

## **Case in Romani: Old Grammar in New Affixes**

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*The dative, locative, ablative, instrumental, and genitive affixes of Romani have been described both as cases and as postpositions. The question is not merely one of terminology but concerns the interpretation of the structure of Romani, the place of Romani typologically among the languages of the world, and the codification and teaching of Literary Romani. Most authors simply assume one or the other analysis, although the postpositional approach has been explicitly defended. In this paper I address the issues in eleven points and conclude that the Romani morphemes in question have made the transition from clitic postpositions to agglutinative case affixes. I also address the question of whether the genitive is inflectional or derivational and conclude that in a synchronic analysis it must be treated as inflectional.*

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### **Introduction**

The question of Romani nominal inflection is of interest to all those concerned with the Roms and their language. The basic problem is whether the so-called dative, locative, ablative, instrumental, and genitive affixes are cases or postpositions. The question is not merely one of terminology but concerns basic issues of both the interpretation

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of the structure of Romani and the place of Romani typologically among the languages of the world. The problem of differentiating a grammatical word from an affix concerns the very nature of the boundaries between words, clitics, and affixes and between morphology and syntax (cf. Zwicky 1977). Moreover, the analysis of Romani nominal structure has serious consequences for studies of implicational linguistic universals (cf. Greenberg 1966). For those concerned with the codification of Literary Romani and the use of Romani in schools and other cultural and educational institutions, the choice of solution will effect how Romani is analyzed, taught, and perceived. In this paper I address the issues connected with this analysis point by point and conclude that the Romani morphemes in question have arguably made the transition from clitic postpositions to agglutinative case affixes.

There is no dispute concerning the fact that like other modern Indic languages, Romani eliminated most of the inherited Indo-European declensional system of Sanskrit and Prakrit—preserving only the nominative, accusative and vocative—and replaced the other cases with a series of postpositions added to an oblique stem. Unlike the other Indic languages, however, Romani does not have a complex set of free standing postpositions. On the contrary, it has only five affixes which more or less correspond in function to the five Sanskrit cases they replaced (dative, locative, genitive, ablative, instrumental). Most scholars present some or all of these affixes either as cases (e.g., Jusuf 1981, Kostov 1962, Ventcel' and Čerenkov 1976) or as postpositions (e.g., Bhatia 1964, Grumet 1985, Hancock 1985a) without addressing the question of why one view is preferable to the other.<sup>1</sup> In older works such as Paspali (1973 [1870]) and Sampson (1968 [1926]) the postpositional origin or agglutinative nature of the affixes is stressed, but they are treated as cases nonetheless. Cortiade (1992) presents arguments to justify the analysis of these affixes as postpositions (cf. also Ramadani 1989), but no one has attempted to justify the analysis of these affixes as inflectional, which I now propose to do. I shall argue that although the distinction between clitic postposition and agglutinative case is a difficult one to draw, nonetheless the affixes of Romani have made that transition. Moreover, the resultant paradigm essentially replicates the case system of Sanskrit on the basis of new grammatical material.

Before proceeding with the arguments and counter-arguments, let us begin with the paradigms of the substantives *čhavo* 'boy'

(masc.) and *balval* 'wind' (fem.), which are given below to illustrate the affixes in question using a phonetic spelling of forms typical of more conservative non-Vlax Balkan Romani dialects.

	SINGULAR		PLURAL	
	masc.	fem.	masc.	fem.
Nominative	čhavo	balval	čhave	balvala
Vocative	čhav[e]a	balvalie	čhavale[n]	balvalale[n]
Accusative	čhave[s]	balvala	čhaven	balvalen
Dative	čhaveske	balvalake	čhavenge	balvalenge
Locative	čhaveste	balvalate	čhavende	balvalende
Ablative	čhavestar	balvalatar	čhavendar	balvalendar
Instrumental	čhave[s]a[<r>]	balvala[s]a[<r>]	čhavenca<r>	balvalenca<r>
Genitive	čhavesk[or]o..	balvalak[or]o..	čhaveng[or]o..	balvaleng[or]o..

