

## 5. Gender

There are only two genders, masculine and feminine, often indicated by the characteristic endings of noun and adjective in the singular, *-o* for masculine and *-i* for feminine, or by agreement in the article or adjective. There is no separate indication of gender in the plural except for certain pronouns. Words denoting males or females are respectively masculine and feminine.

Words borrowed from other languages have to be fitted into this gender system whether, as in Turkish, they originally had none, or as in Greek, they were contained in a three-gender system, including a neuter gender. Greek neuters usually become masculine in Romany: Gk. *το κοστούμι* 'the suit (of clothes)' becomes *o kostúmo*. Sometimes a Greek neuter is taken over along with its article: Gk. *τ'αυτοκίνητο* or further contracted to *τ'αυτοκίντο*, 'the car', also 'the bus', is retained as Rom. *taftokínto*, presumably felt as a masculine.

Gender is indicated for each noun in the glossary by M or F, masculine or feminine, following the word. For some nouns, my data with respect to gender are uncertain or even contradictory; Paspatis's complaints on this score are justified (p. 41, "le genre de plusieurs noms est encore fort incertain").

## 7. General Structure

Case relationships in nouns and pronouns are indicated by distinctive inflectional endings. Adjectives can be used as nouns (*o p(h)uro* 'the old man') and, if capable of gender and number distinction, are adjusted to agree with the noun or pronoun which they modify. The verbal system employs two stems, a present and a preterite. There are participles, some used as adjectives and some incorporated into the preterite tense. Sentence structure is simple with few subordinate clauses.

## 8. The Article

There is no indefinite article although *yek* 'one' can sometimes function as an indefinite article in imitation of Greek usage. The definite article in the nominative singular is *o* (masculine) and *i* (feminine). It is probably not an accident that the Greek definite article for these two forms duplicates them. The nominative plural of both genders is *e*. In oblique cases the article becomes *e*. As in Greek, a first name is used with the article: *o Pavlos* 'Paul'; names of countries and cities also take the article: *o Girito* (or *i Giriti*) 'Crete'.

## 9. The Substantive: Plurals

In addition to gender (Section 5 above), nouns and adjectives have the category of number and may be singular or plural. The plural is regularly formed and predictable in all but a few nouns. If the noun ends in a consonant, the plural adds *-a*: *p(h)ral* 'brother', plural *p(h)rala*. If the noun ends in *-o*, in the plural the *-o* is replaced by *-e*: *tša(v)o* 'boy, son', plural *tša(v)e*. If the noun ends in *-i*, the plural adds an *-a* and the preceding *-i* changes to the semi-vowel *y*: *lulugi* 'flower', plural *lulugya*. There are alternate forms for some of these plurals with loss of *y*, e.g. *gili* 'song,' plural *gilya* or *gila*, *tširikli* 'bird,' plural *tširikliya* or *tširikla*, either as a phonetic development or by analogy with other plurals in *-a*. Borrowed nouns, if they form plurals, may follow these

same patterns, although Greek words may retain their Greek plurals. Borrowed nouns in *-a* sometimes form their plurals in *-es*, perhaps on the analogy of Greek first declension nouns in *-a*: *rokla* 'dress', plural *rokles*.

Some nouns ending in *-(i)pe* have irregular plurals in *(i)mata*: *dilipe* 'foolishness', *dilimata* 'foolish acts'; *sastipe* 'health', *sastimata* 'greetings'.

## 10. Declension of Nouns

(For nominative singular and plural, see preceding paragraph).

