



Naming of the Roma, Romani groups in the contemporary world

Approaches to Romani studies

17. 2. 2021



Who are Roma?

- speakers of Romani language, the only Indian language spoken exclusively in Europe
- at least bilingual, although sometimes stopped using Romani, mostly during 20th century
- English term “Gypsy” – more general, meaning “communities of commercial nomads, peripatetics”
 - Sea gypsies = Sama in Philippines and Melanesia; Travellers, Tinkers, Yenish...

Rom

- word of Indian origin
- $\text{ḍomba-} > \text{ḍomma-} > \text{ḍom} > \text{řom} > \text{rom}$
- ethnonym + meaning “spouse”; not “human”
manuš, „man“ *muřš*, „woman“ *džuvli*
- derivation: *rom*, *rom-ňi*, *rom-an-o*, *rom-an-es*
- **Romanichal** / **Romanichel** (Britain), **Eromanitsel** / **Errumantxel-** (Basque county), **Romnitschel** (Germany, 1835), **Roma(n)sel** (Finland), **Romacel** (Greece), **Urumčel** / **Urmačel** (Crimea)
- Romani + čhel (clan, kin; today documented only in Latvian Romani meaning also tribe, people) => member of the Romani clan
- basic endonym (self-ethnonym) for Romani groups

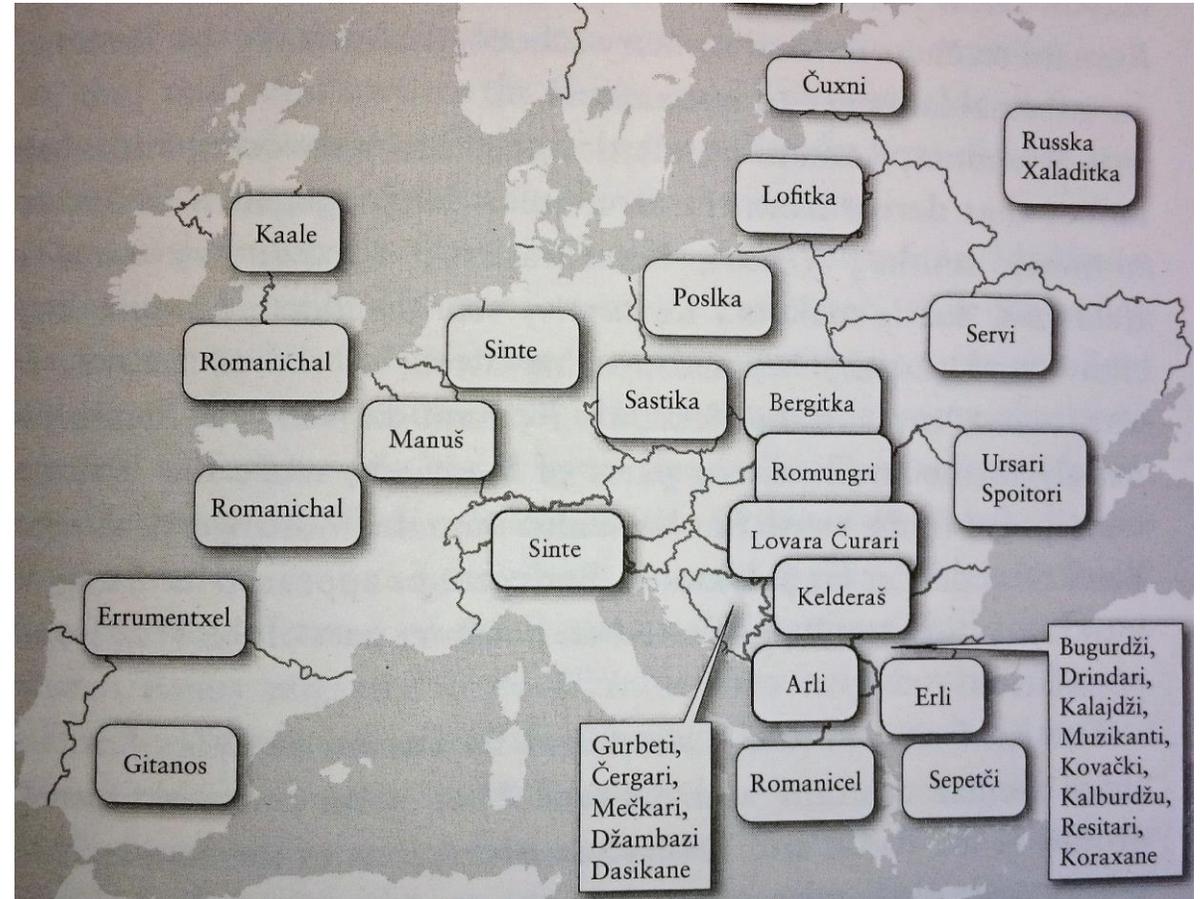
General endonyms

- we may suppose that speakers of Romani originally used the term Rom(a) as an endonym
- east / west division: Roma / different (Romani derived) endonyms
- term Sinti – unknown origin, record of previous Kale (19c)
- mostly speakers of Romani (at least until 20th century)
- (Iberian) Kale – for centuries speakers of Caló, Spanish with Romani-derived lexical layer