[In most dialects, the accusative is only used for animate objects and pronouns while inanimate substantives are left in the nominative. However animate objects in the nominative and inanimate objects in the accusative also occur, e.g., *dikhlas jekh butdžandlo gadžo* 'he saw a wise non-Rom' (Paramičia 1981:79); *gele ande jekhe vešes* 'they went into a forest' (Gilliat-Smith [8] 1912:85). Ellipses after the genitive indicate that the final vowel can also be [-i], [-e], and in some dialects [-a] (fem. sg. obl.) depending on the gender, number, and case of the head noun (cf. Cortiade 1990). All examples are given in the original orthography in which they appeared. An exception is made for Gilliat-Smith's representation of schwa by means of the letter called in Bulgarian *er-goljam*. This symbol is replaced with ə.]

Let us now consider the arguments that have been or could be adduced in favor of a postpositional analysis. Most of these are to be found in Marcel Cortiade's forthcoming Grammar of Romani and article on Romani nominal morphology, and I am indebted to him for sharing advance copies of these with me. After each argument in favor of a postpositional analysis I shall supply a counter-argument in favor of case.

## 1.

*Postpositional argument:* The affixes were postpositional in origin and are clearly postpositional in the modern languages of India. Trying to analyze them as cases is forcing Romani into the mold of classical grammar.

*Case reply:* After a millennium or more of separation Romani has diverged significantly from the other Indic languages. Aside from this closed set of affixes, Romani is a strictly prepositional language. Even dialects heavily influenced by postpositional languages, e.g. that of Agia Varvara (Athens), borrows postpositions as prepositions even while keeping Turkish case agreement. Thus, for example, the meaning 'after' is usually expressed by the preposition *pala* plus the nominative or locative, e.g., *pala i Patrigi* 'after Easter', *pala mande* 'after me' (Messing 1988). The dialect of Agia Varvara, however, also uses the preposition *sona* from the Turkish postposition *sonra*, which, as in the Turkish model, takes the ablative case, e.g., *sona dui tšonendar* 'after two months' (Messing 1988:114) = Turkish *iki aydan sonra*.<sup>2</sup> Given that what were originally postpositions or postpositional enclitics now form a non-productive, closed set with at most five members, we have reason to suspect that Romani has made the transition from postpositional enclitics to agglutinative cases. The fact that its restructured system of agglutinative cases based on former postpositions is closer to Sanskrit than to the modern languages of India reflects Romani's own internal tendencies and not an attempt to impose a Sanskrit analysis on Romani material (cf. Slobin 1986 on recurring structures).

## 2.

*Postpositional argument:* The adjective can have at most only two case forms, nominative and oblique, e.g., the phrase meaning 'my young bride': *mi terni bori* (nom.), *me terne borja* (acc.), *me terne borjake* (dat.), etc. versus e.g., Serbo-Croatian *moja mlada snaha*, *moju mladu snahu*, *mojoj mladoj snasi*. Hence, the postposition is modifying the entire phrase.

*Case reply:* Few or no adjectival cases is typical of agglutinative case systems like those found in Altaic and Caucasian languages, e.g. Turkish, Georgian, Lak. The distinction between case and postposition can be seen in a phrase with more than one substantive, e.g. Georgian *disa da dzmisagan* 'from sister and brother' (-*isa* = gen. case, -*gan* = enclitic postposition 'from'; cf. Aronson 1969). In Ro-

mani, however, the affix must be repeated each time, e.g., *O thagar vojnicenca, pajtonenca, bašalimasa, zurnavenca, davulenca džana e borja te ingelen* (Kostov 1962:33) 'The king with soldiers, carts, music, oboes [and] drums [they] come to get the bride'. Finally, there is the fact that in some dialects of Romani adjectives do agree in case with the substantives they modify, e.g. *barestar romestar* 'from the big Rom' (Ventcel' and Čerenkov 1976:308). Admittedly, this last type of construction is rare, and apparently not used consistently even in the dialects where it occurs, but the very fact of its existence is an indication of case.

## 3.

*Postpositional argument:* Unlike traditionally inflected Indo-European languages, the Romani affixes do not differ according to the gender/number of the stem, e.g. Romani datives *romes-ke*, *romniake* vs the Serbo-Croatian datives *muž-u*, *žen-e*. There are only two cases, and all the affixes are added to the oblique case.

*Case reply:* Romani is typologically distinct from its genetic relatives. The affixes we are studying are *agglutinative*; therefore they do not reflect any grammatical category other than case. Marking for gender and number is carried by the oblique stem suffix to which the case affixes attach. There are other languages with agglutinating case, e.g. Lak, that distinguish two stems, with all oblique cases being added to the oblique stem, e.g., nom. *qqatta* 'house', gen. *qqatt-lu-l*, dat. *qqat-lu-n*, abl. *qqat-lu-šša*, etc.

