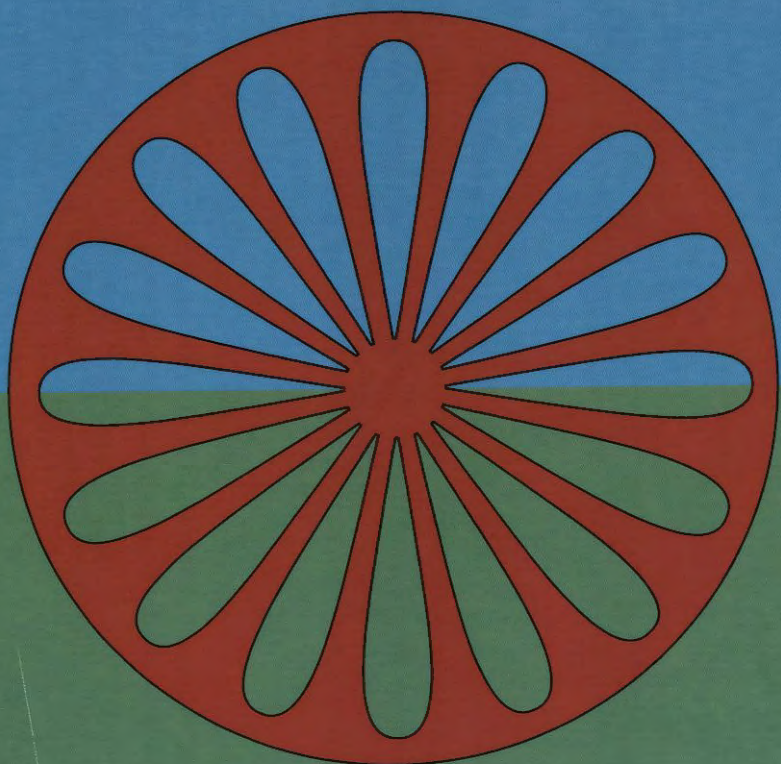


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GYPSY DIALECTS

**A selective annotated
bibliography of materials for
the practical study of Romani**



Edward Proctor

Gypsy Dialects

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for the practical study of Romani

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University of Hertfordshire Press

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1

Introduction

Mashkar le gadjende leski shib si le Romeski zor.

Surrounded by the Gaje the Rom's tongue is his only defense.

Lowara saying quoted in Jan Yoors, *The Gypsies*

La véritable histoire de la race Tchingianée est dans l'étude de leur idiôme.

The true history of the Gypsy race is in the study of their language.

Alexandre G. Paspati,

Études sur les Tchingianés ou Bohémiens de l'Empire Ottoman

Although the study of Romani, or 'Gypsy', dialects has been a recognised sub-speciality within the field of linguistics for well over two centuries, surprisingly little has been published dealing with practical aspects of learning the language *as it is actually spoken*.^{*} Literally thousands of scholarly articles have been published touching on every conceivable aspect of Romani,¹ but few are of any practical value for those wishing to learn to speak and understand the language. The overwhelming majority deal with such abstruse and recondite linguistic topics as 'Deriving inchoatives and mediopassives in Slovak and Hungarian Romani' and the etymology of the Romani word for 'eyelash'.² Blameless works of scholarship, no doubt, but of limited use for language students. There are some excellent recent examinations *of* the language,³ but almost nothing that offers any practical guidance on how to learn any of the sixty or more dialects estimated to currently exist.

This bibliography is intended to correct that deficiency. It is a descriptive and evaluative list of materials in a variety of media useful for would-be students – whether they be Rom ('Gypsy') or *Gadžë*[†] (non-'Gypsy') – of this fascinating and resilient language which, for over a millennium has, like the people themselves, adapted and survived against all odds.

* 'Spoken' is implied throughout since Romani has historically been an unwritten language (with a handful of exceptions), although this situation has begun to change dramatically in recent decades.

† Also spelt *gadže, gajo, gaujo, gadje, gaze* and *gorgio* (with erratic capitalisation).

The sole criterion for inclusion in this book is usefulness. This is, above all else, a *selective* list, and does not attempt to include every book and every article from every journal that touches on any aspect of the language. As George F. Black, author of the first English-language bibliography of 'Gypsy' material, wrote almost a hundred years ago, "A complete bibliography of the subject, it is needless to say, is almost impossible, the indirect material being so abundant."⁴ Today, a complete survey of the entire enormous and rapidly growing field of Romani studies would require several thick volumes (and be out of date before it was published). This bibliography does not pretend to compete with either Bakker and Matras' *Bibliography of Modern Romani Linguistics* (10) or Bakker and Kyuchukov's *Publications in Romani, useful for Romani language education* (8).⁵ It is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive but rather an overview and evaluation of those articles, books, cassette tapes, CDs, DVDs, films and websites which would have been of practical value when I began my own study of Romani, had I known of them, or had they existed, at the time.

While some of the items listed here are out of print and difficult to find (see Chapter 5 on 'Locating and obtaining material' for assistance), the primary consideration has been whether or not they are useful enough to be worth the effort of obtaining or consulting them. Only a handful of what can be considered textbooks for Romani exist but numerous essays located in journals devoted to 'Gypsy' studies, as well as some of the less obscure linguistic articles, monographs, theses and dissertations, have practical value, as do an increasing number of internet and other electronic sources. Most of the materials are in English, French, German, Italian or Spanish, but several particularly valuable Eastern European studies have also been included. Foreign language sources can be useful even for those unfamiliar with the languages in which they are written since texts and grammatical analyses of Romani become meaningful once basic grammar and a core vocabulary have been learned.

Whenever helpful, citations are provided to enable those with particular interests to pursue those topics in greater depth (for example, to in-depth linguistically orientated book reviews of particular titles; to secondary commentaries on primary material; and so on). Chapter 10 gives guidance on sources of future material, and the web page <www.herts.ac.uk/uhp/updates> will provide regular updates to this book by describing material produced after publication, enabling readers to remain *au courant*.

Please send all comments, corrections, criticisms and suggestions for material to be included in future editions to <EdwardProctor@gmail.com>