>jang</i>	<i>mē-</i>	<i>kard(-ak)</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>sar</i>	<i>-aṣ</i>	<i>zōr rasīd</i>
R	(conj.)	fight	(impf.)	made(past)	(conj.)	head-	his	strength reached (past)

"Rostam was battling, when strength came to his head."

<i>dar-ESA</i>	<i>DELA</i>	<i>dar-</i>	<i>KIMist</i>	<i>-um,</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>kas-TOK</i>	<i>maysari</i>	<i>kaya istoy-u-z;</i>
<i>dar</i>	<i>xona</i>	<i>dar</i>	<i>-omad</i>	<i>-am,</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>kas</i>	<i>bozi</i>	<i>karda istoda buda ast</i>
<i>into</i>	<i>house</i>	<i>in-</i>	<i>came-</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>person</i>	<i>play</i>	<i>were-doing</i>
								<i>(progressive, evidential form)</i>

"I entered the house, (and saw) three persons were playing."

KARİK	ÆS	TE	KOL-	EN (pl. obl.)	ARAXAV	-AV
kəjə	ʃəyad	lā	ān-	hā-rā	yāb	-am
where	can	till	them (dir.obj.)		fin	-I (subjunctive)
"Where can I find them?"						

with careful attention to exonymic and endonymic terminology, coupled with some linguistic samples. The following suggests a tentative dialectology of Iranian Gypsy. It is based on the original possessive/oblique forms of the personal pronouns, which were a crucial part of the former inflectional morphology, and as last vestiges provide clues for the dialectal interrelationships. The data suggest two major distinct morphological mark-

ers: (a) the suffix *-ri/-ra* (inherited pronominal possessive forms, probably merged with the dative-accusative function of the Persian enclitic *rā*); and (b) the suffix *-ki* (inherited pronominal dative forms). Their presence or absence define six major dialect groups from northwest to northeast (NOM = nominative, or direct case; POS = distinct possessive, or oblique case, which became the general pronominal form in most dialects):

	"I"	"thou"	"he/she"	
NOM	<i>ma</i>	<i>tu</i>	<i>hu</i>	1) Karači, NW (Patkanoff, 1909, p. 265)
POSS	<i>mi-ra</i>	<i>te-ra</i>	<i>hu-ra/ohe-ra</i>	
NOM	<i>me-rī</i>	<i>te-rī</i>	<i>ū-rī</i>	2) Qerešmāl, E Persia (Ivanow, 1914, p. 447)
NOM	<i>mu-rī</i>	<i>tu-rī</i>	<i>ū-rī</i>	3) Gorbati of Afghanistan (Rao, 1995, texts, pp. 76-81)
NOM	<i>mo-kī</i>	<i>to-kī</i>	<i>ū-rī</i>	4) Jugi of Māz. -Astarābād (de Morgan, 1904, p. 306)
NOM	<i>xo-kī-m</i>	<i>xo-kī-t</i>	<i>ū-rī</i>	5) Gorbati of W Persia (Moqaddam, 1960, p. 87)
NOM1	<i>da-kī-m</i>	<i>da-kī-t</i>	<i>vay-da-kī</i>	6) Jugi of Tajikistan and N Afghanistan
NOM2	<i>man</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>vay</i>	(Oranskii, 1964, p. 70)

It is evident that there is no direct correlation between name and dialect. The Jugi of northeastern Persia is clearly distinct from that of Tajikistan, just as Western Persian Gorbati is distinct from Afghan Gorbati, which in turn is closest to its neighbor, eastern Persian Qerešmāl (speakers of Afghan Gorbati claim "western" origin; Rao 1995, p. 74). However, there is a close correlation between the distribution of morphological features and geographic distribution. The notable exception is Persian

Gorbati, which morphologically is located between the two varieties of Jugi in northeastern Persia and Central Asia. (Already Moḥammad Moqaddam detailed the closeness of the Gorbati of the Arāk area he described and Astarābād Jugi, based on de Morgan, 1904).

In comparison, the dialects of the Ottoman areas clearly belong to the *ki*-groups, but also show compounding with possessive *-r*:

NOM	<i>man</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>hul</i>	Qorbāt, Syria; Dūmān, Baghdad
POSS	<i>man-ki</i>	<i>to-ki</i>	<i>ul-ki</i>	(Newbold, 1856, pp. 305, 309)
NOM	<i>me</i>	<i>du</i>	<i>hul</i>	Kaloro, SE Turkey (Kenrick, 1977, p. 33)
POSS	<i>ma-ghi</i>	<i>tu-r-ki</i>	<i>o-ri-ki</i>	

Geographical Listing of Sources, mostly containing linguistic data:

European Romani. Zargari; endonym/language Rōmāni; two villages in Qazvin area (Windfuhr, 1970). Rōmāni, endonym/language; Qečān area (Djonedī).

