

JOHANN RÜDIGER AND THE STUDY OF ROMANI IN 18TH CENTURY GERMANY

Yaron Matras
University of Manchester

Abstract

Rüdiger's contribution is acknowledged as an original piece of empirical research. As the first concise grammatical description of a Romani dialect as well as the first serious attempt at a comparative investigation of the language, it provided the foundation for Romani linguistics. At the same time his work is described as largely intuitive and at times analytically naive. A comparison of the linguistic material is drawn with other contemporary sources, highlighting the obscure origin of the term 'Sinte' now used as a self-appellation by Romani-speaking populations of Germany and adjoining regions.

1. Introduction

Several different scholars have been associated with laying the foundations for Romani linguistics. Among them are August Pott, whose comparative grammar and dictionary (1844/1845) constituted the first comprehensive contribution to the language, Franz Miklosich, whose twelve-part survey of Romani dialects (1872-1889) was the first contrastive empirical investigation, and John Sampson, whose monograph on Welsh Romani (1926) is still looked upon today as the most focused and systematic attempt at an historical discussion of the language. Heinrich Grellmann is usually given credit for disseminating the theory of the Indian origin of the Romani language, if not for discovering this origin himself. It is Grellmann who is cited at most length and most frequently on this matter. Rüdiger's contribution from 1782 entitled *Von der Sprache und Herkunft der Zigeuner aus Indien* ('On the language and Indian origin of the Gypsies'), which preceded Grellmann's book, is usually mentioned only in passing, perhaps since it has only recently become more widely available in a reprint (Buske Publishers, Hamburg, 1990) and only in the German original, printed in old German characters. Three authors who have devoted much attention to Rüdiger are Wolf (1960) in the introduction to his Romani dictionary, Ruch (1986) in a doctoral dissertation on early Gypsy studies, and Haarmann (1990) in his introduction to the reprint of Rüdiger's article from 1782.

Rüdiger's interest in Romani was first evoked by the publication in Frankfurt in 1755 of the *Beytrag zur Rotwelschen Grammatik, oder Wörterbuch von der Zigeuner-Sprache, nebst einem Schreiben eines Zigeuners an seine Frau* ('Contribution to the grammar of Cant, or dictionary of the Gypsy language, along with a letter by a Gypsy to his wife'). He was then encouraged by a colleague in St Petersburg, Hartwig Bacmeister, to carry out comparative investigations involving Romani on the basis of a sample text also used to test the origin and structure of other languages. Rüdiger was preceded in pointing out an Indian connection by another colleague and teacher from Göttingen, Christian Büttner, who in 1771 had briefly remarked that the Gypsies were a Hindustani-Afghan tribe. Also preceding Rüdiger's article was the publication in the *Wiener Anzeigen* in 1775/1776 of the story of Stefan Valyi, who was reported to have noticed similarities between the language used by Indian students visiting Leiden and that spoken by Hungarian Gypsies. Whether a serious event or just an anecdote, it is quite obvious that the publication in *Wiener Anzeigen* had been available to Büttner, who according to Ruch (1986: 119-123) pointed it out to Grellmann, and so it is plausible that Rüdiger had been aware of the publication too. Two more of Rüdiger's contemporaries, Peter Pallas and William Marsden, also noted the Indian origin of Romani, in 1781 and in 1785 respectively. The presentation of Marsden's letter at the Society of Antiquaries triggered the publication in the same 1785 volume of a collection of Romani words, compiled at an earlier date by Jacob Bryant, in which a comparison is drawn between a number of Romani vocabulary items and their cognates in Persian and "the Persic of Indostan" (the latter referring to Urdu). It is on the basis of these listings of correspondences (which however contain no explicit discussion of the data or their implications), that the discovery of the Indian origin was attributed to Bryant, rather than to Rüdiger (Anon. 1911).

The recognition that the Romani language was affiliated to the languages of India, and the derivation from this that the ancestors of the Gypsies must have immigrated from India was thus becoming a well-accepted fact in academic circles around that time. It is also evident that scholars investigating the origins of languages cooperated and exchanged information and impressions, and so it is rather difficult to assign absolute originality and authorship of the idea to any of those involved. What then makes Rüdiger distinct and his contribution so meaningful to Romani linguistics?

Rüdiger was different in several respects. With the exception of Grellmann, he was the only one of his aforementioned contemporaries to actually display and discuss the linguistic evidence at length. Grellmann however clearly borrowed — or rather plagiarised — his material from other sources (see Ruch 1986, as well as Willems 1998). On top of that, Grellmann was not even consistent in his presentation of Romani data, mixing dialects and misinterpreting categories. This makes Rüdiger the only contemporary scholar to

present an original, coherent, and genuinely insightful comparison of Romani with an Indic language.

Furthermore, Rüdiger was an empiricist. Having been sent Bacmeister's sample text, he had it translated into Romani by a native speaker, a woman identified by Adelung (1815:30) as Barbara Makelin. What he elicited, he transcribed and glossed. He then constructed Hindustani (Urdu) translations using a manual of the language by a missionary named Schultz (spelt "Schulz" by Rüdiger), which he had at hand (Schultz 1744). Though carried out not without naivety (see below), some of this certainly qualifies as pioneer work in linguistic typology and language contact. Rüdiger based his comparisons of the two languages on a selection of the most essential grammatical paradigms, and he was not deterred in his conclusions by the differences that the languages displayed. Rather, he understood that a solid argument in support of a shared linguistic ancestry must account not only for similarities, but also for differences, and in several instances he skilfully identifies the impact of language contact on the structure and typology of Romani.

Finally, Rüdiger was unique among his contemporaries to call for a socially engaged and morally responsible scientific discussion, accusing society and its political institutions of marginalising and persecuting Gypsies, and showing sympathy and understanding for the causes of their misery. There is no doubt that today's empirical, engaged, and theoretical investigation of Romani must look back at Rüdiger's work when tracing the roots of its discipline.

My aim in this paper is to do two things. First, I provide a general overview of Rüdiger's methodology, taking into account both his socio-political views on the Gypsy situation and the analytical procedure that he takes. In this I join some of Ruch's (1986) remarks concerning the setting which appears to have inspired Rüdiger to carry out his Romani-related research and helped shape the general spirit of his argumentation, as well as Haarmann's (1990) observations on Rüdiger's text. Neither Ruch nor Haarmann however appears to have had any direct familiarity with Romani, and neither comments on the details of Rüdiger's analysis. Nor has there been any other attempt, to my knowledge, to scrutinise the narrower linguistic aspects of Rüdiger's work since the publication of the reprint (Rüdiger 1990/1782), or indeed even earlier. I therefore devote the major part of this discussion to the structures dealt with in Rüdiger's comparative analysis and some of the problems that they raise.¹

2. The general outlook and methodology of Rüdiger's essay

The late eighteenth century saw the emergence of an enlightened social anthropology and with it a descriptive, universally oriented study of the languages of foreign peoples. The German universities of Göttingen, Jena, Leipzig, and Halle (where Rüdiger was to become Professor in 1791) were important centres for comparative research with high academic standards, where the notion of objectivity and originality in science was gradually beginning to

take precedence over conformity and submissiveness. This scientific *zeitgeist* is reflected in Rüdiger's essay in two ways: First, he accepts that a foreign people is likely to, and entitled to, live by a set of internally coherent rules and customs that is different from those of the dominant society. At times we find Rüdiger misinterpreting, patronising, and even giving in to stereotypes, which he then romanticises. Such is the case when he speaks of the Gypsies as "this nation that lives by its law of nature" (p. 44), or when he generalises about thefts committed by Gypsies, a generalisation that is intended as criticism of society for having neglected to integrate them. Yet at the centre of his essay is an appeal for the acceptance of the Gypsies as a nation in its own right and for a revision of society's attitudes towards them.

