

*Dialect variation in Romani personal pronouns*

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## DIALECT VARIATION IN ROMANI PERSONAL PRONOUNS

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### 1. Introduction

Romani shows a considerable degree of cross-dialect variation in the domain of personal pronouns. The aim of the present contribution is to find some order in the data and distinguish types and patterns of variation. My main concern here is the internal morphological structure of pronominal forms, with special emphasis on irregular phenomena. I will not deal with semantic aspects of the structure, or with the pronoun's syntactic-pragmatic functions. In order to be able to determine the sources of structural diversity in Romani personal pronouns, diachronic developments of some prominent morphological patterns will also have to be considered. However, the diachronic pursuit will never bring me deeper than to the stage of the pre-European linguistic unity of Romani (Proto-Romani). I have used a representative sample of 59 Romani dialects, whose genetic classification<sup>1</sup> is presented in Figure 1:

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GROUP	SUBGROUP	DIALECT	SOURCE	
Northern	British	Welsh	Sampson 1926	
		English	Smart & Crofton 1875	
	Finnish	Finnish	Valtonen 1972, v. der Voort 1991	
		Northeastern	Lotfitko	Mānuš <i>et al.</i> 1997
	Sinto-Manuš		Xaladytko	Wentzel 1980, Eloeva & Rusakov 1990
			Lešaki	Matras 1999b
			Prajsitko	v. Sowa 1902
			Hameln Sinti	Holzinger 1993
			Marburg Sinti	Finck 1903
			Bohemian Sinti	v. Sowa 1893
			Hungarian Sinti	Vekerdi 1983
			Westphalian Sinti	v. Sowa 1893, v. Sowa 1902
			Auvergne Manuš	Valet 1991
			Piedmontese Sinti	Franzese 1985, Soravia 1977
		Lombardian Sinti	Soravia 1977, Soravia & Fochi 1995	
Apennine		Venetian Sinti	Soravia 1977, Soravia & Fochi 1995	
		Abruzzian	Soravia 1977, Soravia & Fochi 1995	
		Calabrian	Soravia 1977, Soravia & Fochi 1995	

Harvato		Sloveno	Zatta 1986
		Istriano	Soravia 1977, Soravia & Fochi 1995
Central	Northern	Bohemian	Puchmayer 1821
		West Slovak	v. Sowa 1887
		South Polish	Kopernicki 1930
		East Slovak	Hübschmannová <i>et al.</i> 1991
	Gurvari		Vekerdi 1971, 1983, 1985
	Southern	Romungro	Elšík <i>et al.</i> 1999, Vekerdi 1983
		Roman	Halwachs 1998
		Vend	Vekerdi 1984
Balkan	Southern	Prizren	Boretzky & Iгла 1994, Heinschink 1978
		Arli	Boretzky 1996, Boretzky & Iгла 1994
		Prilep	Boretzky 1997, Boretzky & Iгла 1994
		Kyrymitika	Ventcel' & Čerenkov 1976
		Ursari	Gaster 1938, Tcherenkov 1967, 1970
		Sofia Erli	Boretzky 1998a, Minkov 1997
		Zargari	Windfuhr 1970
		Romano	Djonedj 1996
		Sepeči	Cech & Heinschink 1997
		Rumelian	Paspati 1870
	Northern	Bugurdži	Boretzky 1993, Boretzky & Iгла 1994
		Razgrad Drindari	Kenrick 1967
		Pazardžik Kalajdži	Gilliat-Smith 1935
Vlax	Ukrainian		Barannikov 1931
	Northern	Hungarian Lovari	Hutterer & Mészáros 1977, Vekerdi 1983
		Slovak Bougešti	author's observations
		Austrian Lovari	Cech & Heinschink 1998
		Polish Lovari	Pobožniak 1964
		Norwegian Lovari	Gjerde 1994
		Cerhari	Mészáros 1976
		Serbian Kalderaš	Boretzky 1994, Boretzky & Iгла 1994
		Italian Kalderaš	Soravia & Fochi 1995
		Russian Kalderaš	Demeter & Demeter 1990
		Taikon Kalderaš	Gjerdman & Ljungberg 1963
		'American Vlax'	Hancock 1995
	Southern	Vallachian	Constantinescu 1878
		Ihtiman	Kostov 1962
		Gurbet	Boretzky 1986, Boretzky & Iгла 1994
		Korça	Mann 1935
		Italian Xoraxane	Franzese 1986, Soravia & Fochi 1995
		Ajia Varvara	Iгла 1996

*Figure 1: Dialect grouping and description sources*

The structure of the paper is as follows: In the next section, I will make some general observations on the inflectional morphology of personal pronouns. Non-possessive 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person (1+2P) pronouns and non-

possessive 3<sup>rd</sup> person (3P) pronouns will be analyzed in Sections 3 and 4, respectively. Finally, possessives of all persons will be discussed at some length in Section 5. The sections generally open with a description of the stem formation of the respective pronouns, and end with an analysis of their inflection.

## **2. *Pronouns: nominal morphology***

The declension of personal pronouns, like that of nouns, marks the inflectional categories of case and number in Romani. Nouns and personal pronouns also distinguish the same cases, with the exception of the vocative, which is limited to nouns. Unlike nouns, personal pronouns may possess emphatic forms (see 3.3), and frequently there are further distinctions in the pronominal inflection, mostly within the accusative and the possessive cases (see 3.4, 4.3 and 5.4).

In the majority of Romani dialects pronouns show obligatory synthetic case marking in contexts where nouns do not (cf. Matras 1997:73), and in a few other dialects (e.g. in Piedmontese and Lombardian Sinti) pronouns are the only nominals to express inflectional case at all. Calabrian Romani has now almost lost case inflection even in personal pronouns: the original nominative has been generalized in the singular pronouns, and the original locative in the plural pronouns (e.g. *lamendə keriggjēmə* “we did”). Similar developments took place in English Romani, and in a number of Para-Romani varieties.

The main difference between the pronoun declension and the noun declension concerns the internal structure of inflection forms and the paradigmatic relations between the forms. In general the two word classes, nouns and pronouns, agree in possessing a ‘layered’ morphology of inflection (cf. Matras 1997), which may be called nominal oblique-stem agglutination (see Elšik, this volume). However, there are a number of irregularities of many kinds (especially) in the inner layer, or Layer I, inflection as well as in the relations between inflectional stems. The outer layer, or Layer II, inflection is irregular to a much lesser extent.

### 3. *Personal pronouns: 1+2P*

#### 3.1 *Proto-Romani Layer I formations*

The Layer I formations of the 1+2P pronouns as they may be reconstructed for Proto-Romani are presented in Figure 2:

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	1SG	2SG	1PL	2PL
NOM	<i>m-e</i>	<i>t-u</i>	<i>a-m-en</i>	<i>t-u-m-en</i>
Oblique	<i>m-an-</i>	<i>t-u-</i>	<i>a-m-en-</i>	<i>t-u-m-en-</i>
Pre-possessive	<i>m-</i>	<i>t-</i>	<i>a-m-</i>	<i>t-u-m-</i>

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Figure 2: *Layer I formations of 1+2P pronouns in Proto-Romani*

There is a number of inflection irregularities to be observed. First, there are two non-nominative stems: the oblique stem and the one marked as *pre-possessive* in Figure 2. Pre-possessive stem is a morphological construction which serves as a basis for derivation of the possessive stem by means of a possessivity marker (see 5). With nouns, however, the pre-possessive stem is identical with the oblique stem, i.e. nouns derive their possessive stems directly from their oblique stems. Nouns unlike the 1+2P pronouns thus have only one non-nominative stem (per number).

Furthermore, all nominative forms of the pronouns contain irregular markers: cf. *-e* in the 1SG, and *-en* in the plural pronouns (for the 2SG see below, for the plural pronouns see also 3.3). Singular pronouns exhibit an irregular formation of the oblique stem as well, namely a unique suffix (*-an-*) in the 1SG, and an identity derivation in the 2SG pronoun. The obliques of the plural pronouns, on the other hand, contain the regular OBL.PL suffix *-en-*. Indeed, plural obliques have been explained as forms created by analogy with nouns (Woolner 1915:124). The inflectional parallelism between the two plural pronouns has been inherited from OIA.

