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IAN HANCOCK

A Glossary of Romani Terms

The following is a glossary of words occurring in the papers in this volume, plus a number of others relevant to the topics dealt with. Where they represent usage in different dialects, this has been indicated.

Romani spelling, and indeed the Romani language itself, is only now in the process of being standardized, a task being undertaken by the Language Commission created at the Fourth World Romani Congress in Warsaw in 1990. Several readers have already appeared in standardized Romani and a dictionary will be published as part of the *Interface* collection in 1997. The spelling used here has been regularized according to the system outlined in Ian F. Hancock, *A Handbook of Vlax Romani* (Slavica Publishers, Columbus, Ohio, 1995). Briefly, the letters and letter combinations have the following values: [j] is like English "y," [c] like "ts," [š] like "sh," [č] like "ch," [ž] like "s" in "pleasure," [dž] like [ž] with the tongue curled back, [čh] like [š] with the tongue curled back, [dj] like English "j," [r] a flapped or trilled "r" as in Scottish English, [rr] a throat "r" as in French, [x] like "ch" in German "Achtung."

ABJAV	"wedding," pl. ABJAVA. Also BIAV.
AMIRA	Oath taken at the beginning of a KRIS.
AMRAN, ARMAN	"curse," pl. ARMAJA, AMRIJA.
ANAV GADŽIKANO	Non-Romani name for use in dealings with the outside world. This may be an arbitrary choice, or may be an anglicizing (hispanizing, etc.) of the Romani name, thus <i>o Stanko le Mičosko</i> might call himself "Stan Mitchell" in English. An individual may have several ANAVA GADŽIKANE, as well as a nickname (used only in the community).

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- ANAV RROMANO Romani name. Amongst the VLAX, *q.v.* this consists of a given name, plus a patronymic, plus a matronymic, plus the name of the clan affiliation, thus *o Stanko le Mičosko la Gežako anda le Papinešti vica* translates as "Stanko, son of Mičo, son of Geža, of the Papinešti clan." In ordinary discourse, only the given name and the patronymic are used.
- ANGLOROMANI Variety of restructured Romani spoken by Romanichals in Britain, North America, Australia and elsewhere, consisting of Romani words in an English-language grammatical structure. Called POGADI JIB or RUMNIS by its speakers.
- ANGLO-ROMANY The inflected dialect of Romani spoken in England until the turn of the present century, and in the United States until the 1950s.
- ANSURIME "married," of a man. VLAX only.
- BAJUR Misspelling and mispronunciation of BUŽO, *q.v.*
- BANGJARAV "I accuse," also RRESTISAVAV, PURRIV.
- BASHALDO Name of a Romani group originating in Hungary, lit. "musician." Pl. BAŠALDE.
- BAULO ANGLOROMANI *q.v.* word meaning "pig;" slang for "policeman." Pronounced "bawlo." BALO in Common Romani.
- BAXT "luck, fortune, fate;" also SURRUČIMOS.
- BENG "devil."
- BESHIBEN Word used in Northern Romani dialects equivalent to *kris*; lit. "sitting."
- BIBAXT "misfortune."
- BIKINIMASKI HERTIJA "contract for sale (document)."
- BIPRINDŽARIPE "neglect, ignoring."
- BLAKBOLIME "shunned by the community" (< Eng. "blackball(ed)").
- BLOKIME "shunned by the community" (< Eng. "block(ed)").