## 4.

*Postpositional argument:* The descendants of the Sanskrit locative and ablative, viz. -*e*, and -*al*, still survive in a few words, e.g., *khere* vs *khereste* vs *and-o kher* 'at home' vs 'in the house' vs 'inside the house', *dromal* 'along the road' (vs *dromestar*, *kotar-o drom* 'from the road'). Since these are true cases, the new locative and ablative must be treated as postpositions. To these complications can be added the use of invariable -*go* (= [-*ko/-go*]) with certain body parts to denote position or motion: *beš bulāgo* 'sit down', *khelèna kočengo* 'they dance kneeling' cited by Cortiade (1990).

*Case reply:* For an affix to be a case marker, it must be able to attach to all or almost all the nominals that are formally capable of

permitting it. Descendants of the Sanskrit locative and ablative in Romani, however, are limited to a handful of individual lexical items and the Romani affixes are non-productive. These affixes do not constitute case markers in modern Romani any more than survivals of the Common Slavic instrumental in a few Macedonian adverbs, e.g. *kradum* 'stealthily', *nazadgazum* 'backasswards', can justify a claim that Macedonian has an instrumental case. The Romani relic forms are non-paradigmatic; synchronically they are adverbs and prepositions. The same argument applies to the use of *-go* with body parts to denote position or motion.

## 5.

*Postpositional argument:* Two and more rarely three affixes can be combined, e.g., *than* 'place' > *thanesqere* 'of the place' > *thanesqerençar* 'with the ones of the place, i.e. with the locals'; similarly *me çhaverenqeresðar* 'with the one of those of my children' (a potential form in the Džambaz dialect according to Šaip Jusuf as reported in Cortiade [1992]). Such combination is characteristic of postpositions and prepositions (cf. English *into*), not cases.

*Case reply:* The Romani situation is exactly like Georgian double declension. In both languages only the genitive can serve as the base for secondary case endings. Forms such as *thaneskerençar* 'with [those] of the place' cited above are paralleled exactly by Modern Georgian constructions with a declined genitive, e.g. *mta* 'mountain', gen. *mt-is[a]*, dat. *mta-s*, gen.-dat. *mt-isa-s* 'to [those] of the mountain' (Vogt 1971:36). In Old Georgian genitives normally preceded their heads, e.g., *mep-isa kal-i* 'king's daughter', instr. *mep-isa kal-ita*. If the genitive followed, however, it took an additional case affix to agree with its head, e.g., *kal-i mep-isa-y* (nom.), *kal-ita mep-isa-yta* (instr). Precisely the same situation holds in Romani dialects such as Mečkar as reported by Cortiade (1992), e.g., *me amalesqe phenăça* 'with my friend's sister' but *e phenăça me amalesqeraça* 'with the sister of my friend'. This is clearly an instance of case agreement, no lexical information is carried by the second instrumental marker, only syntactic.

## 6.

*Postpositional argument:* In dialects where the stress system has not been seriously disrupted by external influence, stress is oxytonic on native words. The fact that these affixes are unstressed classes them as enclitics.

*Case reply:* There are other bound terminal morphemes of native origin that are not stressed, e.g. the ordinal morpheme *-to* :*štar* 'four' > *štárto* 'fourth', the morpheme *-var* 'times', e.g. *duj* 'two' > *dúvar* 'twice'. There are also unstressed inflectional affixes that cannot be analyzed as postpositional, e.g. *Róma* (voc. sg.) vs *Romá* (nom. pl.), *Romníe* (voc. sg.) vs *Romniá* (nom. pl.). Finally, case affixes can cause a shift of stress whereas enclitics do not, e.g., *tərgóvtsos* 'merchant', *tərgovtsósker* (gen.) but *kása* 'cash box', *kása-da*, 'cash box, too' (Gilliat-Smith[4] 1911-12a:2-8). Since there already exist two classes of bound terminal morphemes—those that attract stress and those that do not—the fact that case markers do not attract stress is not evidence that they are clitics rather than affixes.

## 7.

*Postpositional argument:* The dative *-ke* and locative *-te* are separable and can also occur prepositionally thus pointing to their clitic rather than affixal nature.