All three Layer I formations presented in the Figure 2 – the nominative, the oblique stem, and the pre-possessive stem – share a common stem, which I will term *base stem*. (Note that with the 1+2P pronouns, the pre-possessive stem is identical to the base stem.) While the singular base stems (1SG *m-*, 2SG *t-*) are morphologically simple, the plural ones (1PL *am-*, 2PL *tum-*) may be further segmented. The segment *-m-* in the plural pronouns is to be analyzed as an irregular plural suffix. Thus the 1P pronouns of differing number exhibit a strong root suppletion (1SG *m-* vs. 1PL *a-*), which is, of course, a structural irregularity par excellence.

The *-u-* which occurs in the 2SG non-possessive formations, both in the nominative and in the oblique stem (*t-u-*), as well as in the 2PL base stem

(*t-u-m-*) appears to be the most difficult segment to analyze. It cannot be simply considered part of an unsegmentable 2P root *tu-*, as the vowel is not present in the 2SG pre-possessive stem (*t-*). One way of solving this problem is to assume two allomorphs of the 2P marker, *tu-* and *t-*, with distribution governed by categorial features. Alternatively, the *-u-* may be treated as a residual morphological segment. The latter analysis is supported by the development in a few dialects of the irregular plural reflexive stem *pumen-*, which is constructed in analogy to the 2PL *tumen-*. Knowing that the reflexive root is *p-*, one may clearly identify the *t-* in the 2PL pronoun as a 2P marker. This, in turn, leads to the recognition of *-u-* as a separate morphological segment.

### 3.2 Stem formation

In a few dialects the vowel of the Proto-Romani 2PL base stem *tum-* has been changed. The Zargari/Romano 2PL form *tem-en* arose through a regressive vowel assimilation. Zargari has retained the original vowel in the 2PL possessive stem *tum-ar-*, which testifies to a relative independence of the possessive forms (see 5). In Romano, however, the stem *tem-* has also expanded to the possessive (e.g. *tem-ar-*). Concerning the Bohemian Sinti form *tem-e*, both an assimilation and a vowel reduction (a frequent process in Sinti) can be made responsible for the development. All these changes show that the *-u-* of the 2PL stem *tum-* may develop independently of the same vowel in the 2SG stem *tu-*.

In Westphalian Sinti the root vowel of the 2PL non-possessive pronoun was influenced by the vowel of the 1PL pronoun: *\*tume* → *tame*, to rhyme with *ame*. The development resulted in a relation of *form inclusion* between forms of the two pronouns. Now the 2PL form ‘contains’ the 1PL form (cf. the differential segment *t-*).<sup>2</sup> The vowel change has led to a reanalysis of the irregular plural marker (see 3.1) in non-possessive forms: *-m-* → *-am-*. At the same time the 1PL root has developed into a zero: the 1PL is now marked only by contrast with the 2PL forms.

In some other dialects the same result, i.e. the relation of form inclusion between the two plural pronouns, has been obtained through a rather distinct process, namely truncation of the initial *a-* in the 1PL pronoun (*am-* > *m-*). Thus, for example, in Lombardian Sinti the 2PL stem *tum-* ‘contains’ the truncated 1PL stem *m-*, the differential segment being *tu-*. Unlike Westphalian Sinti there was no reanalysis of the number marker (*-m-*), but like in Westphalian the Lombardian 1PL root is now a zero. The dialectal distribution of the 1PL truncation – the phenomenon is known from Harvato and all

Northern dialects with the exception of the peripheral Xaladytko and Caló – points to its diffusion origin.

In some dialects, including some of those with truncation, the 1PL forms may contain a prothetic consonant (e.g. *j-* in Piedmontese Sinti and Lešaki, and an obscure *l-* in the Apennine dialects). I will use the term *initial modification* as a cover term for truncation and prothesis. Both types of initial modification are often optional, showing interesting patterns of intra-paradigmatic distribution. The pre-possessive stem always agrees with the oblique stem in the initial modification. I have encountered the following patterns: First, the oblique is variantly truncated, while the nominative is not truncated at all (e.g. Lotfitko *ame* vs. *amen-/men-*, Lešaki *jame* vs. *jamen-/men-*, Abruzzian *lame* vs. *lamen-/men-*). Second, the nominative is not truncated, while the oblique is (e.g. Sloveno *ame* vs. *men-*). And, finally, the oblique is truncated obligatorily, while the nominative only variantly (e.g. Piedmontese Sinti NOM *jamen/men* vs. OBL *men-*). Thus it is clear that the oblique stem is more susceptible to truncation than the nominative. The distribution patterns are summarized, in the respective order, in Figure 3 (the plus sign represents truncation):

	1	2	3
NOM	–	–	±
OBL	±	+	+

Figure 3: Patterns of the 1PL truncation in Romani dialects

As a consequence of the truncation, the 1PL pronoun in the Welsh, Finnish, and a number of Sinto-Manuš dialects is, at least variantly, homonymous with the 1SG pronoun in the nominative. In the oblique forms, however, both pronouns are distinguished by a vowel quality (e.g. Bohemian Sinti *me* “I/we”, but *mangi* “to me” vs. *mengi* “to us”).

I suggest that the creation of the curious Istriano nominative forms of the plural pronouns, viz. 1PL *meamen* and 2PL *tuamen*, may be explained as an indirect consequence of the truncation. I assume that the original forms were 1PL *amen/men* and 2PL *tumen* (cf. the current obliques *men-* and *tumen-*, respectively). The 2PL and the truncated 1PL were thus in a relation of form inclusion, with the differential segment *tu-*. This relation was then transmitted onto the relation between the 2PL and the *untruncated* 1PL, bringing about the new 2PL nominative *tu-amen*. The initial segment *tu-* of the new 2PL form corresponds in its shape, as we know, to the nominative of the 2SG pronoun. In a next stage the segment *tu-* was reanalyzed as a 2P marker. Analogically, the

nominative form of the 1SG pronoun *me* was then prefixed to the original 1PL form as a 1P marker: *me-amen*. As a consequence, the original 1PL pronoun became a mere plural marker (*-amen*) in the nominative. The three-stage Istriano development is summarized in Figure 4:

Stage	1PL	2PL
1	<i>amen/men</i>	<i>tu-men</i>
2	<i>amen (men)</i>	<i>tu-amen (tu-men)</i>
3	<i>me-amen</i>	<i>tu-amen</i>

Figure 4: Development of the 1PL and 2PL Istriano nominatives

### 3.3 Layer I inflection

Almost all Romani dialects have retained the irregular Proto-Romani nominatives of the singular pronouns (i.e. 1SG *me* and 2SG *tu*). Nevertheless, in Lombardian Sinti a 2SG variant (*te*) has been created in analogy to its 1SG counterpart *me*. Both singular pronouns now show the irregular nominative suffix *-e*. Also, the Apennine dialects exhibit prothetic vowels of an obscure origin in the 1SG nominative: *i-me* in Abruzzian, and *a-me* in Calabrian. Finally, the deviant 1SG nominative form *min* in Zargari is likely to have been influenced by Azeri and/or Persian *mæn* in its final consonant.

The NOM.PL suffix exhibits two basic forms in current Romani dialects, viz. *-e* (e.g. *tume*) and *-en* (e.g. *tumen*). The suffix spelled as *-er* (e.g. *tumer*), which occurs in some Sinto-Manuš dialects, appears to be just a phonological variant of the suffix *-e*. The forms in *-e* are to be found in the British, Finnish, Northeastern, most Sinto-Manuš, most Apennine, Ukrainian, most Northern Vlax, and a few Balkan dialects (e.g. Ursari). The forms in *-en*, on the other hand, are used in all Central dialects including Gurvari, some Sinti dialects (e.g. Lombardian and Piedmontese), a number of Balkan dialects (e.g. Arli, Prilep, Rumelian, Sepečī, Bugurdži, Drindari) as well as in some Vlax dialects (mostly Southern Vlax, but also in Mačvano). Both variants exist in Marburg Sinti. The *-e* forms thus cover a wide area, in which islands of the *-en* forms (e.g. in the Balkans, Central Europe, and northwestern Italy) may be encountered.

Boretzky & Igla (1994:312, 327) seem to assume that the *-en* forms are original. The nominative *-e* forms could then be explained by phonological reduction in the least marked case. The development, moreover, has led to an abandonment of the NOM/ACC homonymy (e.g. NOM *\*tumen* > *tume* vs. ACC *tumen*). I tentatively accept this hypothesis and posit the forms *amen* and



*tumen* as the Proto-Romani nominatives of the plural pronouns (see Figure 2). The alternative hypothesis, namely that the *-e* forms rather than the *-en* forms are the original nominatives, needs to assume an intra-paradigmatic expansion of the oblique suffix *-en-*. Anyone who would like to maintain this hypothesis would have to answer two questions: First, why there should be a *morphological* development leading to subject/direct object homonymy, *nota bene* in a nominal which is relatively high on the animacy scale. And, second, what is so ‘natural’ about such a development that it should be accomplished independently in a number of unrelated dialects.