BOLIME	“shunned by the community” (< Eng. “(black)ball(ed)”).
BOLIMOS	“baptism.”
BORI	“daughter in law; new bride.”
BORI LADGE-UP	Angloromani phrase meaning “disgrace,” Common Romani BARO LADŽAV. See LADŽ, LADŽAJMOS.
BUTJAKI HERTIJA	“contract for work (document).”
BUŽO	“a pouch.” This is used in a confidence trick also called BUŽO, involving the exchanging of money for cut up paper.
ČAČIMOS	“the truth.”
CEPENIMOS	“deadlock, stalemate,” at a KRIS.
CERXA	Among LOVARA, the name used for clan; the equivalent of VICA, literally “tent.”
ČHAJ	“unmarried Romani female,” (as opposed to RAKLI, <i>q.v.</i>). A female is referred to ČHAJ whatever her age if she is unmarried. A 25-year-old woman (in non-Romani terms) is still a ČHAJ, while a married girl of twelve has become a RROMNI.
ČHAVO	“unmarried Romani male,” (as opposed to RAKLO, <i>q.v.</i>)
ČHEJ	VLAX dialectal variant of ČHAJ.
ČHINEL (E) KRIS	“sentence, condemn.”
ČINASARA	Eve before a SLAVA, KALDERAŠ VLAX dialect.
ČINAVAS	“we agree upon, decide;” also, “we make an offer.”
ČINAVIPE	“agreement, negotiation; decision; an offer.”
ČOR	“thief.”
ČORAV	“I steal.”
ČOVIHANI	“a witch,” ROMANICHAL dialect. See ČOXANI.
ČOXANI	“a witch,” VLAX dialect. Also pron. ČOXAJI.

ČURARI	“member of a NACIJA of RROM,” <i>q.q.v.</i> , pl. ČURARA.
DADESKI DEJ	“paternal grandmother.”
DAKI DEJ	“maternal grandmother.”
DARRO	“dowry, given at Vlax wedding.”
DEL	“God.” Also DEVEL.
DEN KRIS	“they are holding a KRIS,” <i>q.v.</i> ; “they are bringing judgement.”
DEVEL	Var. of DEL, <i>q.v.</i>
DIDIKOI, DIDIKAI	Impolite term used by Romanichals for individual having just one Romani parent.
DIKLO	“scarf,” worn at the neck or on the head. Also distributed at an ABIAV. Pl. DIKLE.
DIVANO	“conversation, discussion, advice session,” preferred to a KRIS as a means of settling a dispute. “ <i>maj feder te huladjon sar amala and’ekh divano, de sar dušmaja and’ekh kris,</i> ” “it is better to part as friends from a divano, than as enemies from a kris.”
DIVINIV	“I advise, I discuss.”
DOMBA	Name applied by academics to the pre-exodus population(s) in India who came to constitute the Romani people.
DRAB	“potion, medicine, drug.”
DRABARAV	“I apply medicine, I heal.” Also, “I divine, I heal spiritually”
DRABARNI	“female diviner.” In English commonly called a “reader,” and “advisor” or a “fortune teller.” See GICISVARA.
DRABENGRO	“physician, pharmacist,” in northern Romani dialects.
DUKATO	American Vlax word for “lawyer,” also AVDUKATO. From var. European forms such as <i>advokat</i> , with metathesis. Pl. DUKATURJA.
DUKKER	“predict the future,” Angloromani form of Common Romani DURIKERAV, <i>q.v.</i>

DUKKERING	“divining, predicting the future.” Angloromani.
DURIKERAV	“I predict the future” (from e.g., reading palms, tealeaves, coffee grounds, etc.).
FAMILIJA	“extended family.”
FARMEČIV	“I curse, put a spell on.” VLAX Romani.
GADŽI	“adult female non-Romani person,” pl. GADŽJA.
GADŽIKANI BAXT	“bad luck,” lit. “non-Romani luck.”
GADŽIKANO	“non-Romani,” adjectival form of GADŽO.
GADŽIKANO DUKATO	“a non-Romani lawyer.”
GADŽO	“adult male non-Romani person,” pl. GADŽE.
GAVER	“policeman,” Angloromani (also MUSKER).
GIČISVARA	“woman who claims to predict the future.” VLAX Romani. For some speakers there is a distinction between a GIČISVARA and a DRABARNI, the former being a hustler, the latter being more “professional” and proud of her skills. From a Romanian word meaning “guess.”
GLABA	“a fine.” Paid, though not exclusively, as the result of a decision made by the KRISNITORJA.
GLABIV	“I fine.”
GONIME	“banished, driven out of the community.” This does not necessarily have to be because the offender is ritually polluted. See MARIME.
GONIMOS	“expulsion from the community.”

