

IS *KALIARDA*, GREEK GAY SLANG, A MIXED GYPSY LANGUAGE?

ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to describe *Kaliardá*, the Greek gay slang, and to evaluate the importance of the Romani element in it. In order to achieve these goals I have proceeded to a word count and to a linguistic classification of the lexical material in the Petropoulos' gay slang dictionary. I conclude that *Kaliardá* is not a mixed Gypsy language. It is rather a slang or a professional jargon with an important Romani element in it. I hypothesize that it first appeared in a Romani speaking environment connected with male prostitution.

KEY WORDS: *Kaliardá*, Romani.

RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene por objeto describir la *kaliardá*, la jerga homosexual griega, evaluando la importancia que tiene en ella el elemento romaní. Para ello he contabilizado y clasificado según su origen el material léxico del diccionario de jerga homosexual griega de Petrópoulos. Mi conclusión es que la *kaliardá* no es una lengua mixta de origen gitano, sino simplemente un argot o jerga profesional que, eso sí, contiene un importante aporte romaní. Mi hipótesis es que dicha jerga surgió en un entorno de habla romaní relacionado con la prostitución masculina.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Kaliardá*, romaní.

1. INTRODUCCIÓN¹

Kaliardá is the name of the gay slang spoken in Greece mainly by transvestites and male prostitutes, but also by homosexuals “on the scene”.

¹ In my transcription of Greek and Romani words I have chosen to put an accent on the stressed syllable.

Although its use has declined a great deal nowadays and only a few words and expressions of it are still known by some gay men, it has somehow been preserved from complete oblivion thanks to Greek folklorist Petropoulos' *Kaliardá Glossary* first published in 1971 (Petropoulos 1982). To publish such a work during the Colonels' dictatorship was so audacious that the book was seized and the author sentenced to five months imprisonment. Linguistic work can be a hazardous activity. Petropoulos' work is an etymological dictionary where he gathers about 3.000 words and expressions of Greek gay slang. Some of the etymologies, though, are uncertain or remain with no indication of their origin. Authors who have dealt, albeit marginally, with this jargon have put forward the possibility that there may be an important Romani element in it (Petropoulos 1982: 252; Triandaphyllidis 1924). Petropoulos himself points to that eventuality, but has no access to Rom sources. He goes so far as to confess: «Whenever I have to investigate something that refers etymologically to Romani, I am literally seized with panic» (Petropoulos 1982: 252).

According to Zahos's Greek slang dictionary (Zahos 1981), «this language has at its base the Gypsy language as lexicon and word structure». Indeed the presence of a sizeable Romani lexical stock in *Kaliardá* jargon is obvious to anyone familiar with that language. The aim of this paper is to evaluate its size and nature so as to establish what kind of linguistic specimen *Kaliardá* is: a Para-Romani language, i.e. a mixed Gypsy language in which the lexicon is Romani, but the grammatical system is from a different language (Bakker & van der Voort 1991: 16; Rusakov 1991), or a case of moderate to heavy borrowing due to a situation of longstanding bilingualism (Thomason & Kaufman 1988), or a secret jargon artificially and consciously created.

Interestingly, there also exists in Istanbul a Romani-based gay slang (Kyuchukov & Bakker 1999) sharing words and linguistic features with *Kaliardá*. Historically, it seems reasonable to hypothesize the same sociolinguistic background for both Greek and Turkish gay jargons, in which case their origin should be pushed further to Ottoman times.

2. ON THE GLOTTONYM

The very name of *Kaliardá* has caused a lot of controversy. In Petropoulos' opinion *Kaliardá* would have a French etymology and would refer to the language of the “gaillards”, i.e. the ‘hale and hearty’, the ‘fellows’,

'chaps', 'guys', 'mates', 'lads'. This is also the etymological explanation adopted by some of the most recently published Modern Greek dictionaries (Babiniotis 1998; Tegopoulos-Fytrakis 1991). Actually this sounds too much like a precious and self-indulgent etymology to be true and we shall see that it is far from being the right one, let alone the fact that French has certainly no prevailing role in *Kaliardá*.

Theodoridis (Theodoridis 1977) suggests another explanation. He comments on the meaning of the *Kaliardá*'s sister Turkish word *kayarto* given by Steurwald's Turkish-German dictionary (Steurwald 1972) and by Wolf's Romani dictionary (Wolf 1959). The first one gives the meaning "Negerdienerin", 'black maid' in *orta oyunu*, Turkish folk theater, but refers also to *pıst*, which is translated in the same dictionary as "Strichjunge", "Lustknaube", 'rent boy', 'male prostitute'. In fact *pıst*, or its Greek equivalent *pústi*, is the offensive Turkish word for 'homosexual' and is not necessarily related to prostitution. On the other hand, Theodoridis quotes 'coffee' as one of the meanings of *kayarto* given in Wolf's dictionary (1959). Bearing on the fact then that all these meanings have something to do with black colour, Theodoridis (1977: 147) goes into an elaborate argumentation. In the beginning, the word *kayarto* would have meant 'black', but through a series of synecdochical shifts would have ended up to mean 'coffee', "Kaffeehausbesitzer", 'café owner', "unmoralische Person", 'person of low morals' (1977: 147) and "verdorbener, lasterhafter Mensch", 'depraved, vicious person' (1977: 148), because in his opinion café owners do not have a very good moral reputation. So, aware of the Romani origin of the Turkish word *kayarto* and of its relationship to the Greek glottonym *Kaliardá*, he concludes (1977: 148):

«Die Entstehung von *kayarto* müsste daher unbedingt in einem Milieu, in dem die Präsenz von Zigeunern spürbar stark war, gesucht werden. Dieses Milieu waren eben die Kaffeehäuser».

