T'avén sasté taj baxtalé!
Romani
the language of the Roma

Daniel Krasa
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General introduction

- Spoken mainly in Europe, North and South America, Australia

- Between 3 and 5 million speakers worldwide (no reliable estimate)

- Romania (~ 1 million), Bulgaria (600.000), Russia (~ 400.000), Serbia (~ 400.000), Slovakia (~ 300.000), Hungary (290.000), Turkey (280.000), Macedonia (220.000), France (210.000)

- Official minority language in more than 20 countries.

- Recognized language at the Council of Europe.

Roma & Romani in Europe

Roma population around Europe, estimates

Number
- 1,000,000+
- 500,001-1,000,000
- 100,001-500,000
- 50,001-100,000
- 10,001- 50,000
- 1,001-10,000
- 0-1,000

ROMANIA
BULGARIA
TURKEY

Source: Council of Europe Roma and Travellers Division, July 2008
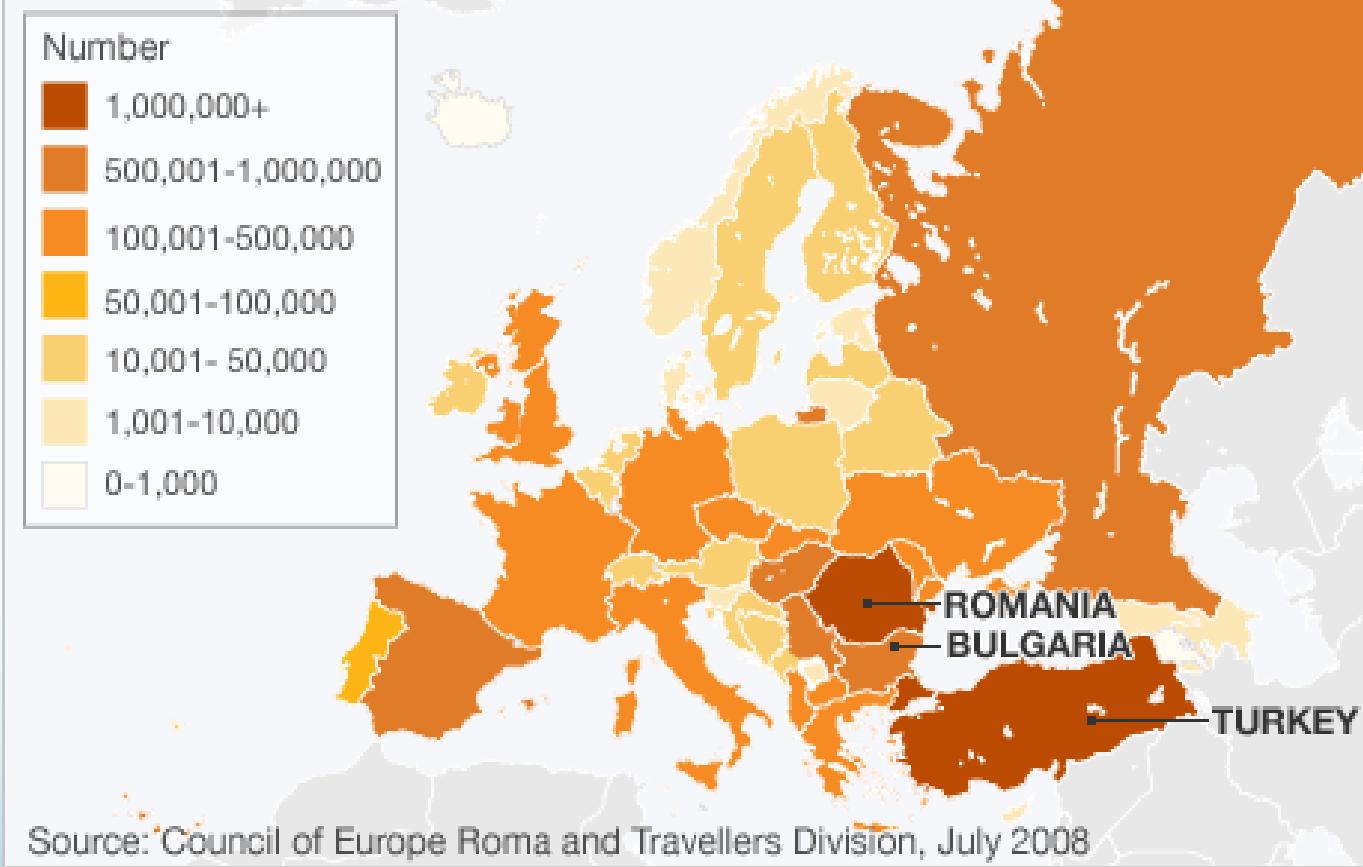
What does it sound like?