GYPSY

Common English word for person of Romani descent, derived from Renaissance English *'gypcian*, i.e., "Egyptian," it being supposed that Egypt was the country of origin of the Roma. The term is intensely disliked by some Roma, and tolerated by others. The persistence of its use in English lies in the fact that there is no single Romani equivalent which is agreed upon by all Romani groups (see RROM). The policy of most Romani organizations is to use the ethnonym (SINTI, RROMA, KAALÉ, etc.) and to avoid the use of all externally-created labels ("Gypsy," "Gitano," "Tigan," etc.). If the word "Gypsy" is used in English, it should be written with a proper noun's initial capital letter.

HOKANO BARO

"technique of extorting money from a victim by deceit," lit. "big lie." A nonce-term coined by George Borrow and supposedly of Spanish Romani origin (see LAVO-LIL, below), the correct Angloromani for this being "BORI HOKAPEN" or variants.

INKALKA

"trespassing."

INKALKIV

"I am trespassing."

JADO

"world outside of the Romani environment."

JAKHALO

"the evil eye," although this word also means "attractive."

JENISCH

A population of mixed origins inhabiting Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands and eastern France. Probably originally consisting of displaced citizens of Hanseatic Germany, later joined by Roma, Jews and others. Today they constitute a distinct ethnic population with its own speech and family names.

- KALDERAŠ** Name applied to several VLAX-speaking Romani groups, and their dialects. The term was originally occupational, meaning "coppersmith." Eastern and Western Kalderaš populations (in e.g., Russia and Serbia) differ considerably in speech and custom. Pl. KALDERAŠA.
- KAPARA** "a wedding gift."
- KETRINCA** apron worn over traditional skirt, symbolizing modesty.
- KIDIMOS** "meeting."
- KINIMASKI HERTIJA** "contract for a sale (document)."
- KINTALA** "spiritual balance, harmony." the Romani world view is a bipolar one, the universe falling naturally into pairs, though not all of them the antithesis of the other: Rrom-gadžo, clean-defiled, God-the devil, male-female, luck-misfortune, upper body-lower body, sexual being-non-sexual being (see PHURIMOS) and so on. Balance is upset by not observing the appropriate behavior.
- KIRVI** "godmother."
- KIRVO** "godfather."
- KRIS** The primary meaning of this word is "law" or "judgment;" thus E DEVLESKI KRIS, "God's law," E MANUŠESKI KRIS "the law of man," but it is most familiarly associated by Romanologists with the tribunal or hearing which is part of the internal legal system amongst Rroma. For some people KRIS is used to refer only to Romani law, while ZAKONO, *q.v.*, is used to refer to non-Romani law. The word is from the Greek, and is used by VLAX RROMA. It may be a retention of the Indian *panchayat*, modified by a similar social structure found among Balkan villagers.
- KRIS BANGI** A KRIS resulting in a negative decision by the KRISNITORJA.

- KRIS ČAČI** A KRIS resulting in a positive decision by the KRISNITORJA.
- KRIS RROMANI** The tribunal or hearing which is part of the internal legal system amongst Rroma.
- KRISAKI ČHIB** Oratorical style of speaking Romani, at KRISA but also heard at weddings, funerals and other formal occasions. It is not appropriate for younger people to use this register.
- KRISAKI PUTJERJA** Power of the Romani tribunal.
- KRISAKO** "legal."
- KRISNITORI** "judge at a KRIS;" also KRIZNITORI, KRISITORI.
- KUMPANIJA** A work alliance, of colleagues, or family members, or members of unrelated Romani groups, which may last for just one job, or be of more or less permanent duration.
- KURVA** Immoral woman; adulterous wife. VLAX word.
- KURVARI** A man who solicits the company of immoral women; a whoremonger.
- LADŽ** Shame, disgrace, immodesty, immorality.
- LADŽAJMOS** Shame, disgrace, immodesty, immorality, VLAX dialect.
- LADŽAV** Shame, disgrace, immodesty, immorality, VLAX dialect.
- LAVO-LIL** The name of a book on the dialect of the ROMANICHALS, *q.v.*, by 19th Century British writer George Borrow, lit. "word-book." Despite its many errors, it is the most widely consulted work on the Romani language. It is of minimal value for the understanding of any other dialect, especially VLAX, *q.v.*
- LOVARI** A NACIJA, *q.v.*, of the RROM, *q.v.*, pl. LOVARA.
- LOVE** "money."
- LUBNI** The same as KURVA, *q.v.*