'So the origin of *kayarto* absolutely must have been in an environment in which the presence of Gypsies was appreciably strong. That environment was the cafés'.

Theodoridis' conclusion might well be right, but he fails in his argumentation in not recognizing the real meaning of the word, which is no more, no less than the past participle *kaljardó* of the Romani verb *kaljaráv*, 'to blacken', deadjectival verb derived from *kaló*, 'black', inflected with the neuter plural Greek bound morpheme *-á* used to refer to language names. Notice also the Spanish Gypsies' glottonym *caló*. Both *Caló* and *Kaliardá* refer to the language of the Black or Dark-skinned, i.e. the language of the

Rom people. Interestingly, the most recent and up-to-date, though perhaps a bit too ethnocentric, Modern Greek dictionary (Babiniotis 1998) perpetuates the received idea that *yíftos* or *tsiggános*, 'Gypsy', is mainly a member of a "dark-skinned" people. Clichés are hard to beat.

On the other hand, according to Petropoulos (1982: 10), the jargon is referred to by the gay community with various other names, all of which tell something about the jargon's origin and status. *Lubinístika* is a glottonym derived from *lubína*, *lubuniá*, *lúbo*, all of them feminine nouns meaning 'homosexual'. According to Zahos (1981), *Lubinístika* is the secret language of passive homosexuals, prostitutes and transvestites. *Lubinístika* seems though to be derived from the Romani word *lubbní*, 'prostitute', and appears to relate the jargon to this professional activity (Wolf 1959; Aktunç 1990). *Latiniká* and *Etrúska* identify *Kaliardá* by way of comparison with those unintelligible languages, i.e. Latin and Etruscan. *Frangolubinístika* is a compound of *Frángos*, 'West European', and *Lubinístika* and, although it has a probable bearing on the most Italian-based variety of the jargon, it is used as a mere synonym of *Kaliardá*. *Tzinavotá* is a glottonym derived from the *Kaliardá* verb *tzinávo*, 'to understand', derived for its part from a confusion of the Romani verbs *jánav*, 'to know', and *djináv*, 'to count', 'to read'. About this Petropoulos (1982: 13) quotes the code watchword *Bená-vis ta kaliardá?*, 'Can you understand *Kaliardá*?', 'Are you gay?', and the usual answer to it *Ke ta tzinávo ke ta benávo*, 'I understand it and I speak it', where the verb *benávo*, 'to speak', is also derived from a Romani verb, *phenáv*, 'to say', 'to speak'. So all of this makes of *Kaliardá* a code and secret language understandable by only a few so characteristic of communities who live on the fringe of society.

Summing up, we have several names which give us an indication of the ethnic and professional origin of the jargon and of its secret status and unintelligible condition for the non-initiated. It is up now to the linguistic data to confirm or refute these first impressions.

3. THE LINGUISTIC DATA

The first time one approaches Petropoulos' *Kaliardá* dictionary with a linguistic critical eye one is immediately struck by two things: on the one hand, it is not *all Greek* to us because the grammatical system is just the Modern Greek one and there is nothing exotic about it. But, on the other hand, there is certainly a huge number of words of foreign origin, i.e. Italian, English and French, that make it unintelligible to a strictly monolin-

gual Greek speaker. Besides there are a number of words of allegedly unknown origin that are clearly Romani. As previously said, the aim of this paper is to measure the size of each borrowed lexical stock in order to establish the ethnic origin of the jargon. I can already anticipate that, by displaying words of a multiple origin, it does not square with the definition of a Para-Romani language, i.e. a language issued from the fact that speakers of Romani have shifted to another language and grammatical system, although maintaining their original lexicon, nor does it match up with Bakker's observation (Bakker-Van der Voort 1991: 40) about Para-Romani languages: «Para-Romani languages never contain elements from more than two languages». So, according again to Bakker, *Kaliardá* has to be considered a non-native secret language spoken by non-Gypsies: «The ethnic origin of the speakers of both types [Para-Romani and secret languages] is probably also different. Para-Romani languages are spoken by Gypsies and these secret languages are spoken by non-Gypsies» (Bakker-Van der Voort 1991: 40). However, this does not challenge my belief that at the outset *Kaliardá* was created necessarily in an environment familiar with Romani. It was coined most probably by Romani bilingual speakers, and only later must Greek speakers have got the hang of it and developed it further.

3.1. *Phonology*

Before discussing lexical matters, a few words on Greek and *Kaliardá* phonology. Although they exist in some regional varieties of the language, Standard Modern Greek lacks voiced and unvoiced palato-alveolar fricatives /ǵ/ and /š/ as well as affricates /dǵ/ and /tš/. These foreign phonemes are rendered by sibilant alveolar fricatives /z/ and /s/ and by the affricate clusters /dz/ and /ts/ respectively. Also voiced and unvoiced labial ([b] / [p]), dental ([d] / [t]) and velar stops ([g] / [k]) can be allophones in free variation as in Romani *bakró*, 'mouton', rendered in *Kaliardá* as *pagró*, 'hair'. This areal feature is also found in Turkish and Southern Italian dialects. Another common phenomenon in *Kaliardá*, as in all slangs and colloquial varieties around the world, is clipping. For instance, the very name of the jargon is clipped into *Liárda*, and *paparúna*, 'poppy', 'police officer', into *rúna*.