Isolate. Seb-Seliyer, endonym; isolate Gypsy dialect, local dialect base; in mountains of Firuzkuh area east of Tehran (Sotuda).

Northwest, Transcaucasus, Armenia, Azerbaijan. Boša: endonym Lom, Armenian base, Christian (Patkanoff 1908; Finck, 1907-08, grammar); Mitrib: exonym, Turkish or Persian base, Sunni (Patkanoff, 1908; Benninghaus). Karači: endonym Dom, Persian or Tat base, Shi'ite (Patkanoff, 1909); Karači: endonym Dom, Tabriz area and Kurdistan (Ouseley, III, pp. 400-401; Patkanoff, 1909).

West, Kurdish areas, western Persia. Kaloro: endonym, also Dom, Marash, eastern Turkey and Ainteb, Syria, along Euphrates, Sunni, 'Alawi, and Kelli groups (Paspates, 1862, 1870, in lexicon). Cingāna: in Central Kurd-

ish areas (Turkey), endonym Dom in most Kurdish areas of Persia and Iraq; Sōz(m)ānī: exonym, in southern Kurdish areas (Sanandaj and Kermānīsh; Voskaniān, 1997, no linguistic data); Dūmān (Dom): endonym, extensive Persian loans, Baghdad (Newbold, 1856, pp. 285-312).

Central and Southern Persia. Gorbati: endonym Il-e Fiuj, Arāk area, from Shiraz area (Moqaddam, extensive data and discussion; Wirth); Gorbati: Jiroft, Sirjān, Kermān (Sykes); Lōrī language Mōkki or Lōrīčīnī, Baluchistan; possibly secret language (Ivanow, 1914, no linguistic data).

Caspian and eastern Persia. Jugi, exonym; Māzandarān and Astarābād (de Morgan, pp. 304-6); Gowdari, exonym; Astarābād; strong Persian component (de Morgan, pp. 306-7); Qerešmāl, exonym; Khorasan (Sykes); Gypsies of Nišāpur, Sabzavār, Qā'en, Birjand (Ivanow, 1920), Qā'enāt (Ivanow, 1914).

Afghanistan. Jat: term for four major Indic Gypsy groups in Eastern Afghanistan, Jalālī, Pikrāj, Šādībāz,

Vangawāli, speaking Inku, related to Hendku in Pakistan (Rao, 1995; the term Jat is also generally used for Gypsies); Haydari: endonym, language Magadi Ġorbati, Faryāb province, North Afghanistan (Pstrusinska, 1986).

Jōgi, Jugi: endonym, also Mugat, language Mogati-bey, North Afghanistan; also called Jugi-e Boḡārā'i or Ġorbati in Mazār region; also called Jugi-e Balḡigi or Qāzulāgi in Balḡ region (Rao, 1995). Kuḡaḡa: Pashto base (Rao, 1995); Balōč, endonym (Rao, 1995), related to Kara-Luli of Tajikistan.

Persian-based Gypsy groups of Afghanistan: Ġorbat, endonym, widely found, language also named Qāzulāgi in Herat, Magadi in Kabul region, claim to come from Persia (Rao, 1995); Šayḡ Moḡammadi: endonym, language Ādurgari, Pashto loans, Afghan Persian base, mostly secret language, Eastern Afghanistan (Rao, 1995; Oleson); related to Kaval of Tajikistan.

Central Asia (Tajikistan/Uzbekistan): Jugi; endonym Mugat, Tajiki base, Hissar Valley (Oranskiĭ, 1961, 1983; Nazarov), related to Jōgi of Afghanistan and to Jugi of Astarābād and Māzandarān; Kaval, qawm Afghan: language Porsi, Pashto loans, Afghan-Persian base mother tongue, Kulyāb district (Oranskiĭ, 1961), related to Šayḡ Moḡammadi of Afghanistan; Balōj: endonym, Persian base (Wilkins, 1882; Patkanoff, 1909), related to Balōč of Afghanistan; Luli: endonym Multāni, argot, Tajiki base, Farḡāna area (Wilkins, 1882; Patkanoff, 1909); Kara-Luli (Lit. Black-Luli): endonym Hindustani, qawm Beluġi, Farḡāna area (Wilkins, 1882; Patkanoff, 1909); related to Balōč of Afghanistan; Afyān: Indic based dialect group (Oranskiĭ, 1956), related to Inku in Afghanistan.

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(GERNOT L. WINDFUHR)