MAČVANKA	A MAČVANO woman, pl. MAČVANČI.
MAČVANO	One of the Vlax-speaking NACIJI, <i>q.v.</i> , originating in the region of Mačva in eastern Serbia. Well represented in Australia and the Americas, but not in Europe itself. Pl. MAČVAJA.
MAGERDIPE	Ritual pollution, defilement; word used in Central Romani dialects.
MAGERDO	Ritually polluted or defiled. Word used in Central Romani dialects.
MAKHARDO	Ritually polluted or defiled, lit. "smeared," a reference to menstrual blood.
MAMI	Kinship term, "grandmother."
MANGER	"lawyer." Scottish Romani word (rhymes with "hanger").
MANGIMOS	"begging."
MANUŠ	A Romani population mainly inhabiting France, and closely related to the SINTI and (historically) the ROMANICHALS. Lit. "men."
MARIME	VLAX term meaning ritually defiled or polluted, from the Greek meaning "to make dirty." Unlike POKELIME, this has the additional meaning of "banished from the community because of defilement." Not the same as GONIME, <i>q.v.</i> Var. MAXRIME.
MARTJA	"spirit of death."
MARTURO	A "witness," KALDERAŠ VLAX dialect.
MELALO	"dirty," also "shameful."
MELJARDO	"made dirty."
MERETIME	"married," of a woman. VLAX only.
MOKADI	Angloromani form of MAKHADO, <i>q.v.</i>
MONG	"beg," in Angloromani.

- MULO "dead;" "the dead;" "spirits of the dead."
Pl. MULE. The MULE remain in the vicinity of the family, and keep watch over the activities of family members. They cause PRIKAZA, *q.v.*, a signal that an individual has upset the balance required by RROMANIJA, *q.v.*
- MUSKER "policeman." Angloromani.
- NACIJA One of the divisions of the Romani population calling itself RROM, *q.v.*, all of which speak dialects of Vlax Romani and descend from the slaveholding principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. They include the KALDERAŠA, the LOVARA, the MAČVAJA and the ČURARA, among others.
- NAŠALAS "we abduct," also NAŠADARAS. Sometimes the BORI, *q.v.*, will be "kidnapped" by members of the groom's family; variation of the above.
- NAŠAV "we flee." Sometimes a betrothed couple will "flee" their families and consummate the union before the ABIAV, thereby reducing the DARRO, *q.v.* done as an economy measure.
- NJAMO "relative," pl. NJAMURJA. VLAX.
- PAL Angloromani form of Common Romani PHRAL meaning "brother." This has entered colloquial English, meaning "friend."
- PARAMIČA "story," pl. PARAMIČI.
- PARRUJMOS "a barter, an exchange."
- PARRUVAV "I trade, barter."
- PATJIV "honor, respect, esteem."
- PATJIVALO "honorable."
- PATO "bed," a VLAX word adopted from Romanian. Use of this word is considered indelicate in mixed company, the euphemism THAN (lit. "place") being preferred.