*Case reply:* The relationship of the prepositions *ke*, *te* to the case affixes *-ke*, *-te* is at best historical and does not affect the analysis of the latter as synchronic case markers. In modern Balkan Romani the locative preposition *te* has been replaced by *ke*, e.g. *ki jek aindž = jekhe aindžate* 'in a field' (Jusuf 1980:32,33). There are two problems brought out by this example. First, the form *ki* is governing an indefinite noun phrase, which suggests that *ki* and *ko* have been lexicalized and can no longer be treated as elisions of *ke* plus the definite articles *o* (masc. nom.) and *i* (fem. nom.) as has been done in the past. Second, the preposition *ke/ki/ko* corresponds to two different case affixes. Synchronically, therefore, the preposition cannot be treated as a preposed postposition nor can the case markers be described as preposable. Cortiade (1990) also rejects the identification of the affixes with the prepositions.

## 8.

*Postpositional argument:* Cortiade (1990,1992) cites the example *Esma kiri gili* 'Esma's song' on Esma Redžepova's first phonograph record, where the affix is spelled separately as is the convention in Urdu, as evidence that these affixes are perceived as separate units.

*Case reply:* Record and cassette covers frequently display arbitrary or downright erroneous word division and should not be taken as reflecting native-speaker perceptions. Thus, for example, the word division in *Kotaro tik nipa* (Ramuš Ramuši) = *Kotar-o tiknipa* 'Since childhood' cannot be justified by any argument. Other examples are the following: *Namangelama* (Ibriam Šemsi and Djula Fetahi) = *Na mangela ma* '[She] doesn't want me'; *Ustiljum sabajle mo muj tetovav* (Čizmoli Muharam and Kajtazi Djemailj) = *Ustiljum sabajle mo muj te tovav* 'I got up in the morning to wash my face'; *Sote čerav* (Jovanka Stanković) = *so te kerav* 'what can I do?'; *Moilo čhindilo* (Esma Redžepova) = *Mo ilo čhindilo* 'My heart has been broken'.

There are several other arguments that favor the synchronic treatment of Romani case affixes as agglutinative case markers rather than as enclitic postpositions.

## 9.

In morphophonological terms, the alternation between voiced and voiceless stops in the genitive, dative, locative, and ablative must be treated as a progressive assimilation of voicing after sonorants. Progressive voicing assimilation does not occur across word boundaries in Romani. Thus, for example, the initial /t/ of the enclitic *ta[r]* used as an emphatic marker on verb forms, especially imperatives, remains voiceless regardless of the preceding consonant, e.g., *án-ta mánje jek čhurí* 'now bring me a knife' (Gilliat-Smith[3]:1910b:147), *nánghjov-ta* 'now strip' (Gilliat-Smith[3]:1910b:143). In fact, when voicing assimilation occurs with enclitics or across word boundaries, it is regressive, as can be seen in the following examples: with *-da* 'and, also, too': *Léz-da kaxáv* 'Him, too, I shall eat' (Gilliat-Smith[1] 1910a:191) (*les* 'him'); with *biš* 'twenty': *biš džené* 'twenty persons' (Gilliat-Smith[4] 1911-12a:3).

On the other hand, synchronic progressive assimilation of voicing does occur in other inflectional and derivational contexts. In

some dialects, we have it in derivation, e.g. *thud* 'milk' > *thudvalo* 'milky' but *rat* 'blood' > *ratfalo* 'bloody' (as well as *ratvalo*; Uhlik 1983:145). The formation of past participles in Balkan Romani can also be described in terms of progressive assimilation of voicing. After sonorants we have /d/ or /l/, elsewhere /t/ or /l/ e.g. *phando* or *phanlo* 'bound' vs *bešlo* or *bešto* 'seated'. After vowels /l/ is normal, e.g., *ha-lo* 'eaten', *pi-lo* 'drunk', *mu-lo* 'dead', but /t/ also occurs, e.g., *su-to* 'slept'. All those cases of vowel + /d/ in the past participle are from stems ending in /v/, which, after Cortiade (1992), can be treated as part of the stem or as epenthetic. Thus, for example, *čhivel* 'put, throw' can have a variety of past participles in different dialects depending on the treatment of the /v/ as epenthetic—*čhito*—or as part of the stem with or without elision: *čhivdo-čhido*. Synchronically, the dental stop past participle formant can be analyzed as basic /t/ with a rule for voicing to /d/ after sonorants. By treating Romani case affixes as inflectional, we can have a single morphophonemic progressive voicing rule that applies within a word at morpheme boundaries and a single regressive voicing rule that applies optionally across word boundaries; thus the separation of morpheme boundary from word boundary in Romani is reinforced by means of different directions of voicing assimilation. If the case affixes are treated as enclitic postpositions, the symmetry breaks down and the generalization is lost.