Second, Rüdiger takes an analytical approach that proposes a ranking of all ethnographic data according to its objective reliability. Language figures at the top of this hierarchy:

...none of the distinctive characteristics of a people is as reliable, long-lasting, crucial and unchanging as language. Form, practices and customs change because of climate, culture and mixing with others, however amid all this change language remains identifiable from one pole to the other, that is from the most extreme wildness to the highest culture; it is rarely to be eradicated even in cases of assimilation. But even then there are still distinguishable traces which can resist violent oppression. [Rüdiger, p. 59]

The study of language is therefore the key to understanding the origin of a people. A successful reconstruction of linguistic origins can then help fit other pieces into the puzzle:

...now that we are in a position to compare the linguistic evidence with all the other historical conditions and characteristics of the Gypsies, we find that they match and correspond entirely. The character of the Gypsies, their first appearance in Europe, their fortune-telling, their feigned Christianity, their abundant livestock, silver and gold, their thefts, their long robes and the big pendants they still wear, all of this fits the Indians much better than any other nation. Their physiognomy as well is similarly Indian. [...] [Rüdiger, p. 79]

Oversimplified as this description may seem, the point is that Rüdiger does not rely on a social characterisation of the Gypsies when determining their origin, but subordinates these additional features to the objective discussion of language. Rüdiger is thus concerned more than anything else with the objectivity of his analysis, and it is with this argument that he defends the social and historical relevance of linguistic reconstruction.

Rüdiger's linguistic observations are preceded in the essay by a long and critical discussion of the position of Gypsies in European society. Gypsies had

arrived in Europe during an historical period of transition “between barbarism and culture”, Rüdiger (p. 43) informs us. Consequently, the reaction on the part of administrations towards them were contradictory. It would have been possible to grant them settlement rights and integrate them into society, Rüdiger argues, but instead they were seen as rivals and enemies and subjected to persecution. The denial of civil rights turned the Gypsies into what they are now — “...single travelling bands of thieves, fortune-tellers, and beggars” (p. 44-45). Rüdiger generalises, of course, drawing on stereotypes and whatever information was available to him from printed sources. But his point is that Gypsies are neither inherently nor voluntarily social outcasts. Rather, their status mirrors their treatment by society, which failed to grant them political equality, and he concludes:

This is still a political inconsistency, which our enlightened century should be ashamed to tolerate. For, the mistreatment of the Gypsies has no other cause but deeply rooted xenophobia. [Rüdiger, p. 45].

Several points in Rüdiger’s socio-political discussion reflect the enlightener and enlightened in him. First, he understands social conflict as a situation, which arises due to a clash of cultures. The Gypsy culture, however romanticised or simplified, is in Rüdiger’s view nevertheless an equal and legitimate system of norms and attitudes. Second, he is sensitive to historical and political contexts and the effect they are likely to have on random events. He regards the point of arrival of Gypsies in central Europe as such a random event, which only triggers hostility because it falls into a period of general instability and social-political unrest. Third, Rüdiger’s sympathy with the underdog is instinctive, only to be followed by reflection. This impression is supported by the rather superficial knowledge he has of Gypsy society. But although he replicates stereotypes, he does not replicate hostility. One is reminded of Todorov’s (1984) discussion of the Spanish colonisation of native Americans: Judgement, sympathy, and knowledge do not necessarily condition one another. One can possess knowledge, but lack sympathy; one can sympathise, but lack knowledge; and one can pass judgement, and still have both sympathy and knowledge. Rüdiger does not pass judgement, and he has little knowledge beyond linguistic data, but he sympathises. Finally, Rüdiger is a reformer. He reminds society of its own modernised moral codes and demands that their implementation be extended to offer justice and protection to the Gypsies:

The Gypsies are respected and protected by the laws, as long as they do not cause offence to anyone. Nonetheless I have the impression that even in the most skilfully governed lands the survivors among this unfortunate people have not yet fully received compensation for the injustice that had been committed against their ancestors. For nowhere have they obtained full civil

status and equality with the rest of us humans — to which they are naturally entitled. [Rüdiger, p. 47]

Objectivity and humanism thus characterise Rüdiger's essay. His humanism is expressed as an emotional, moral appeal. His objectivity however is argued, and in the centre of the argument he places the reliability of empirical data. Scientific reliability means for Rüdiger to ensure the replicability of the experiment. Language as a reliable indicator of origin was highlighted above, and it is here that Rüdiger targets his criticism of earlier and contemporary scholarly endeavours:

Leibniz was right when he was the first to recommend language as the guiding principle for the investigation of the relatedness of peoples. ... If people had known earlier how to apply these tools correctly with regard to the Gypsies, we would have found the truth a long time ago and avoided all these mistakes born of conjecture. This shortcoming is all the more surprising as it could easily have been corrected. For everywhere people were surrounded by the living language of the Gypsies. This had already been observed early on by scholars, and some samples had been collected. Bonaventura Vulcanius had already provided fifty words, and Megiser listed them, presumably following the former, under the heading of the “new Egyptian language” of the Nubian nomads. As Wagenseil had done before, Megiser attributed to the Gypsies the cant of the thieves. However, apart from Ludolf, nobody has ever compared the Gypsy language with other languages. In his book on Ethiopian history he concluded, based on word-samples which he himself collected, that it was not similar to either the Ethiopian or the Coptic language, and he therefore rejected the rather fanciful though otherwise unfounded account of their Egyptian origin. [Rüdiger, p. 59-60]

Language had been recognised before as a valuable clue, but Rüdiger accuses his predecessors of ignorance. Firstly, they neglected to document sufficient specimens of Romani, even though access to data will have been rather easy and involved no travel or the burden of finding reliable interpreters, as was the case with the documentation of languages overseas. Second, those who did collect vocabulary failed methodologically in not bothering to subject their findings to a comparative investigation.

Rüdiger sets out to conduct a comparative study. Aware of the need to ensure replicability, he discusses the problematic sides of his methodology, sharing with us the difficulties associated with empirical work:

It was at his [=Bacmeister's; Y.M.] request that I had a text of his translated by a Gypsy woman into her language. The task was in itself wearisome.

However at the same time I sought to find out about the still obscure grammatical part of the language, a topic which had been overlooked by the afore-mentioned letter. It will be difficult for people without personal experience to imagine how tiresome it is to elicit these things from a person who does not know anything about grammar, and to what extent this increased the difficulty of my task. The mere sweet enjoyment of the pleasures of the lone pioneer more than recompensed my efforts. [Rüdiger, p. 61]

Here is a further indication of Rüdiger's groundbreaking methodology: All previous documentation of Romani consisted of either wordlists, or short phrases, plainly presented to the readers. Rüdiger's initial task, as evoked by Bacmeister, had been similar, namely to provide a translation of a sample text. But Rüdiger, at his own initiative, proceeds to elicit translations of grammatical paradigms as well. It is the grammatical part that ultimately provides the most convincing proof of an underlying linguistic kinship:

As regards the grammatical part of the language the correspondence is no less conspicuous, which is an even more important proof of the close relation between the languages. This follows from the well known fact that in languages which display similar vocabulary the endings and inflexions may still differ a great deal. The reason for this is quite natural, and is to be found in the origin of languages, for the latter (endings and inflexions) develop later and are more affected by changes. This is why, for instance, German differs from English or Danish in its grammar, much more than in the lexicon; the same is true for Latin and Italian or French; the grammar of the later languages was only formed after the division of these different Germanic tribes. [Rüdiger, p 70-71].