Me tut uŽaráv, Čhajé   (I'm waiting for you, girl)
bo me tut kamáv, Čhajé   (because I love you, girl)
me tut uŽaráv,   (I'm waiting for you)
kána pálma avehá,   (until you will come back)
me tut uŽaráv   (I'm waiting for you)

Me tut Čumidáv,   (I'm kissing you)
tire lolé vuštorá,   (your red lips)
tire kalé jakhorá,   (your black eyes)
ándre lénde me dikháv,   (I'm looking into them)
so me túke te phenél,   (what shall I tell you?)
me tut Čhajé igen kamáv,   (I love you so much girl)
me tut uŽaráv   (I'm waiting for you)

[Jan Bendig]

History of Romani
A few facts

- Johann Christian Christoph Rüdiger (1782)

- Possible departure of the Roma from India: 5th-7th century

- Documents from the Sassanid Empire: 7th century

- Documents from the Byzantine Empire: 11th century

- Documents from the South Balkans: 14th century

- Linguistic evaluation carried out in the 19th century by August Friedrich Pott (1845) and Franz Miklosich (1882–1888) showed the Romani language to be a New Indo-Aryan language (NIA)

The "diaspora" of the Roma
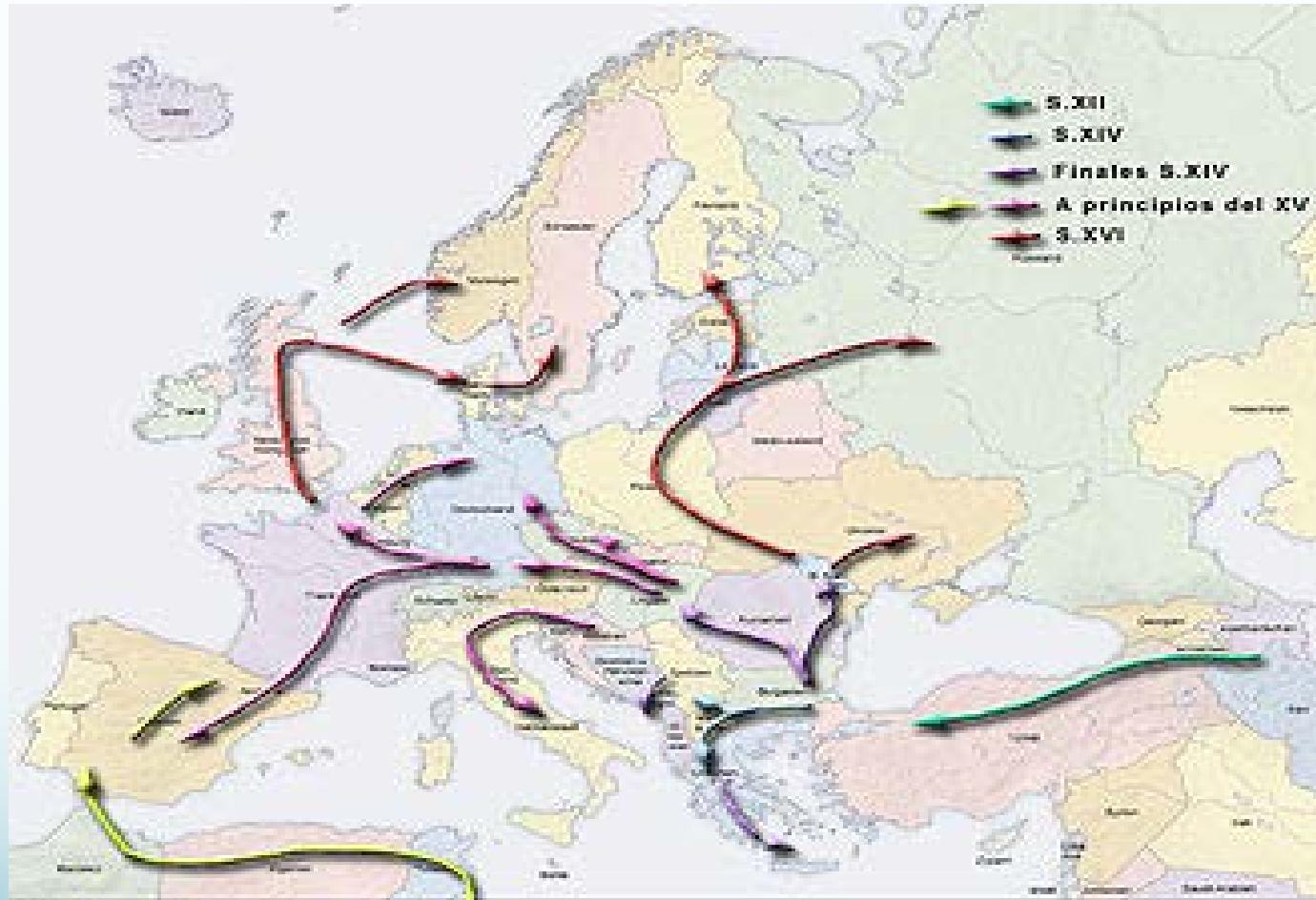
Linguistic influences
Part 1: the origins