Specific emphatic nominative forms are attested in a few dialects of different groups (e.g. in Welsh Romani, and in Ursari), which leads one to believe that they existed in Proto-Romani (cf. Hancock 1995:61). Except for the irregular 2SG *tūja* they are formed from the base stems by the suffix *-aja* (1SG *m-aja*, 1PL *am-aja*, 2PL *tum-aja*). Structurally different are the Harvato emphatics in *-ni*, which only exist with the singular pronouns (1SG *me-ni*, 2SG *tu-ni*). Also the Sepečī forms in *-j* (*me-j*, *tu-j*) – which are not emphatic, however – have been thought to derive from those in *\*-ni* (Heinschink 1978:17). Cech & Heinschink (1997:4) think the *-j* forms rather result from diphthongization of final vowels. A similar diphthongization occurs in Austrian Sinti, and before the borrowed clitic particle of emphasis in Kalajdži (*mej-da*, *tuj-da*). In Erli emphatic forms with both *-da* and *-ni* are attested (e.g. 2SG *tu-da-ni*, and also 3SG.F *oj-da-ni*). Finally, Zargari has reportedly borrowed the whole form of the 1SG Azeri emphatic *özüm*.

### 3.4 Layer II inflection

Formation of the Layer II case forms from the oblique, except for the accusative (see below), is usually regular. Only exceptionally do we find reduced variants (cf. Boretzky & Iгла 1994:385) in the singular pronouns’ dative (e.g. 1SG Gilan Arli *mae*, Gurbet *maj* < *mange*; 2SG Abruzzian *tuk*, Gilan Arli and Bugurdži *tke*, Skopje Arli and some Gurbet *će* < *tuke*) or, more rarely, instrumental forms (e.g. Prizren *tuva* < *\*tuha*).

The accusative form of the 2SG pronoun must be analysed as *tu-t* from a synchronic point of view, i.e. as containing a specific Layer II accusative suffix. Sampson (1926:158) suggests that all oblique forms used to have the oblique stem *\*tu-t-* (e.g. 2SG.DAT *\*tu-t-ke* > *tu-ke*). If his hypothesis is correct, then a reanalysis of the Layer I oblique suffix into the Layer II accusative suffix took place in the accusative form after the consonant clusters *tk* etc. had been simplified in the other oblique forms. The unique suffix *-t* has been completely lost in a few dialects (e.g. in Venetian Sinti, Drindari, Italian Kalderaš, or Austrian Lovari). The current form *tu* in these dialects is thus a

regular accusative formation, i.e. derived by an identity operation from the oblique stem.

In a number of other dialects, especially in Vlax, but also in Arli, Bugurdži, and Sloveno, the *t*-less form is a clitic variant of the full form *tut*. The parallel variation in the 1SG pronoun (full *man* vs. clitic *ma*) has an identical dialect distribution, while the clitic variants of the plural pronouns (1PL *ame*, 2PL *tume*) are much less common. They are known to exist only in the Northern Vlax dialects, where they are homonymous with the respective nominative forms, and in Arli. In Lombardian Sinti the reduced accusative form *ma* is the only variant. The clitic accusative forms must have existed in Abruzzian Romani, too, but now they have developed into object agreement suffixes: cf. *dikkēmə* < \**dikel-ma* “s/he sees me”, or *dikkašt* < \**dikas-tu* “we see you.SG”.

Reduced locative variants of the singular pronouns may be used with prepositions in a few dialects. The reduced locatives are often homonymous with the non-prepositional accusative reduced variants, as in Sloveno: e.g. *smek ma* “in front of me” like *mek ma* “let me (go)” (Zatta 1986:131). Indeed, they are likely to be accusative forms in origin: the pronouns simply retained a prepositional accusative, which had been lost with nouns in most dialects (although it had not, for instance, in Erli). In some dialects, however, the reduced locatives are the only reduced case forms of the singular pronouns: cf. East Slovak Romani *pal ma* (beside *pal mande*) “after me”, but only *mukh man* “leave me (alone)”.

#### 4. Personal pronouns: 3P

##### 4.1 Proto-Romani Layer I formations

Romani is almost unique among the Indo-Aryan languages in having a specific non-demonstrative 3P pronoun. The Layer I formations as well as the subject clitic forms as they may be reconstructed for Proto-Romani are given in Figure 5. Note that unlike with the 1+2P pronouns there is no specific possessive root: the oblique stem also serves as a basis for derivation of the possessive stem (see 5.1).

	3SG.M	3SG.F	3PL
NOM	<i>o-v</i>	<i>o-j</i>	<i>o-n</i>
	<i>a-v</i>	<i>a-j</i>	* <i>a-n</i>
Clitic	<i>l-o</i>	<i>l-i</i>	<i>l-e</i>
OBL	<i>l-es-</i>	<i>l-a-</i>	<i>l-en-</i>

Figure 5: Layer I formations of the 3P pronoun in Proto-Romani

There were two sets of nominative forms in Proto-Romani, one in *o*- and another one in *a*-. Forms of the latter set have survived as rare, conservative style, variants of the 3P pronoun in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Rumelian Romani: *a-v*, *a-j*, *a-l*, respectively (for the different plural inflection see 4.3). The root *a*-, however, is also attested in the Romano demonstrative *ā-vā* (e.g. *āvā berš* “this year”) and the demonstrative influenced 3PL form *ā-lā* (see below). There is no doubt that both nominative roots are of demonstrative origin (cf. the Indic ‘proximate’ *a*-demonstratives and ‘distant’ *o*-demonstratives). The existence of both the *a*-forms and the *o*-forms in the Rumelian and Romano dialects points to a relatively recent functional development of the latter into a specific, non-demonstrative, 3P pronoun.

Both of the nominative roots are strongly suppletive to the clitic (and oblique) root *l*-. Although the subject clitics are widespread in Romani, with significant differences in syntactic distribution (see Matras 1999a), in some dialects they do not exist at all. They have been completely lost in the Northern Central dialects (except for the Vlax influenced Gurvari). In Sinto-Manuš the clitics have been variantly grammaticalized into suffixes, in which the pronominal root was completely repressed (e.g. *l-o* > *-o*). A similar development may be assumed for East Slovak Romani present copula forms (e.g. *hiň-i* < *\*hin-i* < *\*hin-li* “she is”).

The root *l*-, too, is of demonstrative origin. However, its development into the 3P pronoun must be of a much earlier date than that of the root *o*-. The following scenario may be suggested: First, in early Proto-Romani the pronoun in *l*- was a demonstrative with a complete paradigm and a regular nominal inflection:

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	3SG.M	3SG.F	3PL
NOM	<i>l-o</i>	<i>l-i</i>	<i>l-e</i>
OBL	<i>l-es(-)</i>	<i>l-a(-)</i>	<i>l-en(-)</i>

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Figure 6: Layer I formations of the *l*-pronoun in early Proto-Romani

Second, the *l*-pronoun acquired the non-demonstrative 3P function, which presumably happened outside the subcontinental area. Third, the nominative forms of a demonstratives in *o*- were gradually integrated into the inflectional paradigm of the existing 3P pronoun. They became semantically stronger variants with regard to the original nominative *l*-forms, and have been gradually narrowing the syntactic domain of the latter or even completely displacing them in some dialects.

To be sure, alternative scenarios of the suppletive paradigm development have been suggested. Boretzky (1994:63) mentions the possibility that the nominative *l*-pronouns may be secondary analogical formations, i.e. that there was no complete *l*-pronoun at all in Proto-Romani. Sampson's (1926:161) etymology of the two roots, *o*- and *l*-, which derives them from an identical original stem (*\*o-ta-*), assumes that the suppletion arose through irregular phonological changes, rather than through inflectional integration. Both types of suppletion development are well attested cross-linguistically.