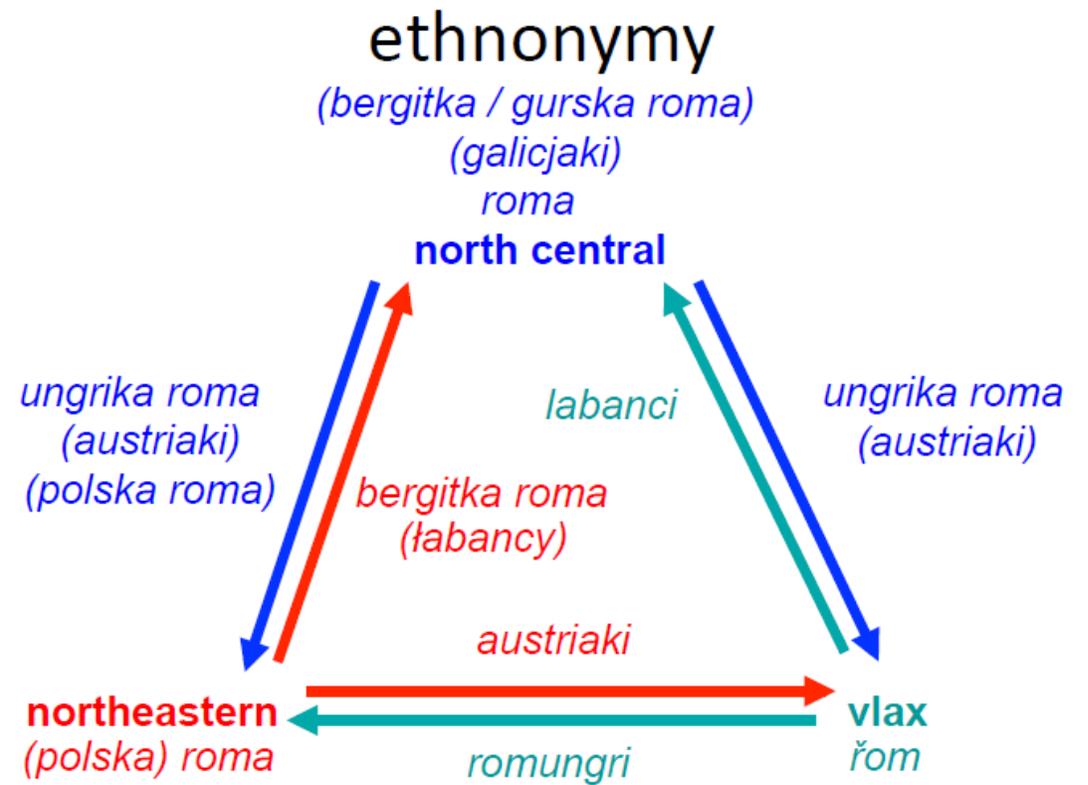


Roma+

- general endonyms in W Europe: change Roma > Kale > Manuš / Sinti
- general endonyms in C, S, E Europe: Roma
- Roma + additional layer of endonyms and exonyms for Romani groups in contact
- this layer is not known to general public, but it is used in academic discourse
- use of different kinds of ethnonyms depends on context and it changes over time



Ethnonyms in Eastern Poland



Elšík, V. 2012. *North Central Romani of Poland*.

Etymology of Romani group names (Central Europe)

- Rumungro – exonym used by Lovara for traditionally sedentary Roma in Hungarian empire (Rom+Ungro); in some context may be used as attributive autonym by “Rumungre” themselves
- Bergitka Roma – regionym; exonym; used in academic discourse; and sometimes also as attributive autonym by sedentary Roma of Eastern Poland
- Czech and Moravian Roma – regionyms used for traditional Romani populations killed during WW2
- Servika Roma – regionym, endonym of sedentary Roma in Slovakia, not used any more
- Vlachi – regionym; exonym; umbrella term both in academic and Romani discourse
- Lovara – professionym, endonym used by Vlach Roma in Hungary; Vlach Roma in CR and SR are linguistically Lovara, but don't use the term, although some of them may know it from academic discourse
- Sinti – unknown origin; endonym which replaced original Kale