The direct object of a verb is normally in the accusative case, and this is indicated by a special ending which constitutes the oblique stem. For masculine singular, the ending is *-es*: *džukel* 'dog', but *mudardem (y)eke džukeles* 'I killed a dog'. In the feminine singular the ending is *-(i)a*: *bori* 'bride', but *mangel pe tšaveske borya* 'she wants a bride for her son'. The accusative plural ending for both genders is *-en*: *manuša* 'relatives', but *araklem me manušen* 'I found my relatives'. Sometimes, however, the nominative case replaces the accusative: *ando po mui astarel o kaš* 'in his mouth holds the stick'. The reason for this substitution is probably a distinction between animate and inanimate direct objects; the accusative (or oblique stem) is generally used in the former and the nominative for the latter. Other examples indicate that the use or absence of the definite article is not the criterion. Serboianu (126) observed: "Les Tsiganes dans leur langage courant emploient très souvent le nominatif au lieu de l'accusatif." But Paspatis (52) had already noted the interchange long before, and it is found in other Romany dialects, notably in the Balkans.

The genitive case is in fact an adjective formed from the oblique stem of the noun by adding *-k-* (*-g-* after *-n-*) plus the adjectival endings *-o-*, *-i-*, *-e*; the result is *-esko* from a masculine noun in the singular, *-eako* or *-yako* from a feminine noun in the singular, *-engo* from a plural of either gender, e.g. *šekereski kutiya* 'box of sugar', *avereske lilensa* 'with the documents of someone else'. Note that there also exist denominative adjectives, not of this distinctive Romany type, e.g. *balano mas* 'pork' (pig's meat) from *balo* 'pig'.

Other oblique case relations are a dative in *-ke* (*-ge* after an *n*), a prepositional in *-te* (*-de* after an *n*), an associative or

instrumental formed by the ending *-sa*, and an ablative with the ending *-tar* or *-dar*. Examples are cited when available; these formants also occur in the pronouns (cf. Section 12 below).

A separate vocative case is listed in the glossary only when I actually heard it. Some are irregular, e.g. *dali* or *mamo* which serve as vocatives to *dey* 'mother'. As a general rule, masculine nouns or adjectives in *-o* form a vocative in *-ea*, feminines in *-i* form a vocative in *-iya* or *-iyena*, consonant stems form a vocative in *-a*. Here are some examples: *kalo: kalea!* 'black man!'; *bibi: bibiya!* 'aunty!'; *guglo: gugliyena!* 'sweet girl!'; *amal: amala!* 'friend!'

## 11. Adjective

The various formations mentioned in the preceding paragraph for nouns apply also to adjectives when used as substantives. Adjectives in *-o* (M) and *-i* (F) take the plural and oblique ending *-e*; adjectives ending in a consonant are invariable. Adjectives agree with the noun or pronoun they modify and vary their endings accordingly: *parno mui* 'white face', but *parni pisika* 'white cat'.

The comparative of an adjective is formed by the word *daha*: *daha šukar* 'more beautiful'. 'Than' after a comparative is expressed by *-tar*: *vov si daha utšo mandar* 'he is taller than me'. I have no examples of a superlative but presume on the ever present analogy of Greek that if used at all, it would consist of the comparative preceded by an article. (In general, Romany lacks a special form for the superlative, cf. Sampson, para 321.) The Gypsies are inclined to use *but* 'very, much' with an adjective to indicate a high degree of something: *but barvalo si* 'he is very rich.'

## 12. Pronouns

The commonest personal pronouns are *me* 'I', *tu* 'you' (sing.), *vov* 'he', *voi* 'she', *amen* 'we', *tumen* 'you' (pl.), *von* or *len* 'they'. The reflexive stem *pe-* 'himself', 'herself', 'themselves' occurs in cases other than the nominative. In the third person singular, perhaps in imitation of Greek *αυτός*, *αυτή* etc., the demonstrative

*kava* is often used for 'he' and *kaya* for 'she'. In the third person plural, *kolen* is sometimes used for 'they' (masc. or fem.), *kalen* for 'they' (masc.), and *kala* for 'they' (fem.). Subject pronouns are often omitted when the verb ending or the context makes them superfluous. When emphatic, they are followed by the particle *da*: *me da* 'for my part; I personally; as for me'.