An analogical process of integration has recently occurred in the dialect of Xaskovo (Iglu 1997: 182) and Zargari: the original nominative forms have been completely replaced by demonstratives (Xaskovo M.SG *\*ov* → *oda*, F.SG *\*oj* → *o(d)ja*, PL *\*on* → *o(da)la*, and Zargari M.SG *\*ov* → *kava*, F.SG *\*oj* → *kaja*),<sup>3</sup> thus iterating the suppletive pattern. In Romano, a variety closely related to Zargari, the original forms were only influenced by the demonstratives, taking over their inflectional suffix: *\*ū-v* → *ū-vā*.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4.2 Roots

The Proto-Romani nominative root *o*- (as opposed to *a*-) is now general in Romani. Apart from minor phonological changes of the root vowel (cf. *ō*- in most Romungro, *ū*- in Romano and some Romungro, *vou*- in Slovak Vlax), the main source of variation is a prothesis of *j*- or *v*- in some dialects. The quality of the prothetic consonant, or the lack of any, is of great dialectological interest (cf. Bakker 1999). Basically, the root *jo*- is Northern and Northern Central, the root *o*- is Southern Central and Balkan, and the root *vo*- is Vlax.

There are some exceptions, however. Balkan Sepečī has *vo*- (as if Vlax), some Northern Central varieties in northeastern Slovakia – but not those in contact with the Southern Central dialects – show *o*-, and Lombardian Sinti has both the expected *jo*- and the odd *o*-. Surprisingly, Istriano (*jo*-) and Sloveno (*o*-) do not agree. In Welsh Romani the root *o*-, not the regular *jo*-, is used after particles such as *ak* (i.e. *joj* vs. *ak'oj* “here she is”). Ursari shows both *o*- and *vo*-, the latter being a clear borrowing from Vlax. In Tcherenkov's (1967, 1970) Ursari texts, interestingly, the two roots are in complementary distribution (M.SG, PL *vo*- vs. F.SG *o*-). Finally, a number of Southern Vlax dialects of Vallachia and Bulgaria (e.g. Ihtiman) have *o*-, apparently a borrowing from Balkan dialects. Some of the exceptions are puzzling as they do not submit to a straightforward dialect contact explanation.

In some Balkan dialects (e.g. Prilep, Rumelian, Prizren, Gilan Arli, Zargari) the oblique forms are variantly prefixed by *o*-. The prefixed variants are non-clitic and emphatic in most dialects (e.g. Prilep *oles diklum-les* “it was him who I saw”). Sampson (1926:161) considers the *o*-forms to be primary (e.g.

*oles* < MIA \**otassa*), while Turner (1975:310-311) derives the prefix *o-* from the nominative root *o-*, by which, he claims, the obliques were contaminated. In Rumelian the prefixed variants are archaic rather than progressive, which does not, however, exclude Turner's hypothesis. A palatalized variant of the oblique root (e.g. *l'-e* < \**l-es* "him") has developed in some Arli varieties.

A specific root *-to-* of obscure origin is attested in Prizren as an enclitic (e.g. *hi-to* "he is"). According to Heinschink (1978:16) this root also occurs in Burgenland in what he calls 'Hungarian' Romani, presumably a Vedic dialect close to Roman (the latter, however, has the regular Southern Central clitic root *l-*). The root shows interesting gender and number inflection (see 4.3).

#### 4.3 Inflection

The original NOM.SG suffixes of the 3P pronoun are idiosyncratic: *-v* in the masculine, and *-j* in the feminine. The former has undergone regular phonological changes in some dialects (e.g. *-u*, *-f*, *-b*), including fusions with the root vowel in Welsh Romani, some Romungro, and some Northern Vlach dialects (e.g. *ōv* > *ō*, *vov* > *vo*). In Xaladytko and Korça Romani the root vowel has been variantly unlauded by the feminine suffix (cf. *joj* > *jej*, and *voj* > *vöj*, respectively, but not \**jev* or \**vöv*).

In some dialects in contact with gender-less languages (Hungarian, Finnish), one of the two NOM.SG forms has been generalized for both genders, the other one having been lost. (In oblique forms the gender distinction is mostly retained; only exceptionally accusative forms may be interchanged.) Both directions of the take-over are attested: the original masculine is now used in Vend, some Lovari, and variants of Finnish Romani, and the original feminine in Hungarian Lovari, Cerhari, and most Romungro dialects.

The Romani NOM.PL inflections are *-n*, *-ne*, *-ni* (*-nni*), *-nk*, and *-l*, *-le*, *-la* (*-lla*). The inflections containing an *-l* are limited to a few Balkan dialects, and are likely to have arisen through an analogy to demonstratives (Boretzky 1996:13). While the demonstrative NOM.PL suffix expanded to the personal pronoun, the personal root itself has been retained (e.g. Baručisko Arli and Zargari *o-la*, Kalajdži *o-lla*, Romano *ū-lā*, Prilep *o-le*). In Sofia Erli, Rumelian, and Bugurdži, the form that arose in this way then lost the final vowel, assimilating to the phonological structure of the NOM.SG forms (i.e. *ol* is VC like *ov*, *oj*). Other Balkan dialects (e.g. Gilan Arli, Kyrymitika, Sepeči, Ursari, Drindari, and, variantly, Bugurdži) as well as the Welsh, Finnish, Sinto-Manuš, Central, and Vlach dialects have retained the Proto-Romani *-n*.

The *-n-* also exists, within an extended formant, in the rest of Romani dialects. The stressed extension *-e* in the Northeastern and Ukrainian dialects is due to an analogy with the other plural pronouns (i.e. *ame*, *tume* → *jone* or

*vone*). The extension *-i* in Harvato might be borrowed from the phonologically similar South Slavic 3PL.M pronoun *on-i*. Although Sloveno and Istriano have different forms of the 3P root, they agree in the extension: *onn-i*, and *jōn-i*, respectively. Furthermore, beside the non-extended *jon* (*jōnə*) there is an extended variant *jōn-i* in Abruzzian. If Sampson (1926:161) is right in considering the extended forms to be primary, then the Abruzzian, Northeastern, Ukrainian and possibly Harvato dialects would be conservative in this respect. Borrowing of an extension is attested in the Nógrád Romungro *ōnk* or *ūnk*, where a Hungarian plural marker *-k* was suffixed to a form which had been plural by itself. Although the suffix *-k* is a regular nominal marker in Hungarian, it is only used in the 3PL pronoun's nominative in Romani. Again, phonological similarity (cf. the Hungarian 3SG pronoun *ő*) could have played a role.

The oblique inflections of the 3P pronoun (SG.M *-es-*, SG.F *-a-*, PL *-en-*) are completely regular. An irregularity occurs in the ACC.SG.M form, which may be *s*-less not only in dialects with a regular final *s*-lessness (such as Southern Central, Arli, Eastern Ukrainian, or Gurbet). Thus in Drindari the accusative form *l-i* (< \**l-is*) is derived by a deletion from the oblique stem *l-is-*, whereas there is no such morphological process in the other nominals (cf. *rakl-is* “boy”). A parallel irregular deletion occurs in the ACC.PL: *l-i* (< \**l-in*) vs. *rakl-in* “boys”.<sup>5</sup>

Unlike Drindari, the Northern Vlax *s*-less and *n*-less accusative forms are only variants to the full forms; they serve as direct object clitics. Deriving an object clitic of an accusative form thus generally consists in a deletion of the final consonant where applicable: e.g. Lovari 1SG *man* → *ma*, 2SG *tut* → *tu*, 1PL *amen* → *ame* (see 3.3), as well as 3SG.M *les* → *le*, 3PL *len* → *le*. The 3P clitics are distributed roughly like the 1+2PL clitics across dialects, i.e. they are less common than the 1+2SG clitics (see 3.3.).

An irregular F.SG subject clitic form *l-a*, as opposed to the regular *l-i*, exists in some Northern Vlax dialects (e.g. in Taikon Kalderaš, Lovari, the Vlax-influenced Gurvari, and, variantly, in Serbian Kalderaš). The Prizren subject clitic in *-to-* almost parallels the independent nominative pronoun in number/gender inflection. At the same time it differs considerably from the inflection of the *l*-clitics in other dialects: cf. SG.F *to-j* as *o-j* (and unlike *l-i*), PL *to-n* as *o-n* (and unlike *l-e*), but SG.M *to* unlike both *l-o* and *o-v*.