Again we encounter a hierarchisation of features which is so characteristic of Rüdiger's methodological approach to data interpretation: Grammar is more susceptible to historical change in language than basic vocabulary, and so parallels at the grammatical level are stronger evidence of a closer historical affinity. It is on this basis that Rüdiger provides us, in the introduction to the linguistic discussion, with a summary of his findings. Aware of the novelty of both his empirical and comparative methodology, and of the shortcomings in the work of his predecessors, he remains nevertheless extremely cautious with respect to the results he is able to obtain, and modest as regard his own role in the discovery:

Eventually, I found to my astonishment a great similarity with the language in Schulzen's Hindustani grammar which led me to trace the Gypsies' origin back to East India. ... Cheerfully, in April 1777, I immediately passed on my

discovery to Herr Bacmeister in St. Petersburg. ... However, one year later, I found that Herr Buettner in the introduction to his *Comparative Compilation of the Writing Systems of Various Peoples* hinted that the Gypsies descended from the Afghan Indians. This indeed spoils the merit of my discovery. Nevertheless I do consider myself entitled to wallow to my heart's content in the intellectual feast of my own discovery. Indeed, I might well be entitled to present some of it to my reader, as a matter of fact it is even necessary. For Herr Buettner, whose discovery I do not want to deny, has given us merely a vague hint, without any explanation or proof. [Rüdiger, p 62]

Finally, he admits to the sceptical reader that there are still gaps in the historical reconstruction, and deviations between the two languages that are subject to comparison. These however do not alter the overall significance of the finding, as they can be explained both by historical change, and by possible gaps in the transmission of the data:

It seems to me that with all this evidence there is no longer room for doubt that the Gypsies and the Hindustanis essentially speak the same language, especially if we take into consideration that, first of all, the former were obliged to lose and change much of their language during their far and long-lasting journeys; not even my teacher could have possibly known the remainder of it. Secondly, in the Hindustani of the missionary Schulz perhaps we do not encounter the right dialect, or he might have recorded some things incorrectly, just as he had used the Persian script instead of the actual Hindustani one. He did not have full command of the language, to say the least, and did not think of comparing it to the Gypsy language. Carrying out the comparison, inevitably some of the similarities must have been lost and so the languages must be fundamentally more similar than what appears here. [Rüdiger, p 77-78]

Rüdiger realises that his findings challenge popular views and earlier hypotheses. Aware of the contradiction between his postulation of an Indian origin, and the widespread view, expressed and reinforced through the label “Gypsies”, that this is a people from Egypt, he offers an explanation for the misconception:

...there is slight evidence to suggest that already the ancient Greeks sometimes used the label India for Egypt, perhaps because of a simple misunderstanding. This would further account for the mistake of seeing the Gypsies originating from Egypt. [Rüdiger, p 83]

Rüdiger's moral sympathy and objectiveness urge him to be consistent in viewing the Gypsies as victims of historical circumstances, and he extends this

to an interpretation of the reasons that may have led the Gypsies to leave India and migrate to Europe. Surveying the turbulent history of India during the period of Islamic conquests he proposes:

All the wars, migrations and revolutions we have touched upon so far represent an adequate reason for the scattering of the Gypsies from their ancient homeland. ...This is probably the reason why they eventually came to Europe, and are most widespread on the Danube. Expulsion or the greed to conquer, or perhaps both, as is usually the case with all migrations of peoples, may have instigated them to do so. [Rüdiger, p 83-84]

Yet the answer to the question remains obscure and is to this day subject to controversy among different disciplinary and ideological approaches. It would be safe to say that since the publication of Rüdiger's essay, little has appeared that would shed new light on the circumstances under which the Gypsies left India. Documentation on the languages and ethnographic features of other groups of Indian origin in the Near East and Central Asia, have inspired the search for Gypsy origins in an Indian caste of commercial nomads, the Dom (see Grierson 1888). The Dom hypothesis has since found its critics both among Romani activists such as Kochanowski (1994) and Hancock (1998), who prefer an origin from populations of priests and warriors, as well as among researchers in the social sciences such as Okely (1983) or Willems (1998), who reject an Indian origin altogether, arguing that lack of historical evidence disproves an outward migration from India, while dismissing all linguistic aspects. Two centuries after Rüdiger, little solid methodology has emerged that would put scholars in a definite position to boast more than Rüdiger was able to say in the concluding words of his essay:

I dare not give a more detailed description of the reasons that motivated their migrations. However, I am, even without the use of supportive tools too much of an outsider to this particular field of history in general and will leave it therefore to the actual historians. I hereby give in modestly before them not only being content but feeling amply rewarded if my small investigation proves to be of any help to them and might give rise to further discoveries in the future. I hope that by using the plumbline of philology I was able to facilitate and safeguard the journey across the history of the Gypsies. [Rüdiger, p 84].

3. The Romani sample

Rüdiger does not create the impression that he was aware of dialectal differentiation in Romani. Indeed, his remarks on the development of the definite article in Romani, as well as on syntax and language mixing might be interpreted

as a naive assumption that German was the only or at least the principal contact language of any significance in the history of Romani. Alternatively, they may be taken to reflect yet again the empiricist in Rüdiger, who does not attempt to speculate beyond observations on evidence that is directly accessible to him — hence concentrating on the German loan component. This means either that Rüdiger was only in a position to identify German influences, or that German played a central role in the dialect he was able to scrutinise. The latter would be unsurprising considering that Rüdiger's informant is known to have had at least a German civil name, and so she is likely to have been a member of the Sinti-Manuš population.

That Rüdiger's empirical observations were based on the dialect of the German Sinti is easily confirmed by a look at the data. In phonology, final *-v* gives way to *-b*, as in *schob, job* 'six, he', a development unique to the Sinti-Manuš group. Unstressed vowels are reduced in closed syllables, and we find in Rüdiger's notation *homes* 'I was', the tense suffix, representing underlying **-as*. A contracted form is also found in the possessive *mre* 'my'. Rüdiger's notation also provides evidence for the centralisation of final vowels in *bascher* < *paŮa* 'next to', equally known to us from contemporary Sinti dialects. Initial *a-* is dropped in the verb 'to come' — *wias* 'came'. The retention of *-a-* in *has* 'was' stands out, compared with *his* in other varieties of Sinti.

The sample shows features in lexical phonology that are in general typical of the Northern branch of dialects, to which Sinti belongs, such as the reduction of initial *a-* in *tschele* 'remain' and in *men* 'us' (but note its appearance in *achale* 'eats'), the *s*-less form for *grey* 'horse' (other dialect branches *gras(t)*) or the presence of *-v-* in *tschowachani* 'witch'. Somewhat curious is the notation of final vowels. Rüdiger's spelling seems to indicate a raising of final *-o*, though inconsistent, as in *baru* 'big', alongside *puro* 'old', and of *-e* in *lati* 'her'. Raising might also be behind the notation *a > e* as in *agawe* 'this', *naschele* 'escapes', and other grammatical markers with the exception of those preceded by *-h*. The notations in *gascht* 'wood', *gan* 'ear' indicate the presence of non-aspirated initial plosives; since following German, *k* would be taken to represent the aspirated plosive, one can assume retention of the plosive opposition aspirated/non-aspirated, which we still find today.

A further feature that clearly identifies Rüdiger's material as Sinti is the development of *s > h* in morphological paradigms, which characterises Sinti as a 'full h dialect'. This affects 1) the entire copula paradigm, for both present and past tenses, and so we find both *hi/has* 'he is/was', and *hom/homes* 'I am/was'; 2) the instrumental case — *leha, laha* 'with him, her'; 3) the long forms of the verb present conjugation with underlying *s* — *tu schuneha, me schunaha* 'you, we hear'; 4) the set of interrogatives and determiners in underlying *s* — *her* 'how', *hacko* 'every', *ha-* 'all'; and finally 5) the verb *hun-* 'to hear', which appears in the sample alongside *schun-*. This is a significant documentation of

the extent of the $s > h$ development, which appears to have reached its full extent in the dialect by the time Rüdiger's study was carried out.

In the morpholexical domain, we have distinctive forms such as retention of a long form in the nominative for *dewel* 'God', the use of *teisse* for 'tomorrow' and 'yesterday', and as deictic expressions *agawe*, *ageie*, *agale*. These, interestingly, show an initial vowel, whose status however — as carrier of a functional distinction (*kava/akava*) or plainly a phonological insertion — is difficult to determine; consider that Holzinger's (1993) recent description of Sinti has only *kava*, *kaja*, *kala*. Definite articles are *o* (masc.) and *i* (fem.). The third person plural pronoun is, uniquely, *jole*. The negation marker is *ne*, corresponding to some contemporary Sinti dialects, and Rüdiger's material shows no sign of postposed *gar*. Negation particles include *kek* 'none' and *tschi* 'nothing', which together with *tschemoni* 'something' constitute a typical inventory for a Northern branch dialect (see Bakker, forthcoming).