PATRIN	“leaf,” pl. PATRI(N)JA. Also “page” and “trail sign(s).” In Angloromani, PATERAN.
PEKALA	“impurity,” var. of PEKELIMOS.
PHURI DAJ	“grandmother,” Northern Romani.
PHURIMOS	“age.” A distinction is made between children and post-climacteric adults on the one hand, both outside of child-producing age, and persons in their young and middle adult years, who are able to reproduce and who have a “sexual” identity. The judgment of an older person (e.g., at a KRIS) is considered to be more balanced because it is less subjective and emotional than that of a younger adult.
PHURO THEM	“old country.” American Rroma more commonly refer to any country in Europe, and to Europe generally, as the THEMA “countries.”
POKELIME	“defiled, impure,” also PEKELIME.
POKELIMOS	“defilement, impurity,” also PEKELIMOS.
POMANA	“a wake.” Pl. POMENI.
PORRADI	“deflowered,” see next.
PORRADI BEŠEL	(for females) “she is sitting immodestly with the legs apart,” lit. “spread apart.”
PORRAJMOS	The Romani Holocaust (1933-1945), also BARO PORRAJMOS, lit. “great devouring.”
PRIKAZA	“retribution,” misfortune or accident as a result of upsetting the balance of KINTALA, <i>q.v.</i> , through not observing right conduct (see VORTA RROMANI FORMA). sometimes translated as “bad luck.”
RAKLI	“non-Romani girl,” as opposed to a ČHEJ/ČHAJ.
RAKLO	“non-Romani boy,” as opposed to a ČHAVO.

- ROMA** A word being increasingly used in English as a singular or plural noun or even as an adjective to mean "Gypsy," thus "he is a Roma," "Roma language." In Romani itself, RROMA is a plural subject case masculine noun only.
- ROMANES** Sometimes used to refer to the ROMANI language. See RROMANES.
- ROMANI** The English adjective (sometimes spelled ROMANY) for "Gypsy," thus "the Romani people," "the Romani language." The word is also used by itself to refer to the language (see also ROMANES), and sometimes as a noun to mean a Romani person ("they are Romanies").
- ROMANICHAL** Name of a division of the Romani migration which entered France and then Britain. British Romanichals have migrated to all parts of the English-speaking world.
- ROMER'D** Angloromani word meaning "married." ROMERDO in other non-Vlax dialects. See ANSURIME, MERETIME.
- RRAJO** "heaven."
- RRASO** Vlax word meaning "race," sometimes applied to distinguish Romani populations (as a RRASO) from other non-Romani RRASURJA (pl.).
- RRESTISAVAV** "I accuse," also BANGJARAV, PURRIV.
- RROBIJA** "jail." American Vlax. Original European Vlax meaning was "slavery."
- RROBO** "prisoner." American Vlax. Original European Vlax meaning was "slave."

- RROM** “person of Romani descent.” However, because of their isolation, the Romani populations who were held in slavery for between five and six centuries in Romania have come to regard themselves alone as being the “real” RROM, distinct from other non-Rrom Gypsy populations such as the SINTI or the BAŠALDE. Nevertheless all non-Rrom populations refer to their culture and language as ROMANI, and use the word ROM (rather than the specifically Vlux RROM) to mean either “Gypsy” or “husband.” Pl. either RROM or RROMA.
- RROM BARO** The leader of a Romani community.
- RROM KRISAKO** A KRISNITORI.
- RROM KRISONGO** A RROM who attends KRISA as a KRISNITORI, reputed for his fairness and whose participation is frequently sought.
- RROMALE ČHAVALE** Term of address to a group, lit. “married men, unmarried men.”
- RROMANE ČHAVORRE** “Romani boys,” label of emphatic affirmation (because of the intentional tautology).
- RROMANES** The adverb derived from RROMANI, meaning “Gypsily, in the Romani way.” In Romani this grammatical form is used when referring to the language, thus VRAKERAV RROMANES “I speak in the Romani way,” i.e., “I speak Romani.” Using this adverbial form in English as though it were a noun is incorrect.
- RROMANESTAN** The notional homeland of the Romani people.
- RROMANI** The singular subject-case adjective derived from RROM. Its use (as ROMANI) for the name of the language in English derives from its function as a feminine singular adjective in RROMANI ČHIB “Romani language.”
- RROMANI FORMA** “correct behavior, behavior according to RROMANĬJA.”