## 5. Possessive pronouns

### 5.1 Possessive stem formation

The possessive stem of most nominals, including the 3P pronoun, is derived from the oblique stem by a regular possessivity marker (e.g. 3PL *l-en-* → *l-en-ger-*). The shape of the regular possessivity marker varies considerably across dialects (the capital consonant letters stand for a pair of phonologically conditioned alternants, e.g. *k* ~ *g*; for the variable *V* see 5.4): cf. *-Ker-*, *-Kər-*, *-Kir-* (*-T'ir-*), *-Kvr-*, *-Kr-*, *-K-*.<sup>6</sup>

In the 1+2P pronouns, however, neither the possessive stem is derived from the oblique stem (see 3.1), nor is the possessivity marker the one which is used with other nominals. The irregularity of the 1+2P possessive formations as against the regular possessives of the other nominals is shared by most Indic languages. Sometimes a terminological distinction is made in Romani linguistics between *possessives* (here: irregular possessives) and *genitives* (here: regular possessives). An illustrative stem analysis of some possessive formations is given in Figure 6 (East Slovak Romani forms):

Base	<i>rom-</i>	<i>l-</i>	<i>m-</i>	<i>a-m-</i>
Oblique	<i>rom-es-</i>	<i>l-es-</i>	<i>(m-an-)</i>	<i>(a-m-en-)</i>
Pre-possessive	= oblique	= oblique	= base	= base
Possessive	<i>rom-es-ker-</i> “husband’s”	<i>l-es-ker-</i> “his”	<i>m-ir-</i> “my”	<i>am-ar-</i> “our”

Figure 7: Regular and irregular possessive formations: stem analysis

Possessives of the 1+2P plural pronouns are uniform in Romani. In almost all dialects they are derived by the irregular suffix *-ar-* from the base stem of the respective pronoun (e.g. 2PL *tum-ar-*). On the other hand, there is immense cross-dialectal diversity in the singular possessive stems. Full stems of the 1+2SG possessives consist of a monoconsonantal root plus a suffixal possessivity marker. The diversity stems from inter-dialectal shape variation of the possessivity markers (see 5.2) and, to a lesser degree, from the diversity of the 2SG root (see 5.3). All dialects, on the contrary, agree in the 1SG root *m-*.

### 5.2 Possessivity markers

In the Vlax dialects each of the two singular pronouns has a distinct possessivity marker. While the 2SG pronoun’s marker *-ir-* is common to all Vlax dialects (hence Proto-Vlax *\*-ir-*), there are a number of cross-dialectal Vlax variants of the possessivity marker in the 1SG pronoun (e.g. *-unř-*, *-unr-*, *-undř-*, *-ungř-*, *-əngř-*, *-ingř-*, *-uxn-*, *-ihn-*, *-’rn-*, *-nř-*, *-nr-*, *-rn-*, *-un-*, *-in-*, *-uř-*

, *-ur-*, *-oř-*, *-or-*, *-iř-*). Often there are up to three variants within a dialect. The Proto-Vlax 1SG possessivity marker may be reconstructed as *\*-unř-*. Some of its later developments<sup>7</sup> are characteristic of certain subgroups within Vlax Romani. For instance, simplification of the original consonant cluster into an *r*-sound (i.e. *r* or *ř*) is typical of the Lovari-like varieties, some Kalderaš, and the Northeast Ukrainian, while metathesis of the cluster consonants is limited to Southeast Ukrainian and some Southern Vlax dialects.

The vowel *i* in the 1SG of a few Vlax dialects (e.g. in *-ingř-*, *-ihn-*, *-in-*) is clearly due to the influence of the 2SG possessivity marker. It is noteworthy that despite the potential influence of the latter, any of the great number of the Vlax 1SG possessivity markers still remains distinct from its 2SG counterpart in a given dialect. In non-Vlax dialects, on the other hand, both singular pronouns of the 1+2P share a uniform possessivity marker: *-indr-* in Sepeči, *-ind-* in Prilep, *-inr-* in ‘Sedentary’ Rumelian, *-ir-* in Welsh, Finnish, Lotfitko, Xaladytko, most Sinti, Calabrian, Abruzzian, Cosenza, some Central, some Arli, Kyrymitika, and Zargari/Romano, *-Vř-* in older Sofia Erli, and Razgrad Drindari, and *-Vr-* in Prizren, Bugurdži, and modern Sofia Erli (for the development of *-Vř-* and *-Vr-* see 5.4). ‘Proto-non-Vlax’ 1+2SG possessivity marker can be tentatively reconstructed as *\*-inř-*.

So far I have reconstructed the following irregular possessivity markers: the Proto-Vlax 1SG *\*-unř-*, the Proto-Vlax 2SG *\*-ir-*, and the ‘Proto-non-Vlax’ 1+2SG *\*-inř-*. How could then the Proto-Romani forms look like? We might assume the developments represented in Figure 8 (the signs “>” and “→” mark phonological and morphological changes, respectively):

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	Proto-Vlax		Proto-Romani		‘Proto-non-Vlax’
1SG	<i>-unř-</i>	<	<i>-inř-</i>	>	<i>-inř-</i>
2SG	<i>-ir-</i>	<	<i>-ir-</i>	→	<i>-inř-</i>

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Figure 8: Possessivity markers of the 1+2SG pronouns: early developments

In Proto-Vlax there was a vowel labialization in the 1SG marker, which may be easily explained by an assimilation to the preceding labial consonant (cf. Woolner 1915:123, Pobožniak 1964:48): *\*m-inř-* > *\*m-unř-*.<sup>8</sup> In the non-Vlax dialects, however, a morphological development must have occurred: the 1SG marker was generalized to the 2SG possessive as well, thus extending the possessive-stem parallelism of the 1+2P pronouns from the plural (see 5.1) to the singular.



Now if there were no exceptions to this morphological extension among the non-Vlax dialects, one could ascribe the development to a ‘Proto-non-Vlax’ stage (as I have, tentatively, in Figure 8). However, there *are* exceptions. Disregarding Xaladytko, where the possessivity marker shows two closely related, and probably secondary, allomorphs (cf. 1SG *m-ir-*, 2SG *t-yr-*), there is one non-Vlax dialect in my sample, which does have distinct markers for the two singular pronouns: South Polish Romani with 1SG *m-indr-* beside *m-ir-* but only 2SG *t-ir-* (i.e. not *\*t-indr-*). If my reconstruction of the Proto-Romani possessivity markers is correct, then South Polish Romani preserves the original forms most faithfully. Vlax dialects and South Polish Romani are the only<sup>9</sup> NIA languages without a morphological parallelism in the singular possessives.

### 5.3 Roots

The 2SG root is the dental *t-* in all non-Vlax dialects. In all Vlax dialects, on the other hand, the root consists of a palatal or palatalized sound. In Ukrainian dialects, Taikon Kalderaš, Cerhari, and most Lovari we find a palatalized dental or a palatal (*t’-*, *t’-,-*, *tj-*), while there is a palatalized velar (*k’-*) in Ajia Varvara and Serbian Kalderaš. Also the affricate roots (*č-*, *č-*) in Gurbet, Italian Xoraxane, Italian and some Serbian Kalderaš as well as in Norwegian Lovari surely go back to one of these stops. The Russian Kalderaš dental in the possessive stem *t-ir-* is only an apparent exception here: There are two complementarily distributed allomorphs of the 2SG root, *tj-* and *t-*. The latter occurs only before front vowels (cf. the SG.M reduced NOM *tj-o* vs. OBL *t-e*), which shows that the original *yod* of the 2SG root has been only recently absorbed by the following *i*.

Now it is clear that we are dealing with an early dialect-differentiating feature: While the ancestor(s) of non-Vlax dialects, no doubt, had the dental 2SG root (*\*t-*), the Proto-Vlax root must have been a palatalized dental or a similar sound (*\*t’-*). Unambiguously, the former variant must be reconstructed for Proto-Romani, and a palatalization of the initial dental due to the following front vowel (i.e. *\*t-ir-* > *\*t’-ir-*) must be assumed for Proto-Vlax. In Cerhari the palatal root of the 2SG possessive has expanded to the 2PL possessive (cf. *t-umār-* → *t’-umār-*), so there is now an opposition in the 2P between the non-possessive root *t-* and the possessive root *t’-*. The early developments of the Proto-Romani 1+2SG possessives are summarized in Figure 9:

	Proto-Vlax		Proto-Romani		'Proto-non-Vlax'
1SG	<i>m-unř-</i>	<	<i>m-inř-</i>	>	<i>m-inř-</i>
2SG	<i>t'-ir-</i>	<	<i>t-ir-</i>	→	<i>t-inř-</i>

Figure 9: Possessive stems of the 1+2SG pronouns: early developments

#### 5.4 Possessive variants within dialects

Apart from the full possessives described in the previous sections there is a variety of reduced 1+2SG possessive variants in different dialects. From a structural point of view I distinguish between *minimal* possessives, whose stems consist of the bare monoconsonantal root, and *syncopated* possessives, whose stems contain a reduced variant of the possessivity marker (*-r-* or, in Arli, *-l-*). Finally, many Sinto-Manuš dialects have developed specific reduced possessives with a word-final possessivity marker: *-ər*, *-ur*, or *-r* (see 5.6). I will call them *r-final* reduced variants. In a few dialects, on the other hand, possessivity markers of the 1+2SG possessives have been ‘lengthened’ rather than reduced: cf. the 1SG *m-īr-* in Welsh Romani, Lotfitko, some Sinti, and some Central dialects, *m-iēr-* (< \**m-īr-*) in Finnish Romani, *m-ūr-* in Gurvari and some Lovari. Many dialects have also lengthened the plural possessives (e.g. 1PL *am-ār-*).