- Indo-Aryan origin: amé (we), bakri (sheep), baró (big), Del (God), jag (fire), kher (house), paji (water), sumnakáj (gold), thuló (fat)

- Early loanwords:
  Persian: angustri (ring), baxt (luck), korró (blind), mol (wine), veš (forest), zor (strength)

- Armenian: dudúm (pumpkin), grast (horse), xumér (dough), kotōr (piece), mom (wax)

- Byzantine-Greek: amborim (maybe), drom (way), kurkó (Sunday), papin (goose), trjandá (30), zumi (soup)

Linguistic influences
Part 2: new loanwords

- Slavonic: áli (but), drúštvo (society), kúxnja (kitchen), slobodíja (freedom), stánica (station)

- Romance: feljástra (window), gindo (thought), lúmja (world, universe), murmúnto (tomb)

- Germanic: cájto (time), fárba (colour), fláša (bottle), policájto (policeman), štráfo (fine)

- Hungarian: bistošo (sure), Čaládo (family), emeléto (floor), hirešo (famous), mindig (always)

- Others: vurdón (cart – Ossetian), cámla (chestnut – Georgian), dúna (world – Turkish)

The old substratum vs. new loanwords

- But raklé avilé | xurdé | koČakénca taj | krafinénca ánde | krČma le | podóski.
Indian | Persian | Armenian | Greek | Slavonic | Romanian
Many boys came with small buttons and nails to the tavern/pub at the bridge.

- Romani doesn't exist without a contact language.

- Depending on the dialect, up to 50-75% of the vocabulary is of modern origin.

- There are around 700 roots from Indo-Aryan, no more than 100 from Iranian, at least 20 from Armenian and up to 250 from Byzantine-Greek. None of these more than 1000 lexemes are all present in one particular dialect.

Indian roots –
from Sanskrit to Romani
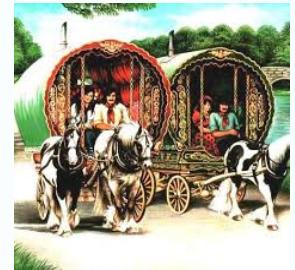
	Sanskrit	Hindi	Romani
hand	hasta	hāth	vast
milk	dughda	dūdh	thud
place	sthana	sthān	than
blood	rakta	rakt	rat
brother	bhraṭr	bhāī	phral
to go	yati	jānā	džav
3	tāṇi	tīn	trin
100	ṣata	sau	šel

Romani shares a number of features with Central Indo-Aryan languages. The most significant isoglosses are the shift of Old Indo-Aryan like kṣ- to kh (Sanskrit akṣi; Romani jakh 'eye').
However, unlike other Central Indo-Aryan languages, Romani preserves many dental clusters (Romani trin 'three', phral 'brother', cf. Hindi tīn, bhāī). This implies that Romani split from the Central Indo-Aryan languages before the Middle Indo-Aryan period.

Romani vs. NIA
## (Hindi/Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati etc.)

Can speakers of NIA languages understand Romani?

- Miré bal hin kalé, tiré bal naj kalé!

- Kon hin kheré?

- Kon ajás?

- Miri bari phen aji.