3.2. *Word count*

To measure each borrowed lexical stock in *Kaliardá* I counted and classified all the foreign words in the Petropoulos' dictionary according to

their origin. The dictionary contains over 3.000 headwords. It is my assumption that such a corpus is statistically representative enough of the whole jargon. However, the fact of not having been able to use any electronic device to do the count, together with the difficulties encountered in making a clear-cut decision on the origin of some of the words, could cast some shadow on the accuracy of the results. I estimate a rate of 2% to 3% a reasonable margin of error, i.e. about 60 to 90 words, but, even if this were to be the case, it should still not distort critically the significance of the results. Besides, whenever the origin of a word turned out to be too uncertain, I followed the default principle and considered it to be of Greek origin. Also, I did not count as different words different varieties of the same lexical item like *vuélo* for *avélo* or *kuélo* for *dikélo* nor did I include in my count Greek grammatical words like *ke*, 'and', and others.

Given the high frequency of compound words (*baló-múskulos*, 'muscled', from Romani *baló*, 'fat', and Italian *muscoloso*, 'muscled'), it appeared sensible not to lump them together with not compounded base words because compound words could well be made up of constituents of different origin and that would have biased the results. I also put in a different set derived words so as to get a fair idea of the basic word stock. I considered a derived word any one yielding a different word class (noun, verb, adjective), a different grammatical category (gender, number) or a diminutive or augmentative out of an underlying root word. The remaining entries are alternative spellings or alloforms, grammatical words, verbal forms, idiomatic expressions, and constructions with the compounding auxiliary verb *avélo*, and others, to be commented on later. So these are the four groups I classified Petropoulos' *Kaliardá* dictionary lexical stock in:

Base words	Compound words
Derived words	Other entries

These are the results:

Table 1: Rates of base, compound and derived words in *Kaliardá* classified according to their origin

Origin	Base words (non-derived)		Compounds (compound and base)		Derived words		Other entries		Total in the whole dictionary	
All non-Greek languages	355	50.71%	761	63.74%	336	60.32%				
Only Greek or unknown origin	345	49.29%	433	36.26%	221	39.68%				
Total	700	100%	1194	100%	557	100%				
Total rate in the whole dictionary	700	23.3%	1194	39.8%	557	18.5%	552	18.4%	3003	100%

Table 2: Origin of base words

<i>Romani</i>	52	7.43%
<i>Turkish</i>	32	4.57%
<i>Italian</i>	152	21.71%
<i>English</i>	54	7.71%
<i>French</i>	57	8.14%
<i>Spanish</i>	5	0.71%
<i>Albanian</i>	3	0.43%
All non-Greek languages	355	50.71%
Only Greek or unknown origin	345	49.29%
Total	700	100%

Table 3: Origin of compounding elements among the 761 non-Greek compound words and the 336 non-Greek derived ones

Origin	Non-derived compounds		Derived words	
Romani	405	39.32%	153	43.47%
Turkish	168	16.31%	36	10.23%
Italian	318	30.87%	105	29.83%
English	78	7.57%	32	9.09%
French	59	5.73%	22	6.25%

German	1	0.10%		
Albanian	1	0.10%	4	1.14%
Total	1030	100%	352	100%

3.3. *Foreign lexical stock*

The figures in table 1 speak for themselves. More than half of the base words are of foreign origin, i.e. 50.71% of all the base words. This is very significant. Among them Romani, English and French roughly score the same mark: 52 to 57 words, i.e. 7% to 8% of all foreign base words (cf. table 2). Unexpectedly the stock of Romani base words does not stand out above all other borrowing languages, but we shall see that the Romani contribution has its own specificity (cf. point 2.7). Italian stock will be commented on later too (cf. 2.8). As for Turkish (32, i.e. 4.57% of all foreign base words), this is a difficult case because, although some of *Kaliardá*'s Greek words have Turkish origin, they are part of the, at least up till twenty or thirty years ago, genuine Modern Greek lexicon and so I have considered many of them to be Greek, depending on their frequency of use in the standard language.

3.4. *Romani lexical stock: a first list*

Some of the *Kaliardá* base words of incontrovertible Romani origin are

<i>Kaliardá</i>	Meaning	Romani	Meaning
<i>Avélo / vuélo</i>	Auxiliary	<i>Aváv</i> , pf. <i>avíl</i>	To come; to be; to have
<i>Bangólos</i>	Deaf	<i>Bangó</i>	Bent, tilted, lopsided; lame, cripple
<i>Bangóla</i>	Myopic (fem.)	<i>Bangó</i>	Bent, tilted, lopsided; lame, cripple
<i>Balós</i>	Fat	<i>Baló</i>	Pig
<i>Barós</i>	Fat	<i>Pharó</i>	Heavy; hard, tiresome, difficult
<i>Baró (neut.)</i>	Disease	<i>Pharó</i>	Heavy; hard, tiresome, difficult
<i>Belé / Pelé</i>	Testicle	<i>Peló</i>	Testicle
<i>Benávo / buávo</i>	To speak	<i>Pbenáv</i>	To say, to speak
<i>Berdé</i>	Money	<i>Parnó</i> , pl. <i>-é</i>	White; money
<i>Bitzanú (fem.)</i>	Ravenous homosexual	<i>Bichináv</i>	To sell
<i>Buriáris</i>	Singer	<i>PuRív</i>	To give away; to blackmail sb.
<i>But</i>	A lot, very	<i>But</i>	A lot, very
<i>Dikélo / kuélo</i>	To look, to see	<i>Dikbláv</i> , pf. <i>dikbél</i>	To look, to see
<i>Hálo</i>	To eat	<i>Xav</i> , pf. <i>xal</i>	To eat
<i>Kakní</i>	Hen	<i>Khainí</i>	Hen