The roots of all types of reduced or lengthened possessives are identical with those of the full possessives (e.g. 1SG *m-*, and 2SG *t-*, *t'-* etc., according to a dialect). Only in Gilan Arli the 2SG root shows two allomorphs: *t-* in most possessive forms, and *k-* in the syncopated possessive *k-l-* (< \**t-l-* < \**t-r-*).

To sum up, we have an inventory of five structural types of 1+2SG possessive forms in Romani: the full variants, the syncopated variants, the minimal variants, the *r-final* variants, and the strengthened variants. The abundance of possessive forms in a dialect may stem from familiolectal variation as well as from inter-dialect borrowing: cf. the rare Hungarian Lovari 2SG variant *tr-* borrowed from Romungro, the rare Hungarian Romungro 1SG *mur-* from Lovari (cf. Boretzky 1999a:223), or the frequent Gurvari 2SG *t'-* of Lovari origin. Nevertheless, no variety of Romani possesses all five variants. Most dialects distinguish two variants of the 1+2SG possessives. It is noteworthy that no more than two functional degrees seem to be distinguished even if there are more than two structural variants.

The distinction between the full and the minimal possessives (e.g. Ajia Varvara 1SG *min-/munr-* vs. *m-*) is particularly common in the Balkans. One may encounter it in Prilep, Sepeči, Rumelian, Kyrymitika, Ursari, some Arli,

Erli, Bugurdži, Drindari, as well as in most Southern Vlax dialects, and some Kalderaš and Lovari. However, the same distinction also exists in the Welsh, Finnish, and Lotfitko Northern dialects. By syncope of the full forms most Arli dialects have transformed this opposition into that of the syncopated and the minimal possessive (e.g. 1SG *ml-* vs. *m-*).

The minimal possessives (as well as the Sinto-Manuš *r*-final possessives) are mostly restricted to prepositional attributes and they may not take noun inflections. For emphasis either the full variant alone is used, or, in some dialects, the full variant followed by the minimal one (cf. Rumelian *tinri ti romni* “your.SG wife”). The minimal variants, however, may ultimately take over the functions of the other variants and become syntactically unrestricted (as in Prishtina Gurbet). A different sort of take-over has come about in Sepeči: Minimal variants of the 1+2SG possessives may now refer to plural possessors of the respective person as well, thus neutralizing the number distinction of the full variants (e.g. 1P *m-* vs. 1SG *mindr-* ~ 1PL *amar-*).

The minimal possessives do not exist in Harvato, most Central, and many Northern dialects. In a number of these dialects only one possessive variant is attested: the full one in Xaladytko, Lešaki, and Hameln Sinti, and the syncopated one in Piedmontese Sinti, Vedic, or in western dialects of the Northern Central group. In eastern dialects of the same group the full variant is used almost exclusively – the syncopated possessive is very rare indeed, being moreover restricted to preposed attributes. In some Romungro dialects, on the other hand, it is the syncopated possessive that is not syntactically restricted, although the full variant is preferred in the predicate: cf. *odā kher tīroltro hi* “this house is yours” (Vekerdi 1983:165). With the 1+2PL possessives, analogically, the predicate variant is lengthened with regard to the attribute variant. In Gurvari there is a lengthening relation in the 1SG possessive (*muro* vs. *mūro*), while in the 2SG the difference is more than a vowel quantity (*tro* vs. *tīro*). An asymmetry between the singular possessives of a different person may also be observed in the Northern Vlax dialects. Here in the attributive position the full variant is preferred or exclusively used in the 1SG, but the minimal one in the 2SG (e.g. Lovari 1SG *mur-* vs. 2SG *t'-*).

It may be assumed that the syncopated variants in various Romani dialects arose through a split development of the full possessives. A full variant was phonologically reduced in some functions (typically, in the preposed attribute), but kept intact in others. The hypothesis that the minimal possessives arose in the same way, i.e. through a split development of the full forms, is less controversial. Woolner (1915:122), for instance, claims that the minimal forms have been inherited from OIA. This would explain their scattered distribution within Romani dialects (Balkan, some Vlax, some Northern). However, a recent

development of the minimal variants from the syncopated ones in some Southern Central varieties (e.g. 1SG *mro* > *mo*) confirms that the minimal possessives in other dialects, too, might have independently developed from the full forms.

### 5.5 Regular possessives

In a few dialects of different dialect groups (e.g. in Taikon Kalderaš, or Rumelian) forms parallel to regular nominal possessives have been created in the 1+2P pronouns. Like the other regular possessives they are derived from the oblique stem by a regular possessivity marker. In some dialects these innovative forms are limited to a certain number: to the singular in Serbian Kalderaš (1SG *man-g-*, 2SG *tu-k-*), and to the plural in Lombardian Sinti, Abruzzian, and Istriano (e.g. Istriano 1PL *men-gr-*, 2PL *tumen-gr-*).

The regular possessives seem to have replaced the original possessive forms in all their functions in Abruzzian. In Serbian Kalderaš and Rumelian, however, they only exist in a construction with the preposition *bi* – which is the only preposition that may govern the possessive case with nouns (e.g. Serbian Kalderaš *bi mango* “without me”). Those Romani dialects which lack the regular 1+2P possessives altogether use the full variants of the irregular possessives even in this construction (e.g. Italian Kalderaš *bi muřo*). The distributional or functional difference between the regular and the irregular possessives in Lombardian Sinti (e.g. 1PL *men-g-r* vs. *mar-*) is not clear.

### 5.6 Inflection

In most dialects possessive forms of all nominals decline for agreement categories, thus exhibiting double marking of case, number, and gender. For example, the form of the 3P pronoun in the noun phrase *leskera datar* “from his mother” (East Slovak Romani) marks the number and gender of the possessor, the possessive relation itself, as well as the agreement in case, number, and gender with the possessee noun:

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<i>l</i>	<i>-es</i>	<i>-ker</i>	<i>-a</i>
3P.(OBL)	OBL.SG.M	POSS	OBL.SG.F
possessor	possessor	relation	possessee

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Figure 10: Double case/number/gender marking in possessives

In most dialects the possessive forms take the suffixes of the most common thematic adjective subclass, the *o*-adjectives. There are only minor

deviations: Taikon Kalderaš differentiates gender in the OBL.SG with adjectives (e.g. M *phur-e* vs. F *phur-eä* “old”, M *koř-e* vs. F *koř-a* “blind”), but there is a gender neutralization in possessives (e.g. 1SG *miř-e*). According to Kenrick’s (1967) description the Drindari inflection suffixes of possessive pronouns differ from those of adjectives: cf. PL/OBL.SG.M *-i* (e.g. *terni* “young”) vs. *-ə* (1SG *məřə*), and OBL.SG.F *-’a* (*terja* < \**ternja*) vs. *-ə* (*məřə*). The different inflections may be explained by ongoing phonological changes *i* > *ə* and *a* > *ə*, which often result in variation (cf. NOM.PL *rakli/raklə* “boys”). Nevertheless, the pronouns seem to make the neutralizing choice consistently. Finally, in Sepeči (Cech & Heinschink 1997:17) the reduced possessives are said to have an *-i* instead of the regular *-e* of other possessives in the NOM.PL as well as in the oblique forms (e.g. 1SG *mindr-e* vs. *m-i*).

Disregarding such minor irregularities, possessives in Vlax, Central, and most Northern dialects may be said to inflect exactly like the *o*-adjectives. In the Balkan dialects, however, the agreement categories are marked not only by the *o*-adjective suffixes, but at the same time by a vowel alternation inside of (some) possessivity markers. I will term this internal marking *introflective*. The introflecting possessives thus constitute an irregular subclass within the *o*-adjective inflection class.