Many words are similar to the Marwari (Western Hindi) language spoken in Rajasthan, India.
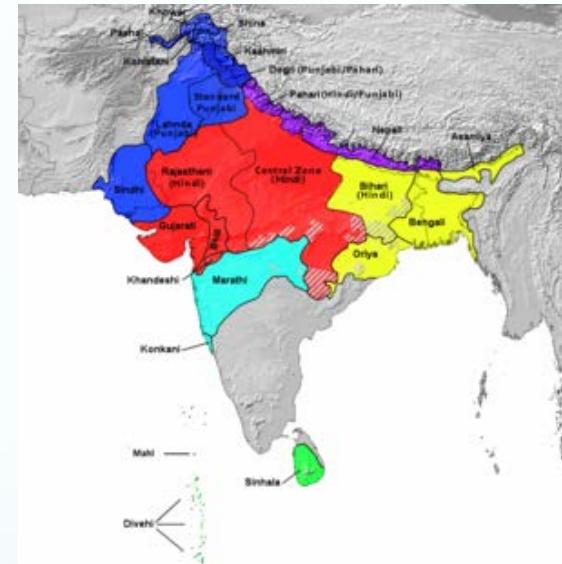
Romani also shows some similarity to the Northwest Indo-Aryan languages like Kashmiri: e. g. enclitic pronouns as person markers on verbs (kerdó "done" + me 'me' → kerdém/kerdŏm "I did")

Dialects of Romani
Vlax vs. Non-Vlax
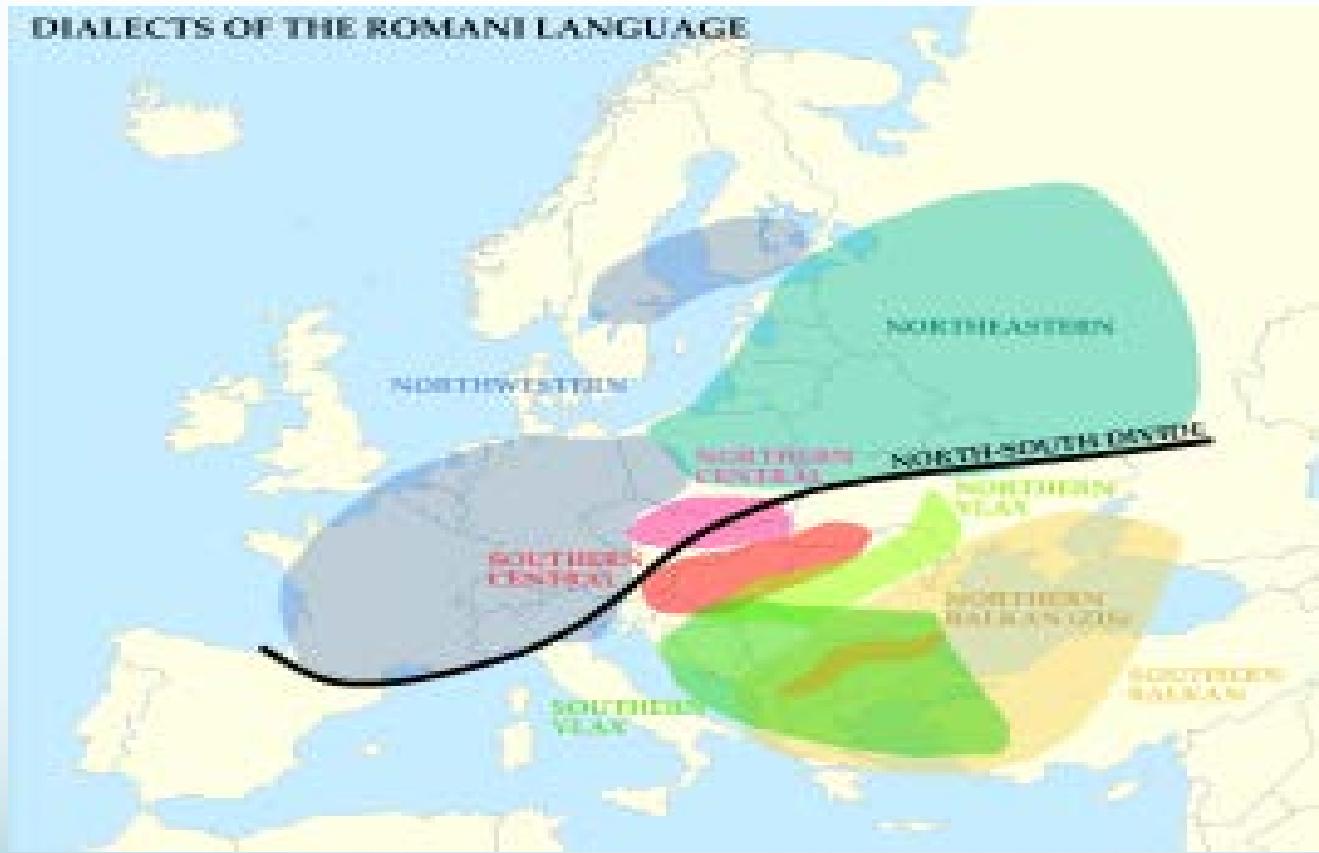
Comparing the dialects

"Why is there war in the world?"