As in the noun, declension of the pronoun is based on the accusative case, comprising the following forms: *man* 'me', *tut* 'you (sing.)', *les* 'him', *la* 'her', *pes* 'himself, herself, themselves', *amen* 'us', *tumen* 'you (pl.)', *len* 'them', *pen* 'themselves' (analogical creation?). These forms serve as the oblique stem (but *tut* loses its final consonant) to which are added the same case endings as those already mentioned for the declension of the noun. The dative forms are accordingly: *mange*, *tuke*, *leske*, *lake*, *peske*, *amenge*, *tumenge*, *lenge*, (*penge*?). The prepositional forms are: *mande*, *tute*, *leste*, *late*, *peste*, *amende*, *lende*, (*pende*?). Similarly, the instrumental forms a series with *-sa*, *mansa* 'with me', etc.; the ablative forms a series with *-tar* (*-dar*), *mandar* 'from me', etc.

Possession is indicated by a periphrasis with the verb 'to be': *si-man* 'I have' (is to me), *si-tut* 'you (sing.) have', *si-les*, *si-la* 'he, she has', *si-amen* 'we have', *si-tumen* 'you (pl.) have', *si-len* 'they have'. The past uses the imperfect of 'to be': *sas-man* 'I had', etc. These pronominal forms are also used as accusatives: *dikel man*, *tut*, etc., 'he sees me, you (sing.)', etc.

Possession can also be indicated by the use of special possessive pronominal adjectives, e.g. *mo*, *mi*, *me* 'my', *ko*, *ki*, *ke* 'your (sing.)', *lesko*, *leski*, *leske* 'his', *lako*, *laki*, *lake* 'her', *pesko*, *peski*, *peske* 'of himself, herself, themselves', *amaro*, *amari*, *amare* 'our', *tumaro*, *tumari*, *tumare* 'your (pl.)', *lengo*, *lengi*, *lenge* 'their'. Variants of some of these adjectives are also found with a greater degree of emphasis, e.g. in lieu of *mo*, both *miró* and *murnó* (see glossary).

The interrogatives *kon* and *so* are used in the nominative for 'who' and 'what'; accusative *kas* 'whom' and *so* 'what' (see these entries). The adverb *kay* 'where' is used as an invariable relative pronoun to mean 'who, whom, which', clearly on the model of Greek *που*. The interrogative pronominal adjective *sa(v)o* means 'which, what (sort of)' and varies like other adjectives. Another interrogative pronominal adjective *kasko*, also declinable, means 'whose?'

## 13. Negation

With a verb other than 'to be' which is not an imperative, the negative is *in*: *in mangav* 'I don't want (any)'. With the verb 'to be' the negative is *na* or *nay*; an intensive, *ninay*, is sometimes used to mean 'there isn't any' or 'not at all'. *Nay* or *ninay* can be coupled with a pronoun to express negative possession: *ninay-man* 'I don't have'; in the past tense this becomes *ni-nas-man* 'I didn't have'. With a noun or pronoun, negation can be effected by the prefix *bi-* 'without' which is followed by the genitive stem: *diklo* 'kerchief', *bidiklesko* 'without a kerchief', *bimango* 'without me'.

*Kantšik*, invariable, is 'nothing' and *konik*, invariable, is 'nobody'; if used in a sentence with a verb, these require a further negation: *in mangav kantšik* 'I don't want anything'. With an imperative, the negator is *ma*: *ma ker-les* 'don't do it!' This is an inherited construction which reaches back to Sanskrit, but many speakers tend to replace *ma* by *na*. Another form of negative imperative uses a finite verb form and is probably patterned on Greek: *te na keres-les!* 'don't do it!', Greek *νά μήν τό κάνεις!*

Note that 'no' as the opposite of 'yes' is *hayir*.

The uninflected auxiliary *nasti* (*našti*) 'it is not possible' contains a negative *na* plus an element discussed at length in Sampson s.v. *astis*, perhaps Sanskrit *asti* 'is'.