## 10

Réné Gsell has argued (Cortiade: personal communication 21/IV/90) that since in dialects such as Čergar, where *s* > *h* / \_\_\_ #, i.e. older /s/ is realized as /h/ in final position, we find *h* (< *s*) in case affixes, e.g., *romeh*, *romehtar*, *romehko*, etc., they are postpositions. Certainly from a diachronic point of view this is additional evidence of their postpositional origin. But even in these dialects there is vacillation between *h* and *s* when case affixes are added, and unless the change of *s* > *h* / \_\_\_ # is still a living rule, the argument does not bear on synchronic analysis.

## 11.

Finally, we come to the function of the case affixes. There are three principle questions to be addressed: the status of the vocative, the status of the genitive, and grammatical vs lexical function in the other case forms.

### The Vocative

In a recent article, Schooneveld (1989) has summarized the major arguments surrounding the theoretical question of the vocative as a case. I concur with his conclusion that it is a "case not like the others" (p. 185), i.e., despite its peculiar semantic features, it can still be considered part of a declensional paradigm. The Romani vocative is not enclitic but inflectional, as evidenced by its stress patterns and independent vocalic realizations, and it takes oblique adjective agreement, e.g., *Bare raja!* 'O great lord!' (Paramičia 1981:84). It is thus clear that insofar as the vocative is a case at all, it is a case in Romani.

### The Genitive

The genitive presents a different problem. Unlike the other cases, the genitive agrees with its head in gender-number-case as can be seen from the following examples: *e rakleskoro dad* 'the boy's father' (nom. sg.); *e rakleskiri daj* 'the boy's mother' (nom. sg.); *e rakleskere amale[s], amala, amalen*, 'the boy's friend(s)' (acc.sg., nom.pl., acc.pl.). As a result of this agreement, many analyses treat the genitive as a possessive adjective (e.g., Ventcel' and Čerenkov 1976; Sampson 1968 [1926]:35). That the genitive can be declined in some dialects and sometimes even agrees in case with the substantive it modifies, as described above, are also cited as facts supporting the analysis of the genitive as a derivational suffix rather than as an inflectional one. There are, however, a number of arguments in favor of not treating the genitive as a case rather than as a derivational marker (cf. Also Grumet 1985):

G1. Unlike adjectives, the genitive is modified by an oblique article even when its head is in the nominative, e.g., *Liljás pes o tǎrgovtos, e rakljakoro dad*. (Gilliat-Smith [4] 1911-12a:4) 'The merchant, the girl's father, set off'.

G2. All derivational affixes attach to the bare or nominative stem whereas genitives attach to the oblique stem, e.g. *manúsh* 'man, male' > *manushés* 'acc.' > *manushéskoro* 'gen.'

*manúsh* > *manushanó* = *manushicanó* 'masculine, manly', *manushipé* 'masculinity, manliness', *manushoró* 'diminutive, little man' (Paspati 1973 [1870]:351-52).

Moreover, the genitive has the typical inflectional features of being both semantically transparent and totally predictable in its application to all substantives.

G3. The genitive can be used as the object of verbs and prepositions. Such uses are clearly non-attributive and in some dialects, we find the genitive substituting for the dative, e.g., *O phral phenel lengoro* 'The brother says to them' and *Thovel len opral lengoro ko šero* 'He puts them (the trays) onto them (his mother and sister) on the[ir] head[s]' (Gilliat-Smith [3] 1910b:146). In most dialects, the preposition *bi* 'without' takes the genitive, e.g. *bi lovengoro* 'without money'. Some accounts of Romani treat *bi* as a prefix added to possessive adjectives to derive a privative adjective, but this account is belied by the fact that *bi* can occur at the head of entire noun phrases, e.g., *bi akale purane gadenqo* (Cortiade 1992) 'without these old clothes' and in phrases where its function is clearly neither adjectival nor possessive, e.g., *bi moro* (Kostov 1962:139) 'without me' not 'without my'. Moreover, the prepositional nature of *bi* and the declensional nature of the genitive account for the fact that in some dialects *bi* can take a different case, e.g., the instrumental in *Lake pharo ulo bi romesa* (Paramičia 1981:83) 'It was difficult for her without [her] husband'.