➢ Vlax

Sóske sî marimós ánde lúmja? (Kalderaš)
Sóske marimó-j ándi lúma? (Lovara)
Sóske si maripé an e lúmnja/an o svéto? (Gurbet)

➢ Non-Vlax

Sóske isi maripé an e dúnja/an o svéto? (Arli)
Sóske hin maribén ándro svétos? (East Slovak)
Sóske hi hábori ándo vilago? (Burgenland-Roma)
Hóske hi kurépen/krigo an o vélto? (Sinti)

Major dialects in Austria

English	Sinti	Burgenland Roma	Arli	Kalderash	Lovara
the world	o vélto (D)	o vilago (H)	e dúna (T)	e lúmja (R)	i lúma (R)
the window	e vóxli (GR)	o bóklo (H)	e péndžera (T)	e feljástra (R)	i felástra (R)
the cemetery	e fridhofa (D)	e témetiši (H)	o mézari (T)	e murmúnci (R)	i murmúnci (R)
the mountain	e bérga (D)	o dómbo (H)	o veš (P)	o plaj (R)	o plaj (R)
the violin	e gájga (D)	e hégeduva (H)	e kemána (T)	e lávuta (R)	i lávuta (R)
I think	me dénkrau (D)	me gondolináv (H)	me mislináv (S)	me gîndiv (R)	me gindij (R)
I help	me hélfrau (D)	me pomožináv (S)	me pomožináv (S)	me ažutiv (R)	me žutiv (R)
I start	me fángrau an (D)	me kezdináv (H)	me bašladináv (S)	me počniv (S)	me kezdij (S)

Which dialect should I choose?

- Personal motivation?

- Geographic reasons?

- Contact language?

- If in doubt... go for a Vlax-dialect such as Kalderash or Lovara

COMMON TRUNK	Indian Sanskrit -- Prakrit	Common Pre-European Elements
	Persian	
	Armenian	
	Greek	Common European Elements
	Southern Slavic (Slavonic)	

Metadialects

Nordic Dialects:	Balkan Dialects:	Carpathian Dialects:	Vlax Dialects:
Mostly influenced by German	Influenced by Turkish	Hungarian and Southern Slavic influences	Strong Romanian influences
Abruzzesi	Arlii	Bohemian	Cerhara
Calabresi	Bessarabian Ursari	Burgenland	Čurara
Cale	Bugurdži	Moravian	Dirzara
Käle	Burgudži Parpuli	North Hungarian	Džambazi
Lalere Käle	Drindari	Plaščuni	Greek Vlax
Polska Roma	Džambaša		Gurbeti
Sinti	Jerlides		Gurvara
Tatare	Kalajdži		Kalderaša
Volšenenge Kale	Kîrîmlídes		Laxora
Xaladytka Roma	Prilep Arlii		Lingurari
	Sepetčides		Lovara
	Thracean Kalajdži		Mačvaja
	Varna Kalajdži		Mašara
	Xoraxane		Patrinara
			Rišarja
			Rudari
			Servi
			Vlaxurja

Figure 14.1. The Common Trunk, Metadialects, and Dialects

Phonetics of Romani
Consonants

	Labial	Dental	Dentoalv.	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p [p]	t [t]				k [k]	
Plosive aspirated	ph [pʰ]	th [tʰ]				kh [kʰ]	
Plosive (voiced)	b [b]	d [d]				g [g]	
Affricate		c [ts]	č [tʃ]/ čh [tʃʰ]				
Fricative	f [f]	s [s]	š [ʃ]			x [x]	h [h]
Fricative (voiced)	v [v]	z [z]	ž [ʒ]		j [j]		
Nasal	m [m]			n [n]	nj [ɲ]	n [ŋ]	
Liquide (vibrant)				r [rr]/ ř [r]			
Liquide (lateral)				l [l]			

Phonetics of Romani
Vowels

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i [i, i:]		u [u, u:]
Mid	e [e, ɛ]		o [o, ɔ]
Open		a [a, a:]	

Stress = loanwords vs. origin
Čh vs. š
dŽ vs. Ž
r/rr vs. Ř
t vs. tj/ć
î vs. i

O tiró Čhavó dŽanél mišto i romani Čhib! (Non-Vlax)