## 14. Numerals

The most usual are: *yek* 'one'; *dui* 'two'; *trin* 'three'; *štar* 'four'; *pantš* 'five'; *šo(v)* 'six'; *efta* 'seven'; *oxto* 'eight'; *inya* 'nine'; *deš* 'ten'; *deš-u-ek* 'eleven'; *deš-u-dui* 'twelve'; *biš* 'twenty'; *šel* 'one hundred'. Note also *paš* 'half' and the multiplicative expressions *yek far* 'once', *duidrom* 'twice'. The numerals for seven, eight, and nine, as well as the tens from thirty to ninety (when not expressed by periphrasis like *dui drom biš* for 'forty'), are borrowed from Greek. To express ordinal numbers, speakers normally use the appropriate Greek ordinals or else simply make do with the Romany cardinals.

## 15. Verb—Generalities

The verb with a few exceptions has two stems, the one from which the present, imperfect, and future are formed, and the participle stem from which a preterite is formed. There is a certain similarity to the two-stem system of modern Greek, even if the aspect distinction of continuing versus completed action, so essential to Greek, is unknown to Romany: at least the Romany preterite, like the Greek aorist, is formed from a second stem. The verb has the categories of number (singular and plural), person (first, second, and third), tense, voice (an active and a medio-passive, the latter not fully developed) and, within limits, mood.

A second person imperative is listed whenever it occurred in my data. In the singular, this consists of the present stem without ending; the plural adds the ending *-en*.

A particle *-tar* (which may be related to the ablative case ending *-tar*) is sometimes added to the imperative, present, and preterite forms of intransitive verbs of motion indicating remoteness (Gj. & Lj., *-tar*).

## 16. Conjugation of a sample verb

## a. Present Tense

The verb *kerav* 'I make, I am making' (there is no separate progressive form in Greek Romany) is conjugated in the present active tense as follows:

	Sing.	Plur.
1	( <i>me</i> ) <i>kerav</i>	( <i>amen</i> ) <i>keras</i>
2	( <i>tu</i> ) <i>keres</i>	( <i>tumen</i> ) <i>keren</i>
3	( <i>vov</i> ) <i>kerel</i>	( <i>len, von</i> ) <i>keren</i>

To the stem *ker-* are added the endings *-av*, *-es*, *-el*, *-as*, *-en*, *-en*.

These endings, which Sampson (para 384) calls a shorter form, alternate in other Romany dialects with a longer form which in each case adds an *-a*. The longer forms do not generally occur in this dialect, but I have recorded one exception, *so mangesa* 'whatever you want', and others may occasionally occur.

## b. Imperfect tense

The imperfect is formed by the addition of the unstressed ending *-as* to the corresponding form of the present tense:

Sing.	Plur.
1 (me) <i>keravas</i> 'I made, was making'	(amen) <i>kerasas</i>
2 (tu) <i>keresas</i>	(tumen) <i>kerenas</i>
3 (vov) <i>kerelas</i>	(von) <i>kerenas</i>

## c. Future Tense

The future tense is formed by introducing the prefix *ka* (or *kam* before a vowel) before the corresponding form of the present tense:

Sing.	Plur.
1 (me) <i>ka kerav</i> 'I'll make'	(amen) <i>ka keras</i>
2 (tu) <i>ka keres</i>	(tumen) <i>ka keren</i>
3 (vov) <i>ka kerel</i>	(von) <i>ka keren</i>

The verb *kam-* in the sense 'love' is not used in this dialect; its meaning was perhaps reduced to 'wish' and its format mainly reduced to a mere particle, making it comparable to the modern Greek future continuous,  $\nu\alpha$  plus present tense. A formation of this kind is also a Balkanism, however, for which see Sandfeld, *Linguistique balkanique*, pp. 180-5 (Paris, 1930). If inflected forms of *kam-* occur at all, they are extremely rare (for a single example, see glossary s.v. *avav*).