The assembly of other particles in the sample is quite enlightening in several respects. First, we find *kommi* for 'still', a Greek derivation that has since vanished from the Sinti-Manuš group or indeed from most continental dialects, and so a conservative feature. Next we find *ue* for 'yes', reminding us of Balkan Romani *va* (and if the two are indeed cognate, then we have a further conservative feature which has since vanished from the dialect). *halauter* for 'all' shows the already established German influence on the inventory of particles, though in the domain of coordinating conjunctions we find *aber* for 'but', but Indic-derived *de* (< *te*) for 'and'. This is consistent with the hierarchy of replacement of conjunctive material in Romani (see Matras 1998a); it is unclear from Rüdiger's remarks whether *oder* is used for 'or', or whether no Romani equivalent was entered (p 77).

In morphology, Rüdiger points out *-ben* suffixing as in *baruben* 'size', and word formation through genitive derivation, *weschiskro* 'forester', the latter typical of the northwestern branch of Romani and Sinti in particular. Athematic nouns frequently end in *-us* (*schnablus* 'beak', *flammas* 'flame'), an older ending shared with Baltic, Finnish, and Central dialects, but rather uncommon in contemporary Sinti, alongside *-o* (*schterno* 'star'). Adjectives show a synthetic comparative — *soreder*, *bareder* 'stronger, larger'. Verb morphology shows the second singular ending *-al* in the present copula and past-tense paradigms. The verb 'to see' forms a past tense in *dikkigom*. A distinctive feature is the tendency of plural person endings to merge. In the copula we see *tume ham* for 'you(pl) are'. In the present paradigm, the ending *-ene* (originally third person plural) takes over all persons plural, while in the past paradigm plural forms merge in second plural *-an*. Athematic verbs show an *-o-* insertion (*fligole* 'it flies'). Oddly, numerals above ten are coordinated with *i*, not *te*: *bischijeck*, *bischidui*.

In morphosyntax, present tense verbs show, as does contemporary Sinti, long forms (*merele* 'dies'), but the final vowel may be dropped in modal verbs, as in *dschanel dschale* 'she knows how to walk'. A participial present tense

construction is attested for one intransitive verb in *ne tschele dschito* ‘doesn’t live long’. Modal complements appear without a *te* complementiser in the third person — *o tschawo na kamele zertele* ‘the boy doesn’t want to suck’, *ageie taschai ne dschanel dschale kommi* ‘this girl doesn’t yet know how to walk’ — but not in the first person — *me kamawe te hunawe* ‘I want to hear’. Subject clitics, productive in the Sinti-Manuš dialect with lexical verbs, are documented in *joi hi jekke bersch de dui manet enge wiasli pro boliben* ‘she was born one year and two months ago’. A very distinctive feature, on the whole a rarity in Romani, is the merger of factual and non-factual complementizers and the use of *te* — otherwise only non-factual — for both functions: *ne schunele, te me rakkerwa* [=rakervaha] ‘he doesn’t hear, that we are speaking’. Most Romani dialects, including Sinti, show *kaj* (sometimes replaced through borrowings) for the factual complementizer. A merger in *te* is documented however for Bohemian Sinti by von Sowa (1893: 456), as well as for Welsh Romani by Sampson (1926).

German loans are richly attested in the lexical domain. Nouns vary in their integration, only some showing an athematic nominative ending — *flammus* ‘flame’ (which adopts masculine gender), *schterno* ‘star’, others without one — *regenboge* ‘rainbow’. Predicative loan adjectives show no agreement — *leskri romn(i) hi taub* ‘his wife is deaf’, *hart her jek bar* ‘hard like a stone’, though we find inflection in attributive position — *je spitzigu schnablus* ‘a pointed beak’. German particles are represented by *halauter* ‘all’ (a composition based on indigenous *ha* ‘all), and *aber* ‘but’. Prepositions and verbal co-particles of German origin are conspicuously missing. Despite the relatively modest length of the sample, this might be taken as an indication of their more recent introduction into the dialect. We do indeed find a calque on German verbal co-particles in *tumaro dad hi pre* ‘your father is awake’ (< German *ist auf*). Curious is the appearance of German dative case endings in *ando leskri neste* ‘in his nest’ and *o panin andro flusse* ‘the water in the river’, and one cannot exclude the possibility that we are dealing with an additional set of athematic vowels here (compare athematic *-i* in some dialects). Finally, Slavic influence, since reduced considerably in Sinti, is attested in *sennole* ‘green’.

Several features of the sample stand out in the problems they raise. Thus gender is rendered wrongly in *Dei ne tschummedele leskre tschawen* ‘(the) mother doesn’t kiss his [instead of *lakre* ‘her’] children’. The lack of word boundary in *medschana* ‘I know’ is, taking into account Rüdiger’s demonstrated acquaintance with morphological paradigms, likely to be a typesetter’s error. The presence of a possessive construction with no oblique marking in *o matscho ji jacka* ‘a fish has eyes’, alongside *o rukkes hi sennole pattia* ‘a tree=OBL has green leaves’ might reflect a step by step processing of the translation task by Rüdiger’s informant, isolating the possessor noun at first.

4. The grammatical-typological discussion

Rüdiger first presents his translation of the sample text provided by Bacmeister, and then goes on to survey grammatical categories in a rather traditional order: Articles, noun and adjective derivation, gender inflection, comparison, case inflection, pronouns, copula and lexical verb conjugation for two verb groups, particles (including some deictics, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions), and isolated remarks on syntax. Considering that this entire survey only occupies some seven pages (p 70-77), it certainly provides a concise overview of the grammatical features, and so constitutes the first ever published grammatical description of a Romani dialect.

Conspicuously missing is a treatment of phonology, which leads us to believe that Rüdiger was not aware of any distinct sounds, and perhaps that considerable phonological convergence with German had already taken place. Also missing is any mention of the tense marker *-as* (or, if a form paralleling that of other Sinti varieties is to be expected, *-s*) or the formation of imperfect and pluperfect/conditional forms. Only in the past tense copula do we encounter *-es*.

Rüdiger subclassifies what is in contemporary descriptions generally dealt with as nominal inflection: The form *dades* is regarded as G. (genitive), alongside *dakri*. The form *dadeste* is D. for ‘dative’, and we find A. for ‘accusative’ in *dades*, *da*, and A. for ‘ablative’ in (*mre*) *dadester*, *mre dater*. The Dative and Sociative however are treated by Rüdiger as postpositions, and their cognate markers in Hindustani are highlighted under the heading of parallels in syntax and word order. Only the dative forms however are written separately from the word stem — *tu ke*, *la ke*, *ma-nge*. The latter is inspired by Hindustani *ange* cited as ‘for’, which however belongs to a different layer, and indeed in the Hindustani column Rüdiger mixes dative and genitive markers. He is consistent in adjoining the sociative endings to the noun, though calling them “postpositions” — *mense*, *tumense*, *laha*. Here Rüdiger is evidently challenged by the lack of structural consistency in the form employed for the Sociative, owing to the *s > h* development in intervocalic position. Despite the somewhat superficial approach, Rüdiger’s listing and categorisation of case endings probably constitutes the first analysis of the Romani case system ever.

One of Rüdiger’s most novel observations concerns the usage of a definite article in Romani. Intrigued by typological contrast between the two languages, Romani and Hindustani, in this domain, Rüdiger explains the emergence of a definite article in Romani as a case of contact-induced grammaticalisation based on demonstrative pronouns, thus laying the ground both for a universal observation on the origin of articles, and for an analysis of the role of contact in typological change:

The article *je* meaning ‘a’, *o* ‘the’ [masc.] and *i* ‘the’ [fem.] is rarely used. Apparently, it only developed as an imitation of German, much like in Wendic [Sorbian; Y.M.]. The article is basically a pronoun or a numeral

which coincides with Hindustani *jek* ‘one’, *un* ‘the’ and *uni* the same. [Rüdiger, p 71].