O ćiró šavó Žanél mišto e Řomani šib! (Vlax)

Structure & morphology

- Two genders (m. & f.) – o rakló / e rakli, o kher / e phen

- Singular & Plural – e raklé / e raklijá, kher / phenjá

- Adjectives agree in gender and number:
o baró rakló / e baré raklé, e bari rakli / e baré rakljá

- Two cases – direct & oblique (= accusative):
raklés / rakljá, raklén / raklján

  Genitive: i rakléski phen (the boy's sister)
  Dative: raklésko (to the boy)
  Ablative: rakléstar (from the boy)
  Locative: rakléste (in the boy)
  Instrumental: rakléssa (with the boy)

- Verbs have present and past roots:
me ker-áv (I do), me kerd-ém/kerdj-óm (I did), including some irregularities: me džav (I go), **me dželem/gelem** (I went)

How it actually works

- *Kaj si o phuró Rom?*
  where is the[m.] old[m.] Rom

- *I phuri Romni si an o kher.*
  the[f.] old[f.] Romni is in the[m.] house[m.]

- *Mothó mánge váreso pa tumaró trájo kathé!*
  say-! to-me something about your(m) life(m) here

- *Kamáv te vorbij tje dadésa. Núma sigo taj akaná!**
  I-want that I-speak your[obl.] father[-obl.]-with. but fast[adv.] and now

Ába sigo taj akanik!

Romani shows some features of New Indo-Aryan, such as erosion of the original nominal case system towards a nominative/oblique dichotomy, with new grammati-calized case suffixes added on. This means that the Romani exodus from India could not have happened until late in the first millennium CE.

Numbers & days of the week

- jek (1), duj (2), trin (3), štar (4), panŽ (5), šov (6) eftá (7), oxtó (8), injá (9), deš (10)

- deš-u-jék (11), deš-u-dúj (12), deš-u-trin (13) … biš (20), biš-taj-jék (21), biš-taj-dúj (22), trjandá (30), štár-var-deš (40), panŽ-var-deš (50) …

- kurkó (Sunday G), lúja / ponedelniko (Monday R/SL), márci / utorniko (Tuesday R/SL), tetrádŽi (Wednesday G), Žója / Četvorniko (Thursday R/SL), paraštuji (Friday G),
sávato
(Saturday G)

Romani in action!

- T'avés sastó / sasti taj baxtaló / baxtali!

- Sar san?

- Mištó sim! Aj tu?

- Xav tjo iló, phén-ta mánge … !

- Čumidáv tjo iló, sar bušós?

- Me bušuváv …, taj tu?

- Sijas, te trajin but berš!

- **Ačh Devlésa! / Ža Devlésa!**

And say some more …

- Rom / Romni san?

- Va – Na, gad**žó / gadží sim.**

- Najis ! (Ov sastó / sasti!)

- Žanés romanés?

- Žanáv férdi jek cira romanés.

- Sitjuváv romanés.

- Či Žanáv mišto romanés.

- Rom, Romni, Romá; Sinto, Sintica, Sinti, Sintitikes

Want to learn more?
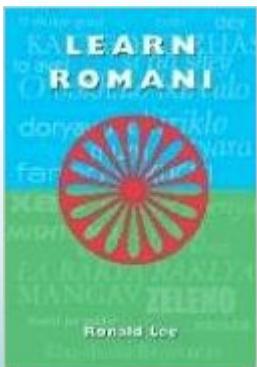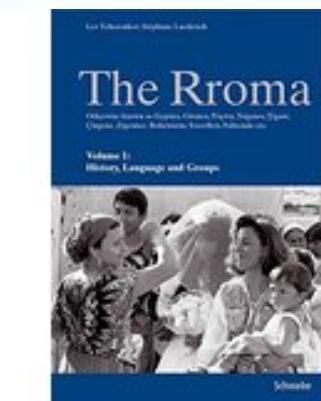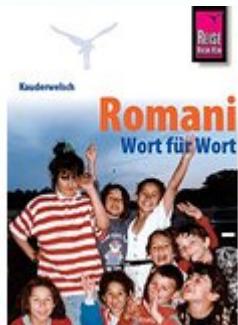
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Najis tuménge!
In memory of Lev Cherenkov

Thank you all for your attention and don't forget...

Monolingualism is a disease. Good to know it's curable.

Te trajin but taj mištó tumaré čhavénca taj sa nepotónca!

Shutka Roma Rap