G4. Typologically, declined and agreeing genitives are found in other languages of the world (cf. the Georgian examples cited above, also Daghestanian [Mel'čuk 1986:83]).

Including the genitive with the other case affixes accounts for its paradigmatic nature, for the shape of the stem to which it attaches and of the definite article that modifies it, as well as for those meanings and uses that are neither possessive nor adjectival. It also allows for a correct treatment of dialectal variation in preposition and case usage. As we have already seen, head agreement, which is the only possible synchronic justification for treating the genitive affix as derivational rather than inflectional, is a phenomenon to which genitives in general are prone, and using it as the justification for classifying the genitive as a derivational affix leaves all the inflectional features of the Romani genitive unaccounted for. (We should note that the relationship of substantivized genitives to their sources, e.g. *bēr[en]jerō* 'sailor' < *bērō* 'ship' [Sampson 1968 (1926):34], is strictly etymological. The lexicalization of oblique forms is well known in many languages with living case systems, e.g., Russian *r'adom* both the instrumental case of *r'ad* 'row' and an adverb meaning 'alongside'. Such derivational

processes do not alter the paradigmatic nature of the suffixes involved.)

### Lexical vs Grammatical

Our final arguments concern the grammatical versus lexical functions of the affixes. Most of the case affixes of Romani serve purely syntactic functions in addition to their obvious lexical meanings. With the exception of the vocative, all of these affixes can occur both alone and with prepositions in at least some dialects. We have already seen examples of prepositional constructions with all the possible cases except the accusative and dative, e.g., *upral me Batimjes sovel xaljom* 'I've sworn an oath on my Batim' (Gilliat-Smith [5]1911-12b:283), *asal e Romeske* 'for the sake of the Rom'. Cortiade (1990) reports similar uses of borrowed prepositions with oblique cases in Manush and Bulgarian Romani. Particularly interesting is the Bulgarian Romani example *za e neve lekakolage* 'about the new car'. Since Bulgarian has lost most vestiges of Slavic case, the use of the dative in Romani reflects a native Romani case-assignment. Given that the preposition is carrying the lexical meaning in these examples, the function of the case affix in these contexts is syntactic. The dative also functions as the marker of the indirect object, the ethical dative, and other non-concrete functions: *oj phenela pe dadeske* 'She says to her father' (Paramičia 1981:79); *Te na kames mange te patjes, dža dikh!* 'If you don't want to believe me, go look' (Paramičia 1981:82); *Uxtino kaj gelo peske* 'He got up and left' (lit. went to/for himself; Šejtanov 1933:26). The ablative can be used in comparisons as well as for the agent in passives: *Vov si mandar po-barvalo* 'He is richer than I' (Kostov 1962:133); *O čhavo thovel pes pe dajatar* 'The child is washed by his mother' (Kostov 1962:138). The case affixes of Romani serve grammatical, i.e. purely syntactic functions of the type not carried out by prepositions, enclitics or by word order. They thus differ functionally as well as formally from both prepositions and enclitics.

### Conclusion

To summarize, the arguments in favor of treating the Romani nominal affixes as agglutinative case suffixes rather than as enclitic postpositions are the following:

1. The other morphemes affected by the progressive assimilation of voicing rule that accounts for the shape of four out of five of these affixes in the plural are all inflectional and derivational. Enclitics do not assimilate voicing progressively but rather can cause a regressive assimilation.

2. Romani is a strictly prepositional language and the five affixes in question constitute a closed, paradigmatic set. Even dialects heavily influenced by postpositional languages borrow postpositions as prepositions and calque case suffixes with the appropriate Romani case suffix.

3. The case suffixes also perform purely grammatical functions, whereas the enclitics have lexical meaning. In some dialects we even find purely syntactic case agreement within the noun phrase.

4. All those arguments pointing to the postpositional origin of these affixes and/or comparing Romani with its genetic sibling languages are mixing diachronic with synchronic criteria. In a strictly synchronic analysis Romani behaves typologically like other languages with agglutinative case, e.g. Altaic, Kartvelian, and Daghastian.

It is interesting to note that the resemblance of the Romani case system to that of Sanskrit is not the result of an externally imposed analysis. Even if one were to insist on treating these affixes as enclitic postpositions, the fact would remain that the undeniable inflected cases and the old postpositions still constitute a closed set precisely mirroring the earlier Sanskrit situation. In the Romani case system we have an example of an isolated offshoot recapitulating the structure of the parent language comparable to the restructuring of the Macedonian verbal system in the southwesternmost dialects (cf. Friedman 1988).