At the same time, Rüdiger’s argument is of course naive, as it is not German that is modelled here, but Greek, and calquing is not synchronically ongoing, but a reflection of convergence in the earlier history of the language. Nevertheless, the insight into mechanisms of change puts Rüdiger well ahead of a follower such as Miklosich, who assumed direct borrowing of the Greek articles. Another instinctive insight, likewise somewhat premature in its presentation, is Rüdiger’s observation on the susceptibility of syntax to contact-induced change:

...having been dispersed, the Gypsies have lost nearly all of their own syntax; rather, they model it according to each language they speak, but even here there are traces which bear similarities with Hindustani. In particular, the postpositioning of prepositions, as well as in the order of words, e.g.:

Gypsy language:	Hindustani:
tu ke ‘for you’, la ke ‘for her’	<i>tumku ,unoku</i>
ma-nge ‘for myself’	<i>mere anger karta</i>
kerdomles ‘I did it’	<i>isku</i> [Rüdiger, p 77; columns as in the original]

While correct in recognising the functional equivalence of postposed case markers, Rüdiger gets somewhat carried away here: He interprets the fronting of the indirect object in Romani (*tuke kerdom*) and the postpositioning of the direct object in Hindustani (*karta isku*) — both rather marked constructions — as typical features of the respective languages, which leads him to posit a shared word order pattern (Indirect object - Verb - Direct object) for both languages.

Overall, Rüdiger’s comparative statements may be summarised as follows: Romani and Hindustani differ in the presence only in Romani of definite and indefinite articles, and in their inventory of particles. The two languages are similar in 1) allowing adjectival and de-adjectival derivations, 2) having a derivational prefix marking negation (like English *un-*), 3) indicating gender in nouns and adjectives through regular vowel suffixes, 4) their lack of word composition patterns, 5) the postposing of declensional affixes, 6) the form of pronouns, 7) the use of the copula as auxiliary in passive constructions (correctly observed, though no examples are provided), 8) the presence of a verb conjugation, and 9) the “postpositioning of prepositions” (see above).

There at least two major typological differences however which Rüdiger fails to note. The first is the postpositioning, in fact, of adpositions in Hindustani, as opposed to their prepositioning in Romani. Rüdiger’s comments to this effect relate solely to Layer II markers, that is, the small closed-set group of abstract case modifiers (see Matras 1997), which in modern Romani linguistics are dealt with as part of the case inflection. But Layer III elements, the unbound or free adpositions, differ in their position in the two languages. Rüdiger should have

been aware of this, as at least one clear-cut example involving cognate expressions is found in his text sample: *la hi but tut anter tschutschi* in Romani, and *ini both dut schischi ander* in Hindustani, ‘she has plenty of milk in her breasts’. In the first, we have a preposition: *anter tschutschi*. In the second, there is a postposition: *schischi ander*. Since Rüdiger constructed his Hindustani sentences on the basis of Schulz’s grammar, and did so correctly at least with respect to the adposition in this example, it is hardly possible that the rule on postposition in Hindustani will have escaped his attention.

The second major difference which Rüdiger leaves with no comment concerns the verb conjugations, where Hindustani marks gender and number, while Romani marks person. Here, Rüdiger actually supplies us with the entire paradigms for both languages, making no remark on the differences. Perhaps of less importance is Rüdiger’s failure to detect the conflict in word order patterns — Hindustani being a verb-final language, and Romani having a verb-rheme structure. Rüdiger leaves quite a number of gaps in the Hindustani gloss, apparently because he needed to rely on Schulz’s grammar to construct his own sentences, while his Romani informant was in a position to provide him with full translations of the sample phrases into Romani. This occasionally affects sentential structure, and it is possible that he was not aware of the consistency of verb-final order in Hindustani, or indeed of the importance of word order rules. The same might pertain to ergativity, which Hindustani displays, but Romani does not, and which typologists nowadays would be quick to note as a feature distinguishing the two languages.

Rüdiger presents material in both languages that is sufficient to demonstrate the language-genetic affinity among them, and he draws the correct conclusions from his data, leading the scholarly investigation of the Romani language into a new era. Paradoxically, however, hardly any of the categories to which he explicitly calls attention in his discussion of grammatical paradigms overtly supports his argument. That both languages possess word formation patterns (nominalisation and adjective derivation, comparative markers, and so forth) is almost irrelevant, since in most cases exemplified by Rüdiger the actual structural material upon which they draw for these purposes is not shared etymologically. As far as nominal declension is concerned, Rüdiger is not aware of the layered case system nor of the historical process that underlies the current state of affairs in Romani and Hindustani, and so he is not in a position to explain the rather faint and superficial similarities between the case formants. The patterns of verb inflection for subject-agreement and tense are fundamentally different in the two languages, and we have no indication that an etymological discussion is attempted as far as person markers (e.g. on the copula) are concerned. When claiming that both languages share the construction of passives, Rüdiger, as mentioned, presents no evidence, and in arguing for a similarity in word order pattern he misinterprets some of the data. Rüdiger finally admits that particles and syntax differ considerably, and his comparison of

demonstratives does not render any striking similarities in structure either. What remains conclusive proof of shared material from among the structures discussed in the grammatical part is the set of shared personal pronouns, excluding those for the third person, which are not cognates.

Why then does Rüdiger's linguistic work deserve our intensified attention? The reason lies firstly in the fact that it constitutes the first concise grammatical description of a Romani dialect and at the same time the first comparative survey contrasting it with another neo-Indic language. Rüdiger's insights are derived from the text sample, from the similarities in basic vocabulary and in sets of numerals and pronouns, as well as from the structural-typological similarities. But his conclusions are largely intuitive, and he is unable to actually formulate and present his argument in explicit detail. Rüdiger's linguistic discussion is simplistic, at times naive and poorly worded; yet it contains the illuminating essence of an argument that would fundamentally change descriptive approaches to the Romani language.

5. Rüdiger's data in comparison with other contemporary sources

Although the upsurge of interest in Romani began in the decades that followed the publication of Rüdiger's and Grellmann's work, Rüdiger did have at least one other source at his immediate disposal — the *Rotwelsche Grammatik* of 1755, with a Romani glossary and the short text entitled a "Letter by a Gypsy Man to His Wife". The *Grammatik* presents a variety of Romani that is very closely related, though not entirely identical with Rüdiger's material. In phonology we find a shift of underlying $v > b$ typical of Sinti in both sources, at least in final position. Thus the *Rotwelsche Grammatik* has *laab* for 'word' and *boob* for 'stove', but *lowe* 'money' alongside both *tschabo* and *tschawa* (the latter in the Letter). Dialectal German (Franconian) might have affected the notation or indeed the production of intervocalic *b* however, possibly contributing to the ambiguity. Contracted forms are found in both sources for *mre* 'my', in the *Grammatik* also for *wle* 'they came'. Both the Glossary and the Letter of the *Grammatik* show a shift of $o > u$ as in *drum* 'road', *gajium* 'I went', *rum* 'husband', which in Rüdiger's text is only attested for adjectival masculine endings (*baru* for 'big', *spitzigu* for 'sharp') and does not affect the first person past tense ending at all. A further differentiating shift is the $a > o$ attested in the *Grammatik* e.g. *pas monde* 'next to me', *pa lotte* 'on her', *komli* 'beloved'. Once more this might reflect dialectal German usage that could have influenced local Romani phonology. On the *s-h* continuum, we find here, as in Rüdiger's material, a tendency towards a maximum of *h*-forms, including the interrogatives *hoske* 'why', *hirr* 'how', *ho* 'what', but *sawe* 'which', and the verb 'to hear' — *hundum*, which in Rüdiger's text interchanges with *schun*-.