## d. Preterite Tense

The preterite tense is formed by the addition of a set of endings, distinct from those of the present tense, to a participial stem. This in turn is formed by adding *-l-* to verb stems except for those ending in *-r*, *-l*, *-n*, or *-v*, which add *-d-* (note the *-v-* is dropped before *-d-*). *Dav* 'give' forms *diem*, and there are a few other exceptions. Thus, to the present *putšav* 'I ask' corresponds the preterite *putšlem* 'I asked'; to the present *bolav* 'I dip, baptize' corresponds the preterite *boldem* 'I dipped, baptized'. The preterite of *kerav* is as follows:



	Sing.	Plur.
1	( <i>me</i> ) <i>kerdem</i>	( <i>amen</i> ) <i>kerdam</i>
2	( <i>tu</i> ) <i>kerdan</i>	( <i>tumen</i> ) <i>kerden</i>
3	( <i>vov</i> ) <i>kerdas</i>	( <i>von</i> ) <i>kerde</i>

Variants in this paradigm: (*amen*) *kerdamus* (R), (*tumen*) *kerdanus* (R).

In the third person singular, particularly of intransitive verbs of motion, a preterite which corresponds to a participle and shows gender distinction is sometimes used, e.g. from *avav* 'I come', *avilo*, *avili* 'he, she came'. In the third person plural (*kerde*) the ending, here and elsewhere, is presumably participial in origin.

According to Sampson, para 421, a pluperfect made from the preterite by the addition of *-as* (like the similar formation of the imperfect from the present, see above Section 16 b) is rare in Greek Romany. It must be even rarer now; at least, my only reliable example is *ando mo suno diklemas-(les)* 'in my sleep I had seen it' (= I had dreamed it).

#### e. Conditional

A conditional, no doubt imitated from Greek, is attested by a very few examples. In Greek, this tense is constituted by the particle of futurity,  $\vartheta\alpha$ , plus a verb in the imperfect tense; *ka mangavas* 'I should like' appears to be a calque on Gk.  $\vartheta\alpha$   $\eta\vartheta\epsilon\lambda\alpha$ . The Greek conditional in sentences of this sort forms the conclusion of a contrary-to-fact condition with an if-clause which may or may not be expressed. If it is expressed, the Romany equivalent of Gk.  $\alpha\nu$  plus imperfect is *te* with the imperfect, but my examples are not completely convincing.

#### f. Passive Voice

Sampson (para 447) had already noted that Greek Romany expressed the medio-passive by a special formation based on the participle of an active verb to which a formant (*y*)*u-* is added. In the dialect described by Gj. & Lj., the formant is (*y*)*uv*. Examples in the glossary point to a formation in *-ivav*, *-ovav*. Only a few verbs are used in the passive, and if so, they often have a special meaning. From *kerav* 'I do', there is a passive of the form *kerdi(v)av* 'I become', which can also be used in the preterite.

The preterite stem, *kerd-il-* adds the usual endings: *kerdilem*, *kerdilan*, *kerdilo*, etc.; the third person of this verb usually has the meaning 'happened'. In the second and third person singular of the present passive, contraction takes place, e.g. *\*kerdio(v)el* is replaced by *kerdiol*.