Individual Balkan dialects differ in the domain of the introflective agreement marking: either it affects only the regular possessive suffix, i.e. *-KVr-* (Arli, Prilep, Sepeči, Kyrymitika, Rumelian), or only the irregular 1+2SG possessive suffix (Prizren, Drindari),<sup>10</sup> or both (Erli, Bugurdži). It need not be a chance that none of the introflecting irregular suffixes, i.e. Prizren, Arli, and Bugurdži *-Vr-* as well as Erli and Drindari *-Vř-*, contains a consonant cluster. That is to say there is no introflection in the suffixes *-indr-*, *-ind-*, and *-inr-* (cf. Rumelian 3SG.M *les-kor-o*, *les-ker-i*, but 1SG *m-inr-o*, *m-inr-i*). On the other hand, even those irregular 1+2SG possessivity markers which do *not* contain a consonant cluster need not exhibit the introflection (cf. *-ir-*, not \**-Vr-*, in Kyrymitika, Zargari/Romano, and some Arli).

Generally, the quality of the alternating vowels depends on the agreement suffixes. Two patterns may be encountered: First, the alternant and the suffix are in a one-to-one relation, i.e. all suffix distinctions are reflected by alternant distinctions (e.g. Drindari 1SG *moř-u*, *meř-i*, *məř-ə*). Second, the alternant neutralizes a distinction expressed by the suffix (e.g. Erli *moř-o*, *meř-i*, *meř-e*, where the stem *meř-* occurs with both *-i* and *-e*). The neutralization pattern exists only in Erli, Rumelian, and, variantly, in the Bugurdži 1+2SG possessives (cf. *mor-o*, *mer-e*, but *mir-i* as well as *mer-i*).

In any case, the alternating vowel and the suffix vowel are either identical (e.g. Prizren 1SG *mor-o*, *mir-i*, *mer-e*, and *mar-a*, Arli 3SG.F *lakor-o*, *lakir-i*,

and *laker-e*), or they at least share a subphonemic feature (cf. the back vowels in Drindari *moř-u*, and the front ones in *meř-i*). Thus the relation between the two vowels has a character of regressive vowel harmony. In noun-like inflection, however, the stem of the corresponding adjectival form seems to be retained, irrespective of the quality of the suffix vowel: cf. Erli LOC.SG.F *meř-a-te* as in OBL.SG.F *meř-e* (i.e. not *\*mař-a-te*).

Minimal possessives are indeclinable in Zargari/Romano: e.g. *mi phorāl* “my brother”, *mi phorālestar* “with my brother” (Windfuhr 1970:276).<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the Sinto-Manuš *r*-final reduced possessives are indeclinable in most sub-dialects: e.g. Manuš *altrāu mur dake* “I am waiting for my mother” (Valet 1991:117). In Lombardian and Venetian Sinti, however, the reduced variants do decline, marking the possessee gender and number. (There is no noun case and thus no case agreement in Lombardian Sinti. The lack of case agreement, however, is also typical for a number of Sinto-Manuš varieties which do express case in nouns.)

While the plural is rendered by the usual suffix (e.g. *mr-e*) in the North Italian Sinti dialects just mentioned, the gender distinction in the singular is marked inside of the possessive stem by a vowel infix. The gender-marking infix is usually *-u-* for the masculine, and *-a-* for the feminine (e.g. Venetian 1SG *mur* vs. *mar*). In Auvergne Manuš a similar type of inflection has developed in reduced forms of a few lexical adjectives (e.g. M *bur* vs. F *bir* – beside M *baro* vs. F *bari* “big”). The vowel infix here probably arose through a metathesis of an original suffix (cf. M.SG *bur* < *\*br-u* < *\*br-o* < *bar-o*, F.SG *bir* < *\*br-i* < *bar-i*, and also PL *bir* < *\*br-i* < *\*br-e* < *bar-e*).<sup>12</sup>

In Lombardian Sinti the possessee gender introflexion has been extended from the 1+2SG possessives to all possessive forms. The regular possessivity marker has thus developed into the discontinuous *-K-r-*: e.g. 1PL *mengur* vs. *mengar* (beside *mar-*), or 3SG.M *leskur* vs. *leskar*. It cannot be excluded that the gender introflexion of the reduced 1+2SG possessives was a common Sinto-Manuš feature, which has been retained only in the southern periphery of this dialect group (and even extended in Lombardian Sinti). If this is the case, then one could assume that elsewhere in Sinto-Manuš the SG.M forms were later generalized for both genders and both numbers. In northern Sinti areas (Marburg, Bohemia, East Prussia) then a vowel reduction occurred (e.g. *\*mur* > *mər*).

## 6. Conclusions

### 6.1 Sources of cross-dialectal diversity

Various moments contribute to the inter-dialectal diversity of Romani personal pronouns. Only a few features are of a clearly genetic nature, i.e. inherited by dialects which developed from a common ancestor proto-dialect. To take the clearest example, the palatalization of the 2SG possessive root (*\*tir-* > *t'ir-*) is a Proto-Vlax development, which has been inherited by all descendant, i.e. all Vlax, dialects. Another Proto-Vlax innovation is the *v*-prothesis in the 3P nominative root (*\*o-* > *\*vo-*). This innovation, however, does not mark the Vlax dialects as neatly as the preceding one, since it also appears in two non-Vlax dialects; there is little doubt that inter-dialect contact is responsible for the prothetic *v*- in Ursari and Sepeči. A third feature that might seem to exhort for a genetic interpretation is the relation between the possessivity markers of the 1+2SG pronouns. The fact that almost all non-Vlax dialects have undergone an identical innovation (viz. uniformization of the two markers) might tempt one to assume a common Proto-non-Vlax development. However, the exception of South Polish Romani makes this hypothesis unlikely.

All three features just mentioned – palatalized 2SG possessive root, prothetic *v*-, and distinct possessivity markers – place Ukrainian Romani within the Vlax genetic group (see also the classification in Figure 1). On the other hand, Ukrainian dialects lack a number of other characteristic Vlax features (e.g. the 1SG.PAST personal suffix *-em*, and the regular possessive suffix *-k-*). These may be, however, later innovations (*\*-jom* > *-em*, *\*-ker-* > *\*-kr-* > *-k-*) that took place in the ancestor dialect of Northern and Southern Vlax after Ukrainian Romani had separated. An alternative explanation would be, of course, intense inter-dialect borrowing.

This brings us to the issue of areal diffusion through dialect contact. An area with quite a few specific pronominal features is the southern part of the Balkans. An important peculiarity is the agreement vowel harmony in full possessive forms (e.g. M *leskor-o*, F *lesker-i* “his”) in a number of Balkan dialects. The fact that the Vlax dialects spoken in this part of the peninsula do not participate in it may be partly explained by structural reasons: no vowel alternation may occur in the Vlax regular possessivity marker *-K-*. Another feature present in all dialects of the Balkans (both Balkan and Vlax), which nevertheless is not limited to this area, is the existence of minimal possessives. The 3PL extension *-e* in the Ukrainian dialects (cf. *von-e*) is likely to have been borrowed from the Northeastern dialects (cf. *jon-e*). Even if this *-e* is an original suffix retained in both groups, the presence of the extension still is an areal feature. Western and northern Europe stands out as the area of the 1PL

pronoun truncation (e.g. *ame* > *me*). In Italy the pattern of regular plural possessives (e.g. 2PL *tum-en-gr-*) must have been diffused across dialect group boundaries, as it exists in Abruzzian Romani, Istriano, and Lombardian Sinti.

Among the different types of contact language influences, form borrowing is a very rare source of diversity with personal pronouns. The only exception seems to be the Zargari emphatic *özüm* from Azeri. Marker borrowing is attested with the 3PL pronouns (e.g. the Nógrád plural suffix *-k* from Hungarian) and a curious sort of form influence with the Zargari 1SG pronoun (*\*me* → *min*, due to Azeri/Persian *mān*). Structural borrowing is better represented: The gender dissolution in the 3P pronoun, which occurred in a number of dialects in contact with gender-less languages, surely belongs to this category. The very existence of a specific 3P pronoun is likely to be a feature acquired (at an early stage) by contact with non-Indic languages, possibly in Proto-Romani by contact with Iranian. An important contact-induced development is the disappearance in a few dialects of case as a regular nominal category.