In morphology, different athematic masculine nominal endings are attested than in Rüdiger's data — we find *alo* for 'eal' and *mondo* for 'moon', *bechari* for 'cup' (German *Becher*), but none in *-s* despite the long vocabulary list. The

two sources share the particles *ua* ‘yes’, *hallauter* ‘all’, *te* ‘and’, *tschommoni* ‘something’, and *tschitschi* ‘nothing’ (reduplicated only in the *Grammatik*). The Letter included in the *Grammatik* has in addition *oder* for ‘or’ and *nina* for ‘also’. Interestingly, different deictic forms are found in the *Grammatik* in the Glossary, where like in Rüdiger’s sample we find *kovva*, and the Letter, which has *dowa*. The comparison between the two sources and especially the differences we find, in notation if not in actual forms, prove that the availability of the *Rotwelsche Grammatik* does not seem to have tempted Rüdiger into plagiarising material. Rather, it seems all the more convincing that Rüdiger indeed based his observations on original and empirical research.

Not so Rüdiger’s contemporary Grellmann. Ruch (1986) and Willems (1998) have commented at length on Grellmann’s plagiarism in his ethnographic chapters, which are a replication of a series of articles published in earlier editions of the *Wiener Anzeigen*. Rüdiger himself had apparently noted errors in a review of Grellmann published in 1784, calling attention to Grellmann’s inclusion of words that were not at all Romani (cf. Willems 1998: 81). Puchmayer (1821: 50-51) mentions that his Bohemian Romani informants failed to recognise several dozen words from Grellmann’s vocabulary list, and presents us with the relevant entries, many of which are indeed not Romani words at all. In a course assignment submitted at the University of Manchester, Monreal (1996) compares Grellmann’s chapter with Rüdiger’s essay. Monreal firstly notices a hidden reference to Rüdiger in the second edition of Grellmann’s book, in the chapter on language:²

Therefore an author says very rightly that the language of the Gypsies would still be one of the most secure means to put the true origin of this people into certainty [Grellmann 1787: 280; transl. by A. Monreal]

Cf.:

...none of the distinctive characteristics of a people is as reliable, long-lasting, crucial and unchanging as language. [Rüdiger, p 59]

She also points out similarities in the layout of data presentation, mentioning the possibility that both Grellmann and Rüdiger may have followed the layout of Büttner’s material, or indeed, one must add, that of standard grammatical descriptions (numerals, nouns, adjectives, verbs). She rightly adds that while Grellmann was more elaborate on word lists, Rüdiger commented on derivational patterns and syntactic formation. She finally calls attention to the similarities in the forms used to present the nominal declension: Grellmann, like Rüdiger, uses *baru balo* ‘a large pig’ (Oblique *bari balis*). Monreal identifies the unusual adjectival ending *-u* used by both authors, which points to replication of the same material, but she fails to notice that Grellmann was in fact inconsistent, using for the accusative a nominative adjective form in *baru balis*. A further addition to Monreal’s observations on the parallels between the nominal

paradigms presented in the two sources may pertain to the exclusion of the dative from the declension; Rüdiger considers it a postposition and deals with it in a separate section, along with the sociative. But the latter, interestingly, is included by Grellmann in the nominal paradigm, and translated correctly. Thus Grellmann must have had some insights of his own, or else profited from advice from another source.

More careful scrutiny easily reveals further problems with Grellmann's text. First, Grellmann's material contains a mixture of Sinti and a Central dialect. This is partly evident from the glossary of vocabulary (*dewel* alongside *del* for 'God', and many more), but is most striking in his presentation of the copula paradigms, where for the present tense *me hom* 'I am' appears alongside *me sinjom*, while for the past tense we have Sinti *me humes* labelled as "Imperfect", alongside a Southern Central form *me sinjomahi* presented as "Perfect". One might say in Grellmann's defence that he was seeking to complete paradigms, and interpreted a deviant form as a further past tense category, which Romani in reality lacks. At any rate, the combination shows uncritical replication of other scholars' material. Further evidence is found in his replication toward the end of the chapter of the Lord's Prayer in a Central dialect. Written in Hungarian orthography, it features alongside typical Central forms as *hin* 'is' and *andal* 'from', also Vlach influences, such as *agyész* 'today' and Romanian-derived *lume* 'world'.

Grellmann was obviously not as interested either in the Gypsies' point of view, or in the internal logic of their language, as Rüdiger was. He replicates both prejudices and hostilities, and he lacks any curiosity for the function and history of linguistic structures, hardly bothering, in contrast with Rüdiger, to comment or even to speculate on them. That Grellmann had no intuitive feeling for Romani grammatical constructions is seen in his ignorant remarks on the definite article *o, i* in Romani, which according to him appears both in the Gypsy language and in Hindustani after the noun (p 303), in his placement of *gadzo* 'man' in both nominative and accusative positions, but especially in his presentation of the vocative case, which, indicated by Grellmann for both Romani and Hindustani by a preceding *O* (a non-existent form in either language, and more like a replication of the style of a Greek tragedy), is even extended to the word 'table'.

Apart from the 'big pig' paradigm, items that are distinctively used in Rüdiger's text and are encountered again in Grellmann's chapter include *manet* for 'month' and *jole* for 'they'. The most conspicuous of Grellmann's plagiarisms however is the replication of extensive parts of his word list from the Glossary of the *Rotwelsche Grammatik*. We find that both spontaneous translations collected by the editors of the *Grammatik* to fill in lexical gaps, and errors in word boundaries, coincide entirely in the two sources, the *Rotwelsche Grammatik* from 1755 and Grellmann's chapter from 1783: we encounter *pleisserdum* 'wage', actually a Rotwelsch borrowing into Sinti, from Rotwelsch *pleisslen* and Sinti *pleisker-* 'to pay'; *tscherodiastele* 'to behead', literally 'he

took down the head'; *Dades Krupral* (cf. *dadeskro phral*) for 'father's brother', and many more.

Two more contemporary sources are worth mentioning in this connection. Both are collections of short phrases or words in Romani, dealt with in the context of Rotwelsch, though both sources clearly distinguish between the Gypsy Language and Thieves' Jargon. The Waldheim Glossary of 1726 (cited in Kluge 1901: 185-190) is a vocabulary collected at an institution that served as a prison, an orphanage, and a shelter for the poor in Waldheim between Leipzig and Dresden in Upper Saxony. It contains altogether over 120 items, including a number of phrases that are marked "Gypsy" and are distinguished from those marked "Rotwelsch". It too documents a Sinti variety. In phonology, it appears more consistent in its shift of $v > b$ — *loby* 'money', *tschobachanin* 'witch' (cf. Rüdiger's *Tschowachano*), as well in the raising of $o > u$, with genitives ending in *-escrou*, or *bacru* for 'goat'. Here too we have an *h*-dialect — *Hau pieke we ha?* 'what are you selling?', but notice the *s*-interrogative in *so racker we ha* 'what are you saying?'. Different from Rüdiger's sample is the presence of *-s* in athematic masculine endings — *doctoris* 'doctor', *schustaris* 'shoemaker', *wirthus* 'bartender', *Hanber-burschus* 'apprentice' (German *Handwerkburche*), alongside *galgo* 'gallows'. Interesting is the author's tendency to render final *-i* as *-ing*, apparently inspired by the cryptolectal endings used productively in Rotwelsch (cf. *trittling* 'foot', *funkling* 'fire'), in *ratting* 'night', *giling* 'song'.

The second relevant source is Schäffer's Sulz Gypsy List of 1787, composed on the basis of interrogation protocols with the Hannikel gang (see Kluge 1901: 250-252; see also discussion in Winstedt 1908). Here too we find the Sinti dialect. The short sentences allow us to trace a distinction between a subjunctive form of the verb, where in the first person plural *-s* is preserved — *Gayaratt Tschoss-ander Philicenn pagassadren (kaja rat džos ander filecin, phagas adren)* 'tonight let us go to the castle and break in', and the indicative where *-h* appears — *Bappian Chahame gern (pappian xaha me gern)* 'we like to eat goose'. More German influence is apparent in these short sentences than in the other sources, featuring German prepositions and calques on German verbal coparticles — *O Meizelen pagias zu Felldorf durchos darabren Ebri (O Meizelen phagjas zu Felldorf durch o staraben abri)* 'Meizelen broke out of jail at Felldorf'.