RROMANIJA	"Romani culture, behavior and values; Romaniness." Any behavior likely to defile or pollute, and therefore disturb KINTALA and bring PRIKAZA and BIBAXT, is GADŽIKANIJA, or "non-Romani ways."
RROMNI	"Married Romani female."
RRUNDO	"rank, status." DAV TUT AND'O RRUNDO "I hold you in esteem."
ŠATO	In American VLAX, a local leader or representative. From E. "(big)shot." The wife of such an individual is a ŠATAJKA.
SELIJA	"bridal veil," also VALA.
SINTO	Member of a division of the Romani migration which moved into northern Europe, pl. SINTI. Today, SINTI are found from France to Russia, and as far south as Austria and northern Italy. They are particularly associated with Germany, and suffered the greatest losses there in the Holocaust.
SLAVA	Amongst VLAX Rroma, a saint's day feast, such as St. George, St. Anne, etc.
SOLAX	"an oath." VOV DEL SOLAX "he takes an oath."
STAGO	"wedding staff."
STARIBEN	"jail," Angloromani dialect. Also STIRAPEN.
ŠUNIBEN	"a hearing."
SURRUČIMOS	"intent."
SURRUČIV	"I intend (to do something)."
SVATAŠ	"spokesman, speaker."
SVATO	"word."
SVEDOKO	"a witness," MAČVANO VLAX dialect. also SVIDETELO.
SVIDETIV	"I bear witness" at a KRIS.
TEKTERI	"detective." American VLAX word.
TEKTERICA	"female detective." American VLAX word.
THAN	Euphemism for "bed." Lit. "place."

ȚIGAN	Romanian word for RROM, considered extremely derogatory. Pl. ȚIGANI.
TRĂȘ'D	"afraid," in Angloromani (Common Romani TRĂȘANO).
TRUȘUL	"cross."
TURVINIPE	"advice," also SOVETO, DIVINIMOS.
VALA	"bridal veil," also SELJA.
VEČERA	"eve before a SLAVA," Mačvano Vlax dialect. See ČINASARA.
VICA	"clan," among some VLAX-speaking groups. A VICA may descend from a common ancestor, or from a common occupational group during slavery, or it may have separated from another VICA which had grown too big. From a Slavic word meaning "vine" or "offshoot." Pl. VICI. See also CEXRA.
VLAX	Designation of a division of the Romani population which traces its ancestry in Europe to the former slaveholding principalities of Wallachia (hence VLAX) and Moldavia, now Romania. Also written VLACH. See RROM.
VORTA RROMANI FORMA	The correct observance of Romani behavior and ritual necessary to maintain spiritual cleanliness and balance, and to avoid MARIMOS. Lit. "right Romani way."
VORTAKO	"male partner; work partner," pl. VORTAČA.
VUDŽILE	"being in debt." ME DAV LESKE VUDŽILE "I make him a loan," ME LEM VUDŽILE "I borrowed." Also UDŽILE.
VUDŽILIMOS	"a loan; a debt."
VUŽIARDO	"(declared) clean," at a kris, after having been declared MARIME at an earlier time.
VUŽO	"clean," both physically and/or spiritually.

XANAMIK	What each spouse's parent is to the other (of the same gender); in some dialects, brother or sister in law. Pl. XANAMIKA.
XORAXANO	"Muslim (especially a Balkan Turk); member of an Islamic Romani population." Pl. KORAXANE.
XOXAJIMOS	"a lie."
XOXAJIPE	"a lie; deceit." Also XOXAJIMOS.
XOXAMNI SOLAX	"a false oath."
XOXAMNO	"a liar."
YÉNICHE	The French spelling of JENISCH, <i>q.v.</i>
ZAKONO	"law," sometimes non-Romani law in particular, as opposed to KRIS.
ŽANDARI	"policeman." Vlax Romani. Pl. ŽANDARJA.