Romani shares with the other modern Indic languages the development of clitic postpositions, but postpositional development stopped at that in Romani while it continued in the languages of India. Given these facts, it is reasonable to assume that the interruption of the postpositional restructuring typical of Indic languages and the shift to prepositional constructions took place after the Roms left Indic-speaking territory. We have no documentation concerning the relative

chronology of these structural changes, just as we have no certain data concerning the exact time of the exodus from India, whether it was a single event or a series of events, or when the Roms actually entered the Balkans. All we can say with certainty is that it is generally agreed upon that the ancestors of the Roms left India sometime in the early middle ages and that by the late middle ages they were in the Balkans (cf. Hancock 1985b:1-5). In the first recorded Romani texts (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), the modern system was already in place. The shift from postpositional to prepositional structure must have occurred therefore sometime between the exodus and the period of the first recorded texts. Moreover, it is possible that the Roms arrived in the Balkans before this restructuring was completed. It is thus not beyond the realm of possibility that the shift from a postpositional structure characteristic of India to a prepositional structure characteristic of the Indo-European languages of the Balkans occurred or was completed on Balkan territory, depending on when the Roms actually arrived there.

Although the received wisdom concerning Balkan nominal structure is that the tendency is toward analyticity and loss of declension, in fact there are also significant examples of agglutination and preservation of case distinctions in the nominal systems of the languages of this region. Thus, for example, Balkan Romance, Balkan Slavic, and Albanian all developed enclitic postposed definite articles, which are essentially agglutinative affixes and which, in Balkan Romance, Albanian and peripheral Balkan Slavic dialects, also serve as vehicles for case marking. While it is true that most Balkan Slavic dialects lost virtually all nominal declension, it is also true that modern Balkan Romance is the only Romance group to preserve remnants of such declension. Thus the move from postposed analyticity to agglutination in Romani could be viewed as a possible Balkanism related to the formation of the case/article systems of Albanian and Romanian and the article system of Macedonian and Bulgarian. Until such time as earlier documents in Romani or concerning the exact chronology of Romani migrations are discovered, however, this conjecture must remain entirely speculative.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup>Zograf (1976:195-196) notes that the argument over what constitutes a case and what a postposition in the modern Indic languages has engendered considerable debate. His own criterion is that if the nouns of the language have oblique stems, then anything following those stems is a postposition, whereas if the language attaches elements to an undifferentiated stem, then those elements are cases. By this criterion, East Indic languages such as Bengali, Assamese, and Oriya have a variety of oblique cases corresponding to postpositions in West Indic languages such as Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Gujarati, and Marathi. By such a criterion, Romani falls with the West Indic languages, to which it is more closely related. In the same volume, however, Ventcel' and Čerenkov (1976:303ff.) treat Romani as having cases rather than postpositions. Without getting embroiled in the general Indic debate, we can argue that Romani must be considered on its own terms as distinct from the rest of modern Indic in this respect because the languages of India are all postpositional, whereas Romani is prepositional with the only possible exceptions being these five affixes. Thus for the Indic languages of India, the issue is distinguishing true postpositions from other postposed elements, whereas in Romani the question is whether the postposed elements are inflectional or enclitic, there being no freestanding postpositions to contrast with the case elements.

<sup>2</sup>Gilliat-Smith (1915/16:87) did record the use of the Turkish postposition *beri* as a postposition, e.g., *siknára-berí* or *siknara-dán-berí* 'since childhood'. This second example uses the Turkish ablative case suffix, which is required in Turkish by the postposition *beri*. He also records *de idžára-berí* 'since yesterday', where *de* is a Romanian loan preposition meaning 'since'. The use of *berí*, however, is extremely limited and quite different from that of the case affixes. If anything, its postpositional use in those dialects where it occurred and perhaps still occurs argues in favor of distinguishing between true postpositions that take the nominative or a loan form and case affixes, that attach to the native oblique stem.

<sup>3</sup>Ramadani (1989) uses an apparent genitive with a non-oblique article, e.g. in the title of her article. Elsewhere in the article, however, she does use oblique modifiers with the genitive. Under such circumstances, I would argue that apparent genitives with nominative modifiers are relexicalized, given that there are also genitives with oblique modifiers.

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