Finally, a brief note can be added on a further source, a novel describing the life of Hannikel (Kluge 1901: 250). Six sentences are included, which portray Hannikel's interrogation — interestingly, in Romani. A full discussion of the phrases, which are often difficult to decipher due to their irregular codification, can be found in Winstedt (1908), and I limit myself to the most relevant features: In phonology, we encounter again vowel raising in *tschoo rindi* 'among thieves', *malendi* 'among friends', *rakerdi* 'they said', but *gejom* 'I went' and *rikerdom* 'I said' alongside *schundum* 'I heard'. In morpho-phonology, we find copula forms in *h-*, but *schun-* for 'to hear'. As deictics we have, according to Winstedt's

interpretation, both *kowo* and *dawa*. The main linguistic insight offered by the Hannikel phrases concerns German influence on the inventory of particles connectives. Unlike Rüdiger's sample, which consistently has Indic *de* for 'and', we find German *und*. The negation particle, for which Rüdiger has Indic *ne*, appears here as *gar* (German *gar* 'at all'). The causal conjunction is German *weil*, which appears alongside *weil di*, the latter representing Romani *te*, which according to Winstedt reinforces the borrowed item. In its syntactic convergence with German, therefore, Rüdiger's sample appears somewhat more conservative than those of most other contemporary sources.

6. The non-Indic origin of "Sinte"

A further point of interest in a comparison of Rüdiger's sample with contemporary sources concerns the self-designation of the Gypsies. All sources, we've seen, base their statements or samples largely on German Romani, known to us today as Sinti, based on the self-appellation of the Gypsies living in or originating from the German-speaking area (*Sinte*). More so than Gypsy groups elsewhere, in Germany and adjoining regions Romani speakers insist on their separate identity as Sinte, they are aware of a distinction between Sinte and (other) Roma, and their associations often carry "Sinti" in their titles. Inspired by ideas disseminated in academic literature, many Sinte are able to cite the Indian province "Sindh" as the origin of their name, thereby implying not only continuity of the term, but also that Sinti distinctness may have even had pre-European origins.

This being the case, it is intriguing that none of the Romani samples cited here contains any mention of "Sinte", although they often do cite self-appellations. Rüdiger devotes a passage to a connection with the province Sindh; but it is not the term *Sinte* that inspires him to do so, but rather the external appellation coined for Gypsies — *Zigeuner*, *Cigan*, etc.:

Even the actual name of the latter people matches that of the Gypsies more closely than is apparent at first sight. For in India itself the nation is referred to by the name of the river *Sind*, therefore *Sindistan*, *Sindland* and not *Sindostan*, the Eastern Sind, as was claimed by Herr Schulz. How easy it must have been for *Sind* to be changed into *Zing* in the Orient; ... Thus, we would have derived the name of the Gypsies from the ancient traditional name of the people. In case some people find this derivation implausible or somewhat far-fetched, we can still find in India a name for the Gypsies that is even closer. In his *Asia* Dapper calls the country surrounding the river Indus *Send* or *Sinde* and depicts the Hindi as a people settled to the North and inclined to robbery. Thevenot, when he reached the estuary of the river Indus in the course of his journey, encountered a city called *Sindy* and a people by the name *Zinganen*. [Rüdiger, p 79-80]

Rüdiger is obviously entirely unaware of the term “Sinte”, for, based on the similarities between *Zigeuner* and *Sind-* > *Zind* he tests the hypothesis that “we”, that is the non-Gypsies, might still be referring to the people by their ancient name, while by implication the Gypsies themselves appear to have abandoned their own ancestral label. Unsurprisingly, a very similar passage can be found in Grellmann’s chapter on language (p 325); he too refers to an Indian tribe called the *Ciganen*, basing his statement on Thevenot. Later on in his concluding remarks, however, Rüdiger distances himself from the postulation of an origin based entirely on the homophony of names, while at the same time reviewing further hypotheses:

There might also be a connection to Huebner's city of *Singi* on the island of *Coremandel* or the *Zinganen* or *Zanganen* in Gujarat, as pointed out by Buesching. However, I do not trust this mere homophony which would point even more easily to the Singhalese; their language however being more remote from both Hindustani and the language of the Gypsies. By contrast, it seems more certain to me to take the *Singa* and the *Moruntes*, who according to Pliny lived on the river Indus, to be the people whom we nowadays refer to as the *Zinganen*, Hindustanis and Moors. ...According to this account then, all the Gypsies are to be derived from the tribe which had populated the border areas between Persia and India since ancient times; it is this tribe that made us refer to all Oriental peoples, recently even to Western peoples, as Indians, which is a common mistake resulting from ignorance.

... I must also add that according to Herbelot the people of the *Zingis* or *Zenghis* waged war against the caliphs in the tenth century, they even fought in ancient Arabia and occupied Basra, Ramlah and Arabian Iraq for a while. Following oriental geographers he cites *Zingistan*, next to Abyssinia, facing the Yemen and on the present-day coast of Zanzibar, as the ancient homeland of this people. However this only proves one thing, namely that the mistake of trying to determine the origin of this people on the basis of the homophony of their name has a long history. [Rüdiger, p 80-82].

Judging by his overall approach one can certainly expect that, had Rüdiger been aware of the term *Sinte* used by the Gypsies themselves, he surely would have cited it. Instead, Rüdiger cites the only term he seems to be familiar with — *Kale*:

I also include their national name. Even though they are merely yellow the Gypsies call themselves *Kalo* meaning black and the Europeans *Pani* meaning pale, like the Indians [Rüdiger, p 79]

Rüdiger of course omitted the -r- in *parne* ‘white’, perhaps a reflection of German Romani pronunciation by his informant. Nonetheless, the passage shows

once more that he is unaware of the word *Sinte*. That *Kale* was the widespread name of the Gypsies is attested in the *Rotwelsche Grammatik*, where it appears as the only ethnonym (*romm* and *romni* are cited as ‘husband’ and wife’ respectively, as in Rüdiger’s sample, which is their meaning in contemporary varieties of Sinti). The word *Kalo* is also attested in von Sowa’s (1893) description of various German Gypsy dialects. It later appears, alongside *Sinto*, in the German Romani glossaries by Liebich (1863) and by Finck (1903). Puchmayer (1821: iii) appears to be the earliest source that refers to the German Gypsies as *Sinde* (*Zinde*). With respect to their self-designation, therefore, the Romani-speaking population in German territories appears to have formed a geographical link between Iberian Romani speakers — *Calé*, Romani speakers in Wales — the *Kååle*, and those in Finland — the *Kaale* (for an overview of the self-designations used in Northern dialects of Romani see also Bakker, forthcoming). Together they formed a western isogloss of endonyms, within which *Kale* was the dominant term. Found in the same area alongside *Kale* are *Romaničel* and *ManuŮ*, but not *Rom* as an ethnonym, although we find it designating persons of Gypsy origin as well as the language, *Rómanes*. The eastern boundary of this isogloss appears to have been, at least until the nineteenth century, a transition zone stretching from Bohemia to northern Hungary. Here Puchmayer (1821: iii) notes the use of both *Kalo* and *Rom* as ethnonyms. The question is therefore, when exactly Gypsies in German-speaking regions gave up the term *Kale* in favour of *Sinte*, and what the origin of the latter may be.