## 6.2 Structural innovation

The development of inter-dialectal diversity is sensitive to categories. Nominative is the case which is most easily affected by morphological innovations, be they contact-induced (e.g. the gender dissolution in the 3P pronouns in a number of dialects), or contact-independent. A number of nominative innovations stem from analogies between pronoun forms of a certain number. Within the singular, for example, the Lombardian Sinti 2SG form *te* was created in analogy to the 1SG *me*. Within the plural, 1+2P pronouns influenced the 3P pronoun in the Northeastern and Ukrainian dialects (e.g. 3PL *\*von* → *vone*, in analogy to 1PL *ame*, 2PL *tume*). Also the intricate development of the agglutinative plural suffix *-amen* in Istriano assumes interaction of the 1PL and 2PL nominative forms.

An important source of contact-independent structural innovation in the nominative is the formal interaction between the 3P pronouns and demonstratives (which, of course, reflects their functional similarities). In some Balkan dialects, we have observed, the original nominative 3P suffixes were replaced by demonstrative suffixes: often in the plural (e.g. Prilep *\*o-n* → *o-le*) and, more rarely, also in the singular (e.g. Romano *\*ū-v* → *ū-vā*). In Zargari and Xaskovo Romani, what is more, the demonstrative nominative has completely displaced the original 3P form (e.g. *\*ov* → *kava* and *oda*, respectively), which is a process that probably occurred in Proto-Romani, too (e.g. *\*lo* → *ov*). Thus it seems the less marked a case is, the more innovative it tends to be morphologically.



Phonological erosion, on the other hand, affects the oblique cases more often than the nominative. I have shown that the oblique is more susceptible to reductive phenomena such as the initial vowel truncation. Also the few irregular Layer II forms (e.g. 1SG *mange* > *mae*, 2SG *tuke* > *će*) as well as the object clitics (e.g. 2SG *tut* > *tu*, 2PL *tumen* > *tume*) in various Romani dialects arose through phonological developments. The development of object agreement in the Abruzzian dialect (e.g. *dikas tut* “we see you.SG” > *dikas+tu* > *dikkašt*) is a consequence of continuing erosion of the clitics. With the object clitics and with possessives, split phonological developments are a source of functional variation.

### 6.3 Morphological irregularity

As far as regularity of pronoun forms is concerned, three types of processes may be distinguished: iteration of inherited irregularity (cf. the new suppletion in the Zargari and Xaskovo 3P pronouns just mentioned), decrease of inherited irregularity, and, finally, creation of new irregularity. An instance of regularization is the replacement of the original 2SG possessivity marker \*-*ir-* by the 1SG *-inř-* in non-Vlax dialects, which resulted in uniform possessivity marking in the 1+2P singular pronouns. A straightforward instance of irregularity decrease is the creation of the regular plural possessives in some dialects (e.g. 1PL *am-ar-* → *am-en-ger-*).

New irregularity, on the other hand, has been developed in the Layer II forms in a number of dialects (e.g. the irregular final *s*-lessness in the accusative of the 3SG.M). The development of the vowel harmony agreement marking in possessives of many Balkan dialects (e.g. Prizren M *mor-o*, F *mir-i* “my”) created irregularity in respect to the inflection class to which the possessives used to belong. Even more irregular are the Italian Sinti possessives with agreement categories marked by an infix placed inside of an discontinuous possessivity marker (e.g. Venetian M *mur* vs. F *mar*), since there is moreover no regular suffix in the forms.

Romani observes the universal tendency that pronouns, especially personal pronouns, fall into the natural domain of irregularity and undergo irregular developments rather than regularizations (cf. Bittner 1988:420-421). The irregularity of Romani pronouns concerns especially the Layer I marking, and intra-paradigmatic relations between the pronouns’ stems. There appears to be a hierarchy in the former kind of irregularity: the nominative markers are irregular with all personal pronouns, the possessivity markers only with the 1+2P pronouns, and, finally, the irregular oblique markers are limited to the singular 1+2P pronouns. Irregularity of the stem relations consist especially in

the strong case suppletion in the 3P pronoun (e.g. NOM *o-* vs. oblique *l-*), and in the strong number suppletion in the 1<sup>st</sup> person (i.e. 1SG *m-* vs. 1PL *a-*).

Suppletion, and irregular stem relations in general, are in fact a type of a more general phenomenon: the tendency towards a greater form differentiation in pronouns in comparison with other nominals. In Romani this tendency manifests itself mainly in the category of case. The progress of case dissolution, while being instigated by language contact, observes universal tendencies. In different Romani dialects pronouns are either more often marked for case than nouns, or they are the only case-marking nominals. A further development towards analyticity – viz. the overall loss of the category of case – has proved to be the last step before language extinction in Romani circumstances (as may be exemplified by the last century English Romani and, very likely, by Calabrian Romani of today). The disappearance of case in pronouns is a manifestation of an accelerating and profound structural influence of a contact language, which is a sign of language extinction.

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### ***Notes***

<sup>1</sup> The classification of the Northern group is based on Bakker (1999), that of the Central and the Balkan groups on Boretzky (1999a) and (1999b), respectively. I have chosen the name *Harvato*, one of a variety of names used to refer to the Harvato-Sloveno-Gopto-Istriano dialect, as a cover term for two similar but not identical subdialects, Sloveno and (‘Sinto’) Istriano. The genetic affiliation of Harvato is obscure; it shares a number of features with Southern Central as well as Northern dialects.

<sup>2</sup> Exactly the same type of development took place in Gujarati. The phenomenon of form inclusion in personal pronouns is known from other languages, too. Only comparative diachronic investigation may show whether form inclusion is a mere by-product of phonological developments, or whether there is a typological principle behind it.

<sup>3</sup> A similar tendency to use the nominative forms of the demonstrative *odā* in anaphoric functions may be observed in Romungro (cf. Elšík *et al.* 1999). On the other hand, in some dialects the oblique forms of the 3P pronoun may be used as discourse deictics (e.g. Auvergne Manuš *hi špasake ke krejum les* ‘it is jokingly that I did it’, Valet 1991:117).

<sup>4</sup> Similarly in the Romano *a*-pronoun: *\*ā-v > ā-vā*. It is less likely that the suffix *-va* was inherited within the two pronouns, i.e. not borrowed from the *k*-demonstratives.

<sup>5</sup> Hancock (1995:62) gives the masculine *es* and *los*, and the feminine *lat* and *lan* as rare accusative variants in ‘American Vlax’. The form *la-t* seems to contain the accusative suffix of the 2SG pronoun (see 3.4).

<sup>6</sup> In Bugurdži, according to Boretzky's (1993:30, 46-47) description, possessivity marking in the 3P pronoun does not entirely correspond to that in nouns. While the markers *-KVr-* and *-Kr-* occur with both word classes, there is an extra variant of the suffix (*-K-*) limited to the 3P pronoun. Very likely, borrowing of the pronoun forms from Vlax is responsible for this irregular pattern.

<sup>7</sup> The marker *\*-unř-* has undergone various dialect-specific phonological changes (cf. also Boretzky & Iglá 1993:24-25): a) changes of individual sounds (e.g. *ř > r*, *ř > x > h*, *u > ə*, *u > o*), b) metatheses within the consonant cluster (e.g. *nř > řn*), c) various epentheses (e.g. *nř > ndr*, *nř > ngř*), or d) sound losses and cluster simplifications (e.g. *nr > r*, *nr > n*, *ndr > nd*).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also the Proto-Vlax labialization of Proto-Romani *pinřo > punřo* "foot, leg".

<sup>9</sup> There is some evidence that the ancestor Romani dialect of Caló was another non-Vlax variety with two distinct possessivity markers in the singular pronouns: cf. 1SG *-urn-/inři-/onr-/in-* vs. 2SG *-ir-/in-* (cf. Boretzky 1998b:106, 120).

<sup>10</sup> It is significant that both dialects *cannot* have a vocalic alternation in the regular possessive suffix, since the suffix (*-K-*) does not contain a vowel.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. also *les dad* "his father" with the accusative rather than the possessive form. I have not enough data to be able to interpret this deviant development in the Zargari/Romano dialect.

<sup>12</sup> I have no suggestion for the origin of the Venetian-Lombardian infix *-a-* (as a F.SG suffix, *-a-* may be found in nouns, but only in athematic ones, or only in the oblique). However, we have found a similar irregularity in the 3SG.F subject clitic form *l-a* in some Vlax dialects (see 4.3).

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