A somewhat similar formation, which seems to have virtually fallen together with the passive cited in the preceding paragraph, uses a formant *-ivav*, *-avav*, *-ovav*, added to the stem of a substantive or an adjective to form an intransitive verb with inchoative force. Thus, from *baro* 'big' there is a verb *bari(v)av* 'I grow, i.e. get bigger'. The conjugation of this verb is as follows:

	Sing.	Plur.
1	<i>bari(v)av</i> , <i>baryav</i>	<i>baryos</i>
2	<i>baryos</i>	<i>baryon</i>
3	<i>baryol</i>	<i>baryon</i>

#### g. Reflexive Verbs

When the subject is represented as acting upon itself, the verb is accompanied by a reflexive pronoun which differs from the usual accusative pronouns only in the third person. One further slight difference in the present tense is that in the first person the final *-v* is dropped: *randav* 'I scratch', but *randaman* 'I scratch myself', *randes-tut* 'you (sing.) scratch yourself', *randel-pes* 'he scratches himself', *randas-amen* 'we scratch ourselves', *randen-tumen* 'you (pl.) scratch yourselves', *randen-pes* or *-pen* 'they scratch themselves'.

Note that some of these reflexives do not retain reflexive force, e.g. *boldias-pes* 'he returned', originally 'he turned himself about'. The effect of the reflexive is often, as Sampson (para 425) indicated, to impart an intransitive force to transitives.

#### h. Participles

These are verbal adjectives (hence varying in gender and number) variously formed. The verb *merav* 'I die' has a participle *mulo* 'dead'; the verb *džav* 'I go' has a suppletive preterite tense *gelem* 'I went', and in the third person singular, in addition to the expected *gelas*, a participial form *gelo* is also found. This is a common phenomenon in verbs, although sometimes with a

difference of meaning: *tšinav* 'I cut' has *tšindas* 'he cut' in the third person preterite, but *tšindo* 'cut' is used as an adjective (*i lulugi si tšindi* 'the flower is cut', i.e. picked).

### i. Irregular verbs

A few verbs show an *a-* vowel in those endings of the present which usually have an *e-* vowel. The commonest are *džav* 'I go' (*džas, džal, džas, džan, džan*) and *xav* 'I eat' (*dav* 'I give' is regular, *des, del*, etc. as is *lav* 'I take'); also *dukav* 'hurt', *pakyav* 'believe', *prastav* 'run' and a few others.

The verb 'to be' has only a present and an imperfect tense. The present is:

	Sing.	Plur.
1	( <i>me</i> ) <i>sem</i>	( <i>amen</i> ) <i>sam, samus</i> (R)
2	( <i>tu</i> ) <i>san</i>	( <i>tumen</i> ) <i>sen, sanus</i> (R)
3	( <i>von</i> ) <i>si</i>	( <i>von</i> ) <i>si</i>

The imperfect is:

	Sing.	Plur.
1	<i>semas</i>	<i>samas, samusas</i> (R)
2	<i>sanas</i>	<i>senas, sanusas</i> (R)
3	<i>sas</i>	<i>sas</i>

The two variants, *samus* and *sanus* with their imperfects, seem to have been reshaped under the influence of Turkish verbal endings, cf. next para.

### j. Turkish Conjugation

One of the most conspicuous features of the verbal system in this dialect is the use of unassimilated Turkish verbs which continue to be conjugated more or less as in Turkish, although the Turkish principle of vowel harmony has been virtually lost. For example, (*me*) *benirim* 'I like' is conjugated as follows (though the vowel of the ending can vary):

	Sing.	Plur.
1	<i>benirim</i>	<i>beniris</i>
2	<i>benirsin</i>	<i>benirsinis</i>
3	<i>benir</i>	<i>benirler</i>

On this base a preterite tense is formed, again with Turkish-type inflection, but with uncertainty about the vowel of the ending:

	Sing.	Plur.
1	<i>bendum</i>	<i>bendumus</i>
2	<i>bendun</i>	<i>bendunus</i>
3	<i>bendu</i>	<i>bendular</i>

For the variation in these endings, see the closing remark of section 3 c, above. Very occasionally, an imperfect of Romany type is made in the third person singular by adding the ending *-as*, e.g. *sever* 'he loves', *severas* 'he loved'.

# A GLOSSARY OF GREEK ROMANY

As Spoken in  
Agia Varvara (Athens)

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Slavica Publishers, Inc.

ISBN: 0-89357-187-3

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