• *Abruzzesi, Ajdžides, Arli, Aškali, Aurari, Beaš, Bessarabian Ursari, Bugurdži, Burgenland Roma, Burgurdži, Calabresi, Cale, Cale Estremenos, Cerhara, Ciurari, Colari, Crnogorska Roma, Cucumanja, Čergarja, Czech Roma, Čokenarja, Dasikane Roma, Dirzara, Drindari, Drizari, Džambaša, Džambazi, Egyptians, Gabelji, Gadžekene Sinti, Grekurja, Gurbeti, Gurvara, Chorachane Roma, Croatian Roma, Jerlides, Kalajdži, Kále, Kelderari, Khangljari, Khebri, Kherari, Kîrîmlîdes, Kišinjovci, Kovači, Krievniki, Lachoja, Lalere, Lingurari, Lovara, Mačvaja, Madzhari, Mašara, Mečkara, Moldovaja, Moravian Roma, Muslims, Niemcuri, Patrinara, Plaščuni, Pojáka, Poljača, Polska Roma, Posotari, Prilep Arlii, Rišarja, Romungre, Rrusurja, Rudari, Sancak Roma, Sasytka Roma, Sepetčides, Serbijaja, Servi, Servika Roma, Sinti, Sinti Estrexarja, Sinti Piemontese, Slovak Roma, Švedicka Rromungri, Tatere, Thracian Kalajjdži, Ursari, Valštike Sinti, Vlachi, Vlaxurja, Volšenenge Kale, Zargari...*



“Romani” groups without Romani language

- some groups speak Romani but don't use the endonym Roma
- many individuals and communities ceased to use Romani recently but still accept the endonym Roma in some contexts
- some groups use majority language with Romani derived lexical admixture
- some groups use majority language and non-Romani minority language
- Ashkali, Egyptians (Albanian), Beáš...(Romanian)
- don't consider themselves to be Roma, but surrounding Romani population treats them either as a kind of Roma or at least not non-Roma

“Rom” as a borrowing in non-Romani languages

- endonyms of minority groups – used only internally as part of the group’s language
- exonyms used by the majority as the name of a minority group often include derogatory meanings
- 20C, ethnic emancipation, calls to use endonyms in majority languages to show respect for minorities
- 1971, founding step for International Romani Union; seek to be called Roma
- majority of Romani organizations use terms derivated from the word Rom
- English: Roma (pl.), Romani (adjective)



Roma+ in correct discourse

- Zentral rat Deutscher Sinti und Roma
- RAE: Roma + Aškali + Egyptians
- “The Fundación Secretariado **Gitano** is a non-profit inter-cultural social organisation which provides services for the development of the **Roma** community throughout the whole of the Spanish State and on the European level as well.”
- Gypsy Lore Society (journal of Romani studies), Etudes Tsiganes
- Gypsy, Gitano, Tsiganes, Zigeuner, Cikán – different languages, different histories, different degree of derogatory meanings

Roma in EU documents

- “The umbrella term ‘Roma’ encompasses diverse groups, including Roma, Sinti, Kale, Romanichels, Boyash/Rudari, Ashkali, Egyptians, Yenish, Dom, Lom, **Rom** and Abdal, as well as Traveller populations (gens du voyage, Gypsies, Camminanti, etc.). EU policy documents and discussions commonly employ this terminology”
 - (https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu_en)

Conclusion

- In different contexts – many names for Roma; general endonyms, (attributive) endo-, exo-, regio-, professionyms...
- one ethnonym can be used for different groups
- an important distinction for Roma studies:
(former) speakers of Romani who testify to the common origin of the group / other traditional (non)European peripatetic groups
- the distinction is clearer when groups in question still use or recently used Romani
- the terms Gypsy and Roma (in the sense used in new EU terminology) both blur this distinction

References

- Beníšek, M. 2020. The historical origins of Romani. In: Matras, Y., Tenser, A. (eds.). *The Palgrave Handbook of Romani Language and Linguistics*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bodnárová, Z. Romani group names. In: *Factsheets on Roma*. Available at http://romafacts.uni-graz.at/view_pdf.php?t=culture&s=c_1_7&l=en.
- Elšík, V. 2012. North Central Romani of Poland. *10th International Conference on Romani Linguistics*, Barcelona, 5.-7.9.2012.
- Červenka, J. 2015. Cikán, Gypsy & Rom - dynamika pojmenování Romů v různých diskurzích. In: Podolinská, P., Hrustič, T. (eds.). *Černo-biele svety. Rómovia v majoritnej spoločnosti na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Veda, Ústav etnológie SAV.
- Marushiakova, E., Popov, V. 2013. 'Gypsy' groups in Eastern Europe: Ethnonyms vs professionyms. *Romani Studies* 23 (1): 61-82.
- Marushiakova, E. a V. Popov. 2016. *Gypsies in Central Asia and the Caucasus*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Matras, Y. 2015. *I met lucky people*. Penguin books.
- Matras, Y. 2004. The role of language in mystifying and demystifying gypsy identity. In Saul, N., Tebbutt, S. (Eds.). *The Role of the Romanies*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 53-78.