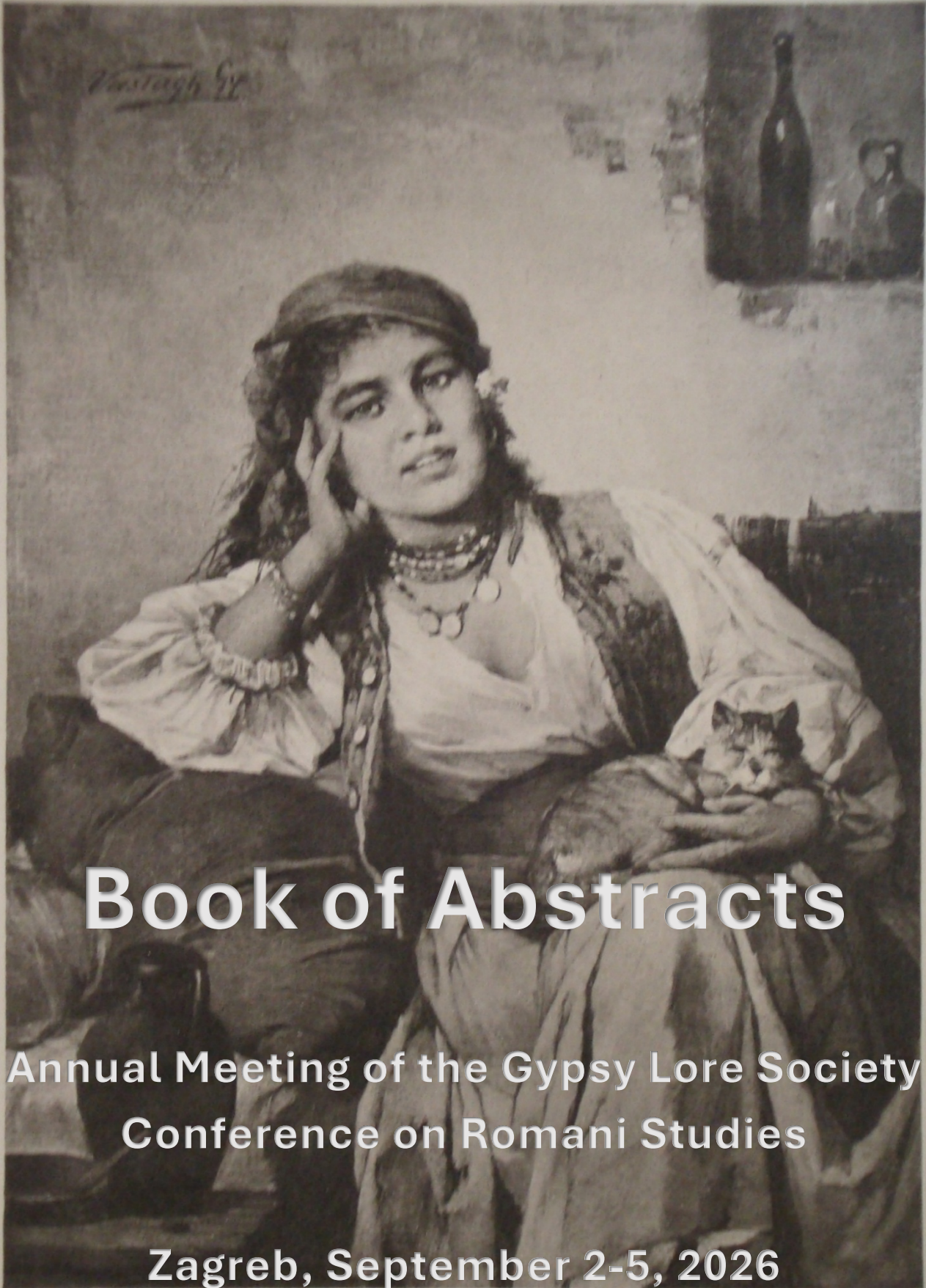




Book of Abstracts

Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society
Conference on Romani Studies