On structural grounds it is quite clear that *Sinte* cannot be a derivation of an Indic name. The word is in Romani athematic, that is, it patterns with European loanwords for inflection. Thus, its singular is *Sinto*, but the plural form is *Sinte*, not **Sinta* as one would expect from an Indic-derived item. The feminine form is *Sinta* or *Sintica*, both borrowed feminines endings, and not Indic-derived **Sinti* or **Sintni*. This is paralleled by the use of the term into other dialects. Vlach dialects of Romani have *Sinturi* in the plural, and *Sintos* not **Sintes* for the accusative singular, *Sinton* and not **Sinten*, in the accusative plural. The variation *Sinte/Tsinte* might furthermore suggest an underlying *ts* in initial position.³ All this is evidence that the term *Sinte* is not an ancient Indic name, but a recent loanword adopted into the German dialects of Romani in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, replacing *Kale* completely only in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Though no positive answer to the question of the origin of the word *Sinte* can be provided here, an insight is offered by the Sulz Gypsy List, published by the criminal investigator Schäffer in 1787. The Sulz List was the third source, following the Waldheim Glossary of 1726 and the *Rotwelsche Grammatik* of 1755, to draw an accurate distinction between the “Gypsy language” and the vocabulary used by thieves and vagabonds as a secret language. Although the purpose of including both idioms in one compilation may ultimately have been

to help investigators gain access to the internal codes used by the respective non-mainstream populations and so to support control and observation, the compilers themselves certainly do not appear to have entirely lacked pure academic curiosity. Willems' (1998: 16) statement that in the Sulz List "Gypsies are claimed to have a secret language (Rotwelsch) of their own", is tenable only insofar, as on p. 10 of the list we read that

According to Fritsch, they [=their language] is not related to any other language, rather, it is only through words that Gypsies and vagabonds [*Jauner*] can communicate among themselves. Fritsch calls this Gypsy language 'Rotwelsch'.

Nonetheless, chapter 24 of the List, entitled "The difference between the Gypsy language and Thieves' Jargon (*Jaunersprache*)", consistently distinguishes the two, providing translations into both of sample sentences. It is this separation that is of interest to our discussion: Consistently and in a series of sentences, the Romani text renders "Gypsies" as *Kale*, while in Thieves' Jargon they are referred to as *Sende*:

[a] *Die Juden bestehlen die Zigeuner sehr gern* ['The Jews like to steal from the Gypsies']

[Gypsy]: *O Bivolte T'schorna galen gern*

Thieves' Jargon: Die Keime denneschoflen die Sende recht gern ...

[b] *Die Zigeuner führen immer geladene Flinten* ['The Gypsies always carry loaded shotguns'] [Gypsy]: *Egalen hi Perdebuschgi [e kalen hi perde puŸki]*

Thieves' Jargon: Die Sende keklen alleweil geladene Klassen ...

[c] *Im Pirmasenser Land haben es die Zigeuner gut* ['Gypsies are well off in the Pirmasense Land']. [Gypsy]: *Andro Pärmasensediko tem higalenge misto*

Thieves' Jargon: In der Pirmasenser Märtine hens Sende recht tof [Sulz List, p 10]

A remote possibility, though one that should not be abandoned before further scrutiny, is that the name now used by speakers of Romani in Germany and neighbouring countries was originally a cryptic formation — a kind of disguised codename — adopted into the language as Gypsies needed to re-define their social and economic position in society toward the end of the eighteenth century. It is during this period that Gypsies are confronted with pressure to conform to mainstream culture and social organisation, that state control and observation increases, and that consequently their own inherited, everyday ethnic language assumes an important function as a secret code. This results in pressure to adopt a variety of euphemistic designations — for placenames, occupations, and social and administrative functions — and it might be the case that a collective self-appellation followed in the same path.⁴

It is at any rate likely that *Sinte* started off as the name of one particular subdivision among the German Gypsies. The most widespread term for “Gypsies” in German secret languages is not *Sende*, but *Manisch* (see Matras 1998c) — clearly derived from another self-appellation, *ManuŬ*, still in use in France. Puchmayer’s (1821) encounters with German Gypsies may have been with those groups that first adopted *Sinte*, for otherwise it seems strange that he should have generalised about the use of the term among all German Gypsies. It is therefore possible that the source on which the Sulz List draws for Thieves’ Jargon (*Jaunerprache*) was one that had been in contact with those groups named *Sende*, while the Romani source for the List came from a separate group named *Kale*. Whatever the origin of the term, the impression from the sources is that in eighteenth-century Germany the *Sinte* were still a small and rather isolated group among Romani-speaking Gypsies.

7. Conclusion

We have no straightforward answer to the question who really was the first scholar to discover the Indic origin of Romani. Rüdiger must therefore be judged as objectively as possible on his originality. Three points come to mind. First, he gives credit to predecessors, even though their contribution was rather minor and insignificant compared to the empirical effort that Rüdiger shows, and although the results of their studies were not disseminated publicly in a comparable form. In other words, Rüdiger could have easily downplayed the role of his mentors and sources on Romani, as Grellmann did, but chose not to do so. Second, there is no evidence in the data cited in his text that would suggest that he replicated any material from the *Rotwelsche Grammatik*, although we know that this source was available to him, and although it contains considerably more material than Rüdiger’s sample. This can be seen in the structural differences, however minor and insignificant, between the two varieties and the notations adopted to render them. Once more Rüdiger’s essay contrasts with Grellmann’s work, which abounds in linguistic plagiarism. Finally, Rüdiger remains modest in his conclusions, but at the same time he integrates his linguistic analysis into an original and daring criticism of historical and contemporary Gypsy-related policies. His political discourse, which was not only unprecedented but was not replicated by any of his colleagues that followed either, was a luxury that could have been left out of the scholarly linguistic discussion, yet Rüdiger saw his task as that of an enlightener — on both linguistic origins and social attitudes.

Though Rüdiger’s mentor Büttner was the likely figure behind the inspiration that led to the essay, having made the connection to Bacmeister in St. Petersburg, and having possibly left his material at Rüdiger’s disposal (cf. Ruch 1986), it is the empiricist and the social reformer in Rüdiger that entitles him to be regarded as discoverer and founder of a linguistic discipline. Willems (1998: 80-81) ridicules Rüdiger as a “romanticist”, criticising his replication of stereotypes while at the same time mocking at his role as self-appointed advocate

for the Gypsies. In reality, Willems claims, Rüdiger had little hard evidence to offer in support of his radical theory of an Indian origin. But it is only possible for Willems to pursue this line of interpretation while choosing to ignore any merit of Rüdiger's linguistic presentation — the essence of his Romani-related contribution — and concentrating instead, selectively, on details from among the historical remarks at the end of the essay, which Rüdiger admits are speculative and entirely preliminary. Willems appears to be inspired by a single lecture on language which he heard at Leiden University and which concentrated on the origins of the Indo-Europeans (cf. 1998: 83), some four millennia before the arrival of Romani-speaking Gypsies in Europe. On this basis he hypothesises a spread of language without the movement of populations (see also Okely 1997: 240). Thus, by rejecting a connection between language and origin, Willems excuses himself from studying the linguistic facts, including those pertaining to language transmission. While earlier sources were already able to distinguish between Romani and the jargons and vocabularies of the Roads, it was Rüdiger who first demonstrated the structural coherence of the language by composing the first concise grammatical description. Both Willems and Okely owe us an explanation as to how and why a full-fledged language with grammatical inflections will have been transmitted from Asia to Europe and expanded there to become the everyday language of millions, without the physical migration of a population of speakers at an early stage.⁵ Rüdiger may have been an idealist, but his intuition, however naive, has not yet found a serious challenger.

Notes:

- ¹ In citing from the text, I draw in part on an English translation composed by Manuell Priego-Timmel, Karl Bernhardt, and Anette Monreal (University of Manchester, June 1996).
- ² Overt reference to Rüdiger's work is made by Grellmann in a footnote, p. 284).
- ³ Hancock (1998: 23) compares *Cinti* [tsinti] with German *Zinn* 'tin', though it is not clear whether he actually argues for a German etymology of the word.
- ⁴ Much like the adoption among German Jews of *amxa*, literally Hebrew for 'your own people'. For a discussion of the functional continuum in western dialects of Romani from an everyday community language to a secret language see Matras (1998b).
- ⁵ Wexler (1997) claims to be able to disprove the grammatical coherence of Romani, arguing that Romani draws on the grammar of contiguous languages and has little productive Indic grammar. In actual fact, however, Wexler only discusses vocabulary and ignores fully the productivity of Indic grammatical

categories and underlying Indic-derived formants. See brief discussion in Matras (1998a:3, 6).

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