<i>Kuló</i>	Shit	<i>Kbul</i>	Shit
<i>Latsós</i>	Good, beautiful	<i>Lachó</i>	Good, beautiful
<i>Lubína / Lubumiá</i>	Homosexual	<i>Lubbní</i>	Prostitute
<i>Mandó</i>	Bread	<i>ManRó</i>	Bread
<i>Mol</i>	Water, liquid	<i>Mol</i>	Wine
<i>Mu(n)tzó</i>	Vagina	<i>Minch</i>	Vagina
<i>Pagró</i>	Hair; wool	<i>Bakró</i>	Mouton
<i>Pisélo</i>	To sleep	<i>Pasbláv</i>	To put to bed
<i>Púli</i>	Arse	<i>Bul</i>	Arse
<i>Purós</i>	Old man	<i>Pburó</i>	Old man
<i>Rélo</i>	Fart	<i>Rril</i>	Fart
<i>Tzáo</i>	To go, to leave	<i>Jav</i>	To go, to leave
<i>Tzinávo</i>	To understand	<i>Janáv; Djináv</i>	To know; to count, to read
<i>Tirabó</i>	Shoe	<i>Tiráx</i>	Boot
<i>Tsurnévo</i>	To steal, to rob	<i>Choráv</i>	To steal, to rob

3.5. *Composition and derivation*

Composition and derivation from non-Greek items are also striking: 761 and 336 words respectively, much higher than the score of Greek items, i.e. 433 and 221 respectively (cf. table 1). Romani-based secret languages not only have recourse to foreign lexical items, but use these rather than the host language's ones to derive and coin new words. This makes sense as the main objective of secret languages is to remain unintelligible to outsiders.

3.6. *Compounding and Modern Greek*

Almost 40% of the total lexical stock, more specifically 39.8% (cf. table 1), are non-derived compounds. I do not know the exact rate of compound words in colloquial Modern Greek, but all the same this is well over average. Compounding reveals itself as the most characteristic and productive *Kaliardá* linguistic feature. According to Mackridge (1985: 326), Demotic, i.e. spoken Modern Greek, is rich in compounding, although recent compound words tend to be based more on the learned tradition, i.e. ancient Greek. *Kaliardá* is probably the most radical and far reaching example of this demotic tendency. Compounding is a very powerful means to create new words. This is reason enough for studying this jargon from a linguistic point of view.

3.7. *Romani constituents: combinatory power and grammaticalisation*

As for the detailed figures about Romani, the divergence between the number of the Romani base words (52, cf. table 2) and that of the Romani compound (405) and derived (153) items (cf. table 3) is due to the high degree of repetitiveness of a handful of constituents, many of which could be considered to be on the way to grammaticalisation as deriving bound morphemes: an unrestricted number of compound words can be developed with a restricted number of constituents. And, although the Romani base word stock is weak, it has a greater combinatory power than any other lexical stock of a different origin and this is exploited to the full by the speakers of *Kaliardá*. Together with the constructions with the auxiliary verb *avélo* (cf. point 2.11) the Romani element makes up almost a quarter of the corpus.

The most frequent constituents are: *balo-*, 'fat', 'pig'; *baro-*, 'fat'; *kulo-*, 'shit'; *latso-*, 'beautiful'; *molo-*, 'liquid'; *mutzo-*, 'vagina'; *pagró-*, 'hair'; *pišelo-*, 'to sleep'; *pulo-*, 'arse'; *puro-/puros*, 'old'; *tzus-/tzas-*, 'flight', 'sacking', 'throwing away', from Romani *tzav*, 'to leave'; *tzinavo-*, 'to be gay'; *bal-*, 'food', etc.

3.8. *Italian data*

The high scores of Italian in derived, compound and base words also need an explanation. The fact that traditionally, previous to the infatuation for French among cultured groups, Italian was the main western European language in the cities of the old Ottoman Empire, spoken by the Levantines and enjoying great popularity, can probably account for these figures. Until recently Italian has been the language through which many modern western European words have been incorporated into Greek and Turkish. Also it might well be the case that there were different varieties of *Kaliardá*, one of which would contain more Italian words (cf. point 1).

Some Italian constituents are: *vivo-*, 'living', from Italian *vivo*, 'alive'; *groso-*, 'big', from Italian *grosso*, 'big'; *gran-*, 'big', from Italian *gran(de)*, 'big'; *lakrimo-*, 'tear', from Italian *lacrima*, 'tear'; *luto-*, 'light', from Italian *luce*, 'light, sunlight'. In any case Italian compounding elements are less repetitive than Romani ones and so appear to be less grammaticalized.