Zagreb, September 2-5, 2026

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**2026 GYPSY LORE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING AND
CONFERENCE ON ROMANI STUDIES
ZAGREB**

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



GYPSY LORE SOCIETY
— Z A G R E B 2 0 2 6 —

2026 Gypsy Lore Society Annual Meeting and Conference on Romani Studies
– Book of Abstracts

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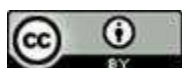
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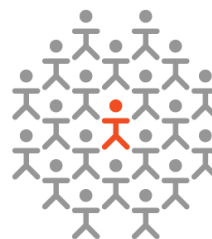


Sveučilište u Zagrebu
Filozofski fakultet

University of Zagreb
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences



THE CROATIAN ROMANI UNION
"KALI SARA"



**Institute of Ethnology
and Social Anthropology**
Slovak Academy of Sciences

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INTRODUCTION

GYPSY LORE SOCIETY, ITS ANNUAL MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

The Gypsy Lore Society, an international association of people interested in Gypsy and Traveler Studies, was founded in Great Britain in 1888. Its conferences are among the most significant annual scholarly events devoted to Romani Studies worldwide. Each year the event takes place in a different country and is organised by the Gypsy Lore Society in cooperation with local academic institutions.

The research field of the Gypsy Lore Society has traditionally included many different communities which, regardless of their origins and self-appellations in various languages, have been referred to in English as Gypsies. These communities include the descendants of migrants from the Indian subcontinent which have been considered as falling into three large subdivisions, Dom, Lom, and Rom. The field has also included communities of other origins which practice, or in the past have practiced, a specific type of service nomadism. The breadth of the Society's interests is reflected in the articles published in its journal and papers presented at its conferences.

The goals of the Gypsy Lore Society include promotion of the study of these communities, their history and cultures worldwide; dissemination of accurate information aimed at increasing understanding of them in their diverse forms; and establishment of closer contacts among scholars studying any aspects of these cultures.

The Society sponsors programs and conferences and publishes the twice-yearly *Romani Studies* (continuing *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*) and other occasional publications. The Society established the Victor Weybright Archives of Gypsy Studies, a research collection specializing in recent scholarly work on Gypsy, Travellers and related studies, for the benefit of researchers and students. This collection, compiled from 1978 to 2012, is now the Gypsy Lore Society Victor Weybright Archives of Gypsy Studies collection within the Special Collections division of the Michigan State University Libraries. Earlier collections of the Gypsy Lore Society, 1888-1974, can be found at the University of Liverpool.

Gypsy Lore Society meetings are held on an annual basis and are rotated among different countries. Meetings typically include presentations of recent research, discussion sessions, exhibits and films. Gypsy Lore Society members receive discounts on meeting registration fees.

PREVIOUS GLS CONFERENCES 1979–2026

Year	Dates	Location
1979	3 February	Montclair State College, Montclair NJ, USA
1980	2 February	Montclair State College, Montclair NJ, USA
1981	7-8 February	Wagner College, Staten Island NY, USA
1982	6-7 February	Wagner College, Staten Island NY, USA
1983	11-13 March	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, USA
1984	24-26 February	Wagner College, Staten Island NY, USA
1985	15-17 February	National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC
1986	21-23 February	Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA
1987	26-28 March	University of California, Los Angeles, USA
1988	25-27 March	Wagner College, Staten Island NY, USA
1989	7-9 April	University of Toronto, Canada
1990	30 March - 1 April	Wagner College, Staten Island NY, USA
1991	19-21 July	Leicester Polytechnic, Leicester, United Kingdom
1992	13-15 March	Harvard University, Boston MA, USA
1993	28-30 May	Catholic University of America, Washington DC, USA
1994	1-2 April	University of California, Los Angeles, USA
1995	29-31 May	National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, The Netherlands
1996	28-30 March	New School for Social Research, New York NY, USA
1997	25-27 April	Boston University, Boston MA, USA
1998	27-28 March	University of Texas - Arlington, USA
1999	28-29 June	University of Florence, Italy
2000	11-12 August	Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA
2001	no meeting	
2002	6-7 September	Minority Research Institute at Hungarian Academy, Budapest, Hungary
2003	30-31 May	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, USA
2004	3-4 September	University of Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom
2005	9-10 September	Universidad de Granada, Spain
2006	2-3 June	University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, USA
2007	6-8 September	University of Manchester, United Kingdom
2008	28-30 August	Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA
2009	27-29 August	University of Helsinki, Finland
2010	8-10 September	Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal
2011	1-3 September	European Centre for Modern Languages, Graz, Austria
2012	19-22 September	Istanbul, Turkey
2013	11-12 September	University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, United Kingdom
2014	11-13 September	Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Slovakia
2015	10-12 September	Academy of Sciences of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova
2016	14-16 September	Södertörn University, Stockholm, Sweden
2017	30 August - 1 Sept	University of Cyprus, Nicosia
2018	4-7 September	Bucharest, Romania
2019	15-17 August	Reykjavík, Iceland
2020	no meeting	

2021	8-10 September	Prague, Czech Republic
2022	28-30 September	Belgrade, Serbia
2023	3-6 October	São Paulo, Brazil
2024	25-27 September	Sofia, Bulgaria
2025	23-26 September	Paris, France
2026	2-5 September	Zagreb, Croatia

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Dates: 2-4 September 2026

Excursion: 5 September 2026: guided visit to Uštica / Jasenovac Memorial Site

Venue 1: Rooms D1, D4, D5, and D7. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Address: Ulica Ivana Lučića 3, 10000 Zagreb:

Venue 2: Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar
Address: Marulićev trg 19/1, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

Venue 3: The Institute for Migration Research
Address: Trg Stjepana Radića 3, 10000 Zagreb

Day 0 — Tuesday, 1 September 2026, 17.00

Annual Meeting of the GLS Board of Directors

Venue: Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Marulićev trg 19/1, 10000 Zagreb

Day 1 — Wednesday, 2 September 2026

Time	Room D7	Room D1	Room D5	Room D4
08:00–09:00	REGISTRATION			
09:00–11:00	Official opening of the conference (Room D7) Addresses by Tatiana Zachar Podolinská, GLS President; Huseyin S. Kyuchuk and Lilyana Kovacheva, GLS Vice-Presidents; The Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia Ministry of Science, Education and Youth Željko Holjevac (Director; Institute of Social Science Ivo Pilar, Zagreb) Domagoj Tončinić (Dean; University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zagreb) Marina Perić Kaselj (Director; The Institute for Migration Research, Zagreb) Veljko Kajtazi (The Croatian Romani Union "Kali Sara", Zagreb) Danijel Vojak (Institute of Social Science Ivo Pilar, Zagreb)			
11:00–11:30	Opening of the exhibition "The History of Romani Studies in Croatia."			
11:30–12:00	COFFEE BREAK			
12:00–13:00	Plenary session (Room D7): Carol Silverman, <i>Recentring Romani Music: Negotiating Heritage, Profession and Advocacy</i>			
13:00–14:30	LUNCH			
14:30–15:00	Panel: Ethnography, Customs and Rituals Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov. <i>The Romani Kris and Social Media in Postmodern Society: The Case of the Post-Soviet Space and Bulgaria</i>	Panel: Late-Peripatetic Adaptations in the Age of Global Modernity Egemen Yılğır. <i>The Concept of Late Peripatetics and Adaptive Varieties</i>	PANEL: PRECARIOUS INCLUSIONS: Labor, Performance, Representation, and Activism among Romani Musicians in Central/Southeastern