

Leksa Mānuš, Jānis Neiland & Kārlis Rudevič: ČĪGĀNU-LATVIEŠU-ANĢĻU UN LATVIEŠU-ČĪGĀNU VĀRDNĪCA [ROMANI-LATVIAN-ENGLISH AND LATVIAN-ROMANI DICTIONARY], Zvaigzne ABC, Riga 1997, 352 pp. (ISBN 9984-04-548-X).

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This recent book deals with a variety of Romani spoken in Latvia, which belongs to the so-called Northern branch of Romani. It has much in common with, for instance, the dialect of the Polska Roma and to the variety documented in Jan Kochanowski's works (1963), who is also from Latvia.

The book consists of three main parts: a Romani-Latvian-English dictionary, with about 4,000 entries (pp. 21–134), a Latvian-Romani part (pp. 135–318), with about 12,000 words, and a brief grammar of this Latvian Romani dialect (pp. 319–352). Apart from this, there is also a preface (pp. 5–9) by Mānuš, and an introduction to the dictionary. Neiland and Rudevič took care of the Latvian to Romani section (135–318), and Mānuš wrote the Romani to Latvian and English section (19–134).

For readers who do not know Latvian, there are a number of limitations. The preface, for instance, is only in Latvian, and so is the grammatical sketch. The Latvian to Romani part does not give English translations. However, by glancing through the Romani examples, one can get a reasonable grasp of this variety.

The Latvian to Romani part is considerably larger than the Romani to Latvian part. I noticed that there are quite a few Romani words (especially integrated borrowings from Latvian) which are not listed in the Romani to Latvian part. It could also be that this part contains more neologisms.

Those readers who only know English, however, will be able to appreciate the Romani-Latvian-English dictionary. All Romani words are translated not only into Latvian, but also into English. Furthermore, the etymologies given for almost all entries are also given in English as well. In this review I will, for practical reasons, focus mostly on the Romani and English parts.

There is a considerable tradition of Romani dictionary making. For an (incomplete) overview of modern Romani dictionaries, see Samara (1996). One can signal three tendencies for these dictionaries. Some dictionaries are made on the basis of one dialect only (Kalderash, Lovari, Sinti-Manush, Erli, Finnish Romani, etc.), whereas others either cover several dialects spoken in a region or in a country (Bosnia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, etc.). Others tried to make dictionaries covering all varieties of Romani (Wolf) or a dictionary limited to a common core of all Romani dialects (Sailley). The dictionary under review is an example of the first. It lists only those words

used by speakers of this dialect, or actually a cluster of closely related dialects. In a few cases neologisms are listed as well, but these are always marked as such.

The spelling used for Romani (as far as one can judge it) is consistent and exemplary, and well compatible with systems used elsewhere. Stress is marked on all words, both in the dictionary part and in the grammatical part. There are other diacritical marks as well, which probably would not require explanation for the Latvian reader, but for others it may not be clear what they mean: vowel length, vowel quality, or perhaps secondary stress. These are not explained.

The structure of the Romani to Latvian/English section of the dictionary is briefly, too briefly in my opinion, explained in Latvian and English, and a list of abbreviations is also given, but no explanation of the diacritics.

The introduction is only written in Latvian, by Mānuš. As far as I can grasp it, it discusses the classification of Romani dialects, the Roma groups living in Latvia, and the groups elsewhere whose dialects are most closely related. It also discusses Romani dialect differences within Latvia, and some dialectal peculiarities, mostly of a phonological nature.

The grammatical sketch has sections relating to the noun, discussing gender and case, and listing paradigms from different noun classes. Further there are sections on adjectives, pronouns, numerals, verbs and conjunctions. Syntax is hardly discussed, and no example sentences are given in the grammatical sketch. In the dictionary part illustrative sentences given, but this happens only a few times on each page.

As can be expected, the variety is influenced by Latvian, and there are also many Polish loanwords. These are all identified as such. Reminiscent of the situation with Sinti and Romani varieties in Slavonic countries which borrowed German and Slavic verbal prefixes, this dialect borrowed a set of Latvian prefixes (cf. Ariste 1973).

Some special attention must be devoted to the etymologies given in the first part of the dictionary. Most of the entries list an etymology. The etymologies for Romani words given by Mānuš are well thought off and original, and in some cases more acceptable than the "traditional" ones by Pott-Miklosich-Sampson-Turner-Boretzky/Igla. They show a thorough knowledge of the relevant source languages (Indo-Aryan, Iranian, Slavic, and in a few cases Dravidian), and it provides quite a few new proposals as well for words thus far without a satisfactory etymology.

I will give a few examples. The verb *hurav* 'to put on [clothes]' is linked with Tamil *uḍu* and *urū* 'to dress' (P. 62). Boretzky & Igla (1994: 293, under *urjavel*) give Prakrit *uḍḍīya* 'blanket for wearing' and Hindi *oṛhnā* 'cover, put on'. The word *ger* 'scabies' is usually related to Sanskrit *gara* 'sickness' and Hindi *gar* 'sore', but Mānuš proposes Kurdish *gār*, *gir* 'itch, mange', and for the (mostly) Northern word *xolov* 'trousers', sometimes 'stockings', he suggests an Ossetic word *xälaf* rather than a Slavic one. In one case I find the etymology

somewhat fanciful, such as *gadžo* 'non-Rom' from Old Indo Aryan *gā-dža* 'born from the going and the singing', which seems more poetical than reasonable. Around twenty etymologies are given for words where Boretzky/Igla (1994) are unable to give etymologies. Most of them at first sight plausible.

It is good to see that there is so much good work (being) done by Roma in Northern Europe on the Romani language. We can think of the texts collected by Kochanowski (1963) and his phonological comparisons, the excellent Kalderash dictionary and grammar made by Demeter/Demeter/Tcherenkov in Moscow, in Russian, and some English (1990), and the Romani-Finnish-English dictionary by Viljo Koivisto in Finland (1994).

In short, this dictionary is exemplary. The contents are excellent, and the quality of printing and binding is also very good. It gives a more reliable picture of the dialect than Kochanowski's monograph. The etymological proposals are a great step forward. They should be taken into consideration in all future work in the Romani lexicon. I think that this dictionary is one of the best ones produced in the tradition of dictionaries of specific dialects.

It is a matter of great regret that Leksa Mānuš has not been able to see this beautifully produced book in print – he died in his fifties in 1997. He was known also as a poet, linguist and a translator. He regularly published poems, for instance in the periodical *Roma*, and he translated the Indian epic *Rāmāyāna* into Romani, which was printed and published as a book. He also published a number of linguistic studies, a selection of which is given at the end of this review, both under the name Leksa Mānuš and his other name A. Belugin.

I am sure that both Latvian Roma and linguists with an interest in Romani will be delighted with this book. I do not know what the price is. Information can be obtained from the publisher, whose address is listed in the heading.

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