3.9. *Kaliardá in action: semantic change, neologisms, metaphor and speech play*

Speech play and conscious linguistic engineering are at the very base of *Kaliardá*: new words are created all the time, replacing the old ones or

modifying their original meaning. Many of these new words are metaphorical synonyms that involve a funny definition of the word or are based on a comic analogy. This replacement or relexification procedure is very common in Romani-based slangs.

As I mentioned before (cf. point 2.5), an interesting phenomenon about *Kaliardá* compound words is that they are often coined out of non-Greek material, but according to Greek patterns. So in some cases *Kaliardá* speakers just replace an existing Greek constituent by its Romani or Italian counterpart, as in say *palio-*, 'old', which is rendered either by *puro-*, from Romani *phuró*, 'old', or Italian *veko-*, from Italian *vecchio*, 'old'; or the intensifier Greek bound morpheme *theo-*, from *Theós*, 'God', which is rendered in *Kaliardá* with the English equivalent *godo-*, from *God*.

Pagró, 'hair', is a good example of the semantic shifts calqued on Greek undergone by Romani words. Modern Greek has the same homophonous word, *malí*, for 'human hair' and for 'long animal hair one can spin', i.e. 'wool' or 'fleece', although the first meaning is usually rendered in plural, *maliá*. As might be expected, the *Kaliardá* word has both meanings calqued on Greek. That is so much for the Greek contribution. As for the Romani one, 'wool' is not referred to by the corresponding Romani word, but by the producer of it, i.e. by the word for 'mouton', *bakró*. This kind of metaphorical transfer is indeed characteristic of *Kaliardá*.

The constituent *molo-* is again a good example of the linguistic engineering the creators of *Kaliardá* go in for. Originally the Romani word *mol* meant 'wine', but it was turned into meaning just what one could consider the opposite of it, i.e. 'water', as in the compound word *molóletra*, 'water company bill', from Romani *mol* and French *lettre* or Italian *lettera*, 'letter'. However, the *Kaliardá* verb *moliázo*, 'to get drunk', has preserved its primitive meaning, confusing the outsider even further.

This tendency inherited from Romani to replace old words with jokey neologisms is also applied to toponyms. Paris is called *Mutzótopos*, from Romani *mutzó*, 'vagina', and Greek *tópos*, 'place', but London is known as *Tzinavótopos*, from *Kaliardá* verb *tzinávo*, 'to be gay', and the same Greek constituent.

I shall discuss now three lexicalized expressions as an extreme illustration of all the mechanisms *Kaliardá* speakers make use of.

- (1) *but-gratsiozo*.

'Thank you' (I am thankful).

This word can be considered either a loose compound or a word derived from a lexicalized bilingual expression *but grazie*, from Romani *but*, ‘very’, and Italian *grazie*, ‘thank you’, plus Italian adjectival bound morpheme *-oso*. Notice though that either this morpheme is used agrammatically to make the word look like more Italian or the meaning of the Italian word *grazioso*, ‘graceful’, is wrongly believed to be derived from the expression *grazie*, ‘thank you’.

(2) *Kóza tímbo avêlis?*

What time Have: 2SG

‘What time have you got?’

On the other hand, in sentence (2), in spite of the fact that the Italian interrogative (*cbe*) *cosa*, ‘what’, is a pronoun, *kóza* has been agrammatically generalised in *Kaliardá* as an interrogative adjective or even as an all purpose interrogative word. This process reminds similar grammaticalizing phenomena found in creole languages. Also in this sentence the *Kaliardá* verb *avêlo* is not used as an auxiliary, but has one of its Romani lexical meanings, ‘to have’ (cf. point 2.11).

(3) *Kuláro Tin isándes prezánda.*

Defecate: 1SG ART. FEM. ACC POSS. 2SG. PL presence: ACC

‘F... you!’, ‘I f... Your Excellency!’

Finally, in sentence (3) *kuláro*, ‘to defecate’, comes from Romani *kbul*, ‘shit’, and Modern Greek verbalizing bound morpheme *-ar-*; *isándes*, ‘your’, is a Romani-based possessive; *prezánda*, from French *présence*, ‘presence’, or sociolinguistically most probably Italian *presenza*, ‘presence’, is a highfalutin agrammatical neologism coined by analogy with the Greek word *servánda* or *serván*, ‘sideboard’, borrowed from French *servante*, ‘sideboard’. In fact *-ánda* is not a very productive derivational morpheme, but might have an acoustic similarity with the colloquial and derogatory Greek morpheme of Italian origin *-ántza* as in *mastorántza*, ‘the building trades’, and *soferántza*, ‘the driving trade’, from French *chauffeur*. However, the interesting point about this new word is that *prezánda* is a *calque* of the Turkish and Arabic term *bazret*, ‘presence’, an honorific form of

address in those languages meaning ‘your awesome Presence, your Excellency’, but also a jockey synonym for ‘you’ in Turkish slang according to Aktunç (1990). This most probably brings to the mind of any Greek speaker the expression *i afendiâ* + clitic possessives, ‘Your Excellency’, used traditionally as a synonym of personal pronouns exactly in the same way as Turkish *hazret* + possessive suffixes. These expressions can be paralleled also to the grammaticalized Spanish and Portuguese personal pronouns *usted* and *voçê*, contractions of *vuestra merced* and *vossa micê*, ‘Your Worship’. But let’s trail step-by-step this amazing derivational pattern: in a first stage the *Kaliardâ* speaker would like to use a traditional Greek form of address for “you”, *i afendiâ* + clitic 2nd person possessive –either singular or plural, it does not matter (*sou/sas*)–, but in order to conceal the meaning of his words his mind goes to the equivalent Turkish expression, *hazret*, ‘presence, Excellency’. Now, being a bilingual person, he probably knows that the first meaning of this Turkish word is ‘presence’, as in the expression *birisinin hazretinde*, ‘in the presence of someone’, hence ‘before Your Excellency’, and so he makes consciously a fragmentary translation of it in Italian as *presenza*, ‘presence’, and wraps it up with a morpheme of French origin. So the meaning is Greek and Turkish, but the form is Italian and French. Obviously the result is complete nonsense to an outsider. This is precisely how *Kaliardâ* works. And what this linguistic manipulation leads one to believe is that *Kaliardâ* was born in a multilingual society, i.e. the Ottoman Empire, where all the languages spoken were just different manifestations of a common linguistic pattern allowing the speakers to skip from one to another. It is to be regretted that Petropoulos could not yield more real instances of this elucidatory slang.

3.10. *Compound words: some more examples*

Let’s see now some more examples of compound words representative of language intertwining and of all the metaphorical and ironical replacements carried out by *Kaliardâ*’s creators and users. The most common syntactico-semantic relation in *Kaliardâ* compound words is the modifier-head type (Adj + N, *balo-múskulos*, ‘muscled’, cf. table 4), but one can also find the object-predicate (O + V, *almo-biseliázo*, ‘to hypnotize’, see next table), predicate-object (V + O, *tzas-moliázo*, ‘to sweat’, cf. table 4) type, or the appositive one (N + N, *lutso-lákrimo*, ‘candle’, cf. table 5). All the examples are from Petropoulos’ dictionary, with indication of the Romani etymology where appropriate.

<i>Table 5: Compound words</i>			
<i>Modifier-head type, either A + N (4 to 8), N + N (9 to 11) or V + N (12):</i>			
(1)	<i>balomúskulos</i>	'muscled'	Kaliardá <i>balós</i> , 'fat', by analogy with Romani <i>baló</i> , 'pig', and Italian <i>muscularo</i> , 'muscular'.
(2)	<i>ilektropopilóbuso</i>	'trolleybus'	Neologism from Greek <i>ilektrikó</i> , 'electricity', Italian <i>popolo</i> , 'people', and English <i>bus</i> . <i>Popilóbuso</i> alone means 'bus'.
(3)	<i>latsokangéla</i>	'gold'	Romani <i>lachó</i> , 'good', and Kaliardá <i>kángelo</i> , 'metal', semantic widening of Greek <i>kángelo</i> , 'iron bar'.
(4)	<i>latsotémba</i>	'summer', 'fine weather'	Romani <i>lachó</i> , 'good', and Italian <i>tempo</i> , 'time, weather', calque from Greek <i>kalokéri</i> , 'summer' (<i>kalós</i> , 'good', and <i>kerós</i> , 'weather').
(5)	<i>sodomolú</i>	'champagne'	By analogy with common <i>soda</i> and Romani <i>mol</i> , 'wine'.
(6)	<i>tzastirabosekéri</i>	'poison'	Three constituent word compounded of the expressive Kaliardá idiom <i>tzázo ta tirabá</i> , 'to throw away your boots', i.e. 'to die', from Kaliardá <i>tzázo</i> , 'to send away', causative semantic widening of Romani <i>jav</i> , 'to leave', Romani <i>tiráx</i> , 'boot', and Turkish <i>sbekeer</i> , 'sugar', i.e. 'killing sugar, poison'.
(7)	<i>xalemandómbomba</i>	'tin of food'	Italian <i>bomba</i> , 'bomb' and Kaliardá <i>xalemandé</i> , 'food', coined from the perfect stem of the Romani verb <i>xal</i> , 'to eat', and the hellenizing Kaliardá plural noun <i>balémata</i> , 'food', with fictitious pseudo-French colloquial derivational morpheme <i>-ndé</i> .
(8)	<i>tzinavókosmos</i>	'the world of gay men'	Determinative compound from Kaliardá <i>tzinávo</i> , 'to understand', and Greek <i>kósmos</i> , 'world'.
<i>Object-predicate/predicate-object type, either O + V (13 to 15) or V + O (16):</i>			
(9)	<i>almobiseliázo</i>	'to hypnotize'	Literary Italian <i>alma</i> , 'soul', and Kaliardá <i>pisélo</i> , 'to sleep', derived from Romani <i>pasbláv</i> , 'to put to bed'. Notice that /p/ and /b/ can be allophonic (cf. 2.1).
(10)	<i>animatsúrnos</i>	'death'	Italian <i>anima</i> , 'soul', and Romani <i>chor</i> , 'thief'. The word is actually derived from the <i>Kaltardá</i> verb <i>tsurnévo</i> , 'to steal', 'to rob', where <i>-n-</i> is the present stem marker preserved though in nominal derivation.
(11)	<i>pánbalo</i>	'autumn'	Greek <i>pan</i> , 'everything', and Romani <i>xav</i> , 'to eat', 'because of the seasonal fruit abundance' according to Petropoulos (1982: 120).
(12)	<i>tzasmoliázo</i>	'to sweat'	Romani <i>jav</i> , 'to leave', and Kaliardá <i>mol</i> , 'water', unexpected semantic evolution from Romani <i>mol</i> ,

'wine' (cf. 2.9).

Appositive type, N + N:

- (13) *lusalákrimo* 'candle' Lyric analogy with Italian *luce*, 'light', and *lacrima*, 'tear'.

3.11. *The compounding auxiliary verb 'avélo': an all purpose device*

Kaliardá is often said to lack verbs. In fact it has a very productive way of creating new verbs through compounding mostly with a noun, but also with an adjective or a verbal stem attached to the delexicalized auxiliary verb *avélo* or its synonym *vuélo*, derived from the perfect tense *avil* of the Romani verb *aváv*, 'to come', 'to be', 'to have' (Boretzky 1997). Notice that this is not the only *Kaliardá* verb derived from the Romani perfect form. We also have *dikélo*, 'to see', and *bálo*, 'to eat'. This may well be a general Greek borrowing tendency as most Turkish verbs are also derived from the perfect form. As for the semantics of these verbal compounds, they contain no overt aspectual marker and so it is very difficult to find out whether they designate an activity, a state or an achievement. Judging by the translations in Petropoulos's dictionary, their meaning will depend on that of the noun or adjective attached to them, but in some doubtful cases it will have a high degree of conventionality and arbitrariness and will depend on the pragmatic context. In fact *avélo* should be considered a general and loose verbalizing morpheme with no specific aspectual meaning. Its use can actually be paralleled with that of the delexicalized Greek verb *káno*, 'to do', or even more with that of the Turkish auxiliary *etmek*, 'to do', but *avélo* has certainly gone further in its extension of use. This is probably due to the wide functional range of its Romani ancestry *aváv*, but also to the fact that the jargon was adopted by non-Gypsy speakers. This extension of use is again a grammaticalizing process not unknown in the formation of creole languages and it might suggest that linguistically the difference between a non-native secret jargon and other native linguistic breeds could be a scalar one, or that these linguistic formations may well be genetically related.

As it has already been said, Petropoulos gathers in his dictionary 112 compound verbs, i.e. 3.73% of the whole dictionary. This raises the total score of headwords with Romani elements in them up to a quarter of the dictionary (cf. point 2.7). Some examples of these compound verbs are as follows:

<i>Table 6: Compound verbs</i>			
<i>Denominal verbs:</i>			
(1)	<i>avélo kulá</i>	'to defecate'	Romani <i>kbul</i> , 'shit'.
(2)	<i>avélo rélo</i>	'to fart'	Romani <i>Rril</i> , 'fart'.
(3)	<i>avélo katólia</i>	'to cry'	Kaliardá <i>katólia</i> , 'tears', of unknown origin.
(4)	<i>avélo bládo</i>	'to have monthlies'	English <i>blood</i> .
(5)	<i>avélo trómba</i>	'to inject oneself a drug'	Drug addiction slang <i>trómba</i> , 'injection', probably of Italian origin (<i>tromba</i> , 'trumpet' and 'trumpet-like object', hence <i>syringe</i>).
(6)	<i>avélo biesmán</i>	'to make overtures to sb'	Kaliardá <i>biesmán</i> and <i>piasmán</i> , action nouns derived from the aorist stem <i>piáso</i> of the Greek verb <i>piáno</i> 'to grasp'.
(7)	<i>avélo dézi</i>	'to get sexually aroused'	Clipped Italian noun <i>desiderio</i> , 'wish'.
(8)	<i>avélo berdé</i>	'to pay'	Kaliardá <i>berdé</i> , 'money', derived from Romani <i>par-né</i> , 'white (coin)'.
(9)	<i>avélo opsión berdé</i>	'to have money'	French <i>option</i> , 'option' and <i>berdé</i> (cf. previous).
<i>Deadjectival verbs:</i>			
(10)	<i>avélo marmarú</i>	'to wait'	<i>Kaliardá</i> feminine adjective <i>marmarú</i> , coined out of Greek <i>mármara</i> , 'marble'.
(11)	<i>avélo normál</i>	'to fall prone'	Highly covert and conventionalized meaning from French <i>normal</i> , by analogy with the "normal" position in sexual intercourse.
<i>Deverbal verbs:</i>			
(12)	<i>avélo kloz</i>	'to close'	English stem of the verb <i>to close</i> or of the adjective <i>closed</i> .
(13)	<i>avélo tzóka</i>	'to play'	Italian stem of the verb <i>gioccare</i> , 'to play'.
(14)	<i>avélo skríva</i>	'to write'	Italian stem of the verb <i>scrivere</i> , 'to write'.
(15)	<i>vuélo tza</i>	'to leave'	Romani stem of the verb <i>jav</i> , 'to go', 'to leave'.

Numbers 1 to 6 and 13 to 15 designate undeniably activities. As for the rest of the examples, it is not so clear. One of the meanings of Romani

aváv is 'to have' as in sentence (2), but I do not see any particular reason why (8) *avélo berdé* should mean 'to pay', and (9) *avélo opsión berdé*, 'to have money'. It is highly probable that their meaning may depend on the pragmatic context in which they are used. This is also the case of the very specific (11) *avélo normál*, 'to fall prone', which is probably used to describe any achievement or activity carried out in a "normal" position. On the other hand, (10) *avélo marmarú*, 'to wait', and (12) *avélo kloz*, 'to close', are both translated in Petropoulos's dictionary as activities, but *avélo marmarú* could as well be interpreted as a state or as a change of state and mean something like 'to be made of marble' or 'to become like marble', and *avélo kloz* could make reference either to the activity of *closing* or to the state of *being closed*. As for (7) *avélo dézi*, 'to get sexually aroused', my feeling is that it could equally be used with a stative or with a causative meaning. Finally, the second element in the deverbal verbs could be as well a newly coined verbal noun, in which case these verbs should be considered denominal.

3.12. *On pronouns*

As for personal pronouns, interestingly enough they are all of Romani origin, as all other non-Greek grammatical features in *Kaliardá*. In any case Romani pronouns are very easily integrated into slangs and Para-Romani languages. *Emándes*, 'I', and *imándes*, 'we', are derived from Romani oblique *mande*, 'I', and *amende*, 'we', by phonetic analogy with Greek *emís*, 'we'. *Esándes*, 'you' (sg.), and *isándes*, 'you' (pl.) and possessive 'your' (sg./pl.), are formed by analogy with the first person *Kaliardá* pronouns and the Greek ones *esí*, 'you' (sg.), and *esís*, 'you' (pl.). *Mandúla*, 'I', and *sandúla*, 'you' (sg.), are derived forms with the Greek feminine diminutive *-úla*.

3.13. *Range of use*

Kaliardá is a very specialized "professional" jargon for male prostitutes, rather limited when talking about matters other than carnal trade between male homosexuals. According to Petropoulos, it has at its disposal around 40 different words for different kinds of gay men, as well as many synonyms to describe sexual organs and practices. However poor this terminological restrictedness might be, it evinces an amazing sociological knowledge of men and the gay world.

4. A SOCIOLINGUISTIC OUTLOOK

We saw that *Kaliardá* must have been generated in a Romani speaking environment. The point now is why this initially Romani-based jargon specialized in Greece and Turkey (Kyuchukov-Bakker 1999) in a gay slang and what the relationship among the Greek and Turkish homosexuals and the Rom speakers was. Those are questions that go beyond the scope of this paper, but we can still make some guesses. Camaraderie among men seems to have always been encouraged in the Eastern Mediterranean as long as it did not end up in exclusive homosexuality. But even in a somehow permissive society like the Ottoman one in matters related to masculine homosexuality², the only men who could display their exclusive homosexuality openly must have been the most marginalized, and obviously the freest, social groups, among whom figured the Rom. But even in this case homosexuality was displayed publicly in a fringe and stigmatized fashion, i.e. through prostitution and transvestism, activities that the conventional sectors of society could easily identify as alien to them. The sexual trade, as well as any other despised activity like the one performed by ironmongers, buskers or tavern musicians, was inevitably mainly reserved to those out-cast groups. The linguistic features of *Kaliardá*, or the alternative names of it, prove that the culture medium in which this secret professional jargon developed must have been bilingual Rom groups keen on playing with speech and on intertwining and modifying language for fun and for the pleasure and the hilarity that the fact of not being understood by outsiders provokes. Interestingly, both gay men and Roms are well known for their wit and humour and for their tendency to distort received language as a way to face the conventionalisms of society. Pushing the question still further one could wonder why there are no other Romani-based gay secret jargons in Europe outside Greece and Turkey (and perhaps the Balkans, although for the moment we have no evidence of that). The fact that both these jargons are very akin suggests that there is something specific about the late Ottoman Empire in this domain, but that is a matter for sociologists and historians to explain.

² I am particularly thankful to Alberto Conejero, who is working on a PhD dissertation on rebetiko songs, for drawing my attention to reported homosexual practices among sufi brotherhoods and janissary clans.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Kaliardá presents a number of linguistic features. The most striking one is the importance of composition and the high number of lexical items of non-Greek origin. As for the question of if *Kaliardá* is a mixed Gypsy language, i.e. a Para-Romani language developed from the fact that speakers of Romani have shifted to another language grammatical system, the answer must be a negative one in view of its multilingual lexical stock. It is rather a non-native slang consciously created through speech play and metaphorical transfer, where borrowed Romani lexical material represents about a quarter of the lexicon. Also the Romani element is structurally the most important one in the word formation subsystem: composition and derivation are highly developed from Romani constituents, more than from any other lexical stock, and a huge number of compound verbs are created through the use of the Romani auxiliary *avélo* plus a noun, an adjective or a verbal stem. Personal pronouns also are of Romani origin. Finally, *Kaliardá* has inherited from Romani the indiscriminate tendency of its speakers to coin new words through metaphorical association in a vast replacing or relexifying process of the standard lexicon that covers even toponyms. However, this kind of replacement is not exactly the same as the one carried out in the development of a Para-Romani language, where in principle there are no new words coined. My claim is that *Kaliardá* was born in a bilingual environment connected with male prostitution in which the Rom speakers had a leading role in laying the lexical and derivational foundations of the jargon. Subsequently it must have been enriched with other foreign lexical stock, the main one being Italian due to its status in the Ottoman big cities. The French and the English contribution must have entered the jargon at a much later date. It is probable that in the beginning *Kaliardá* had a very much bigger Romani vocabulary, but that it was progressively lost as the jargon was generalizing among homosexuals and losing contact with its Romani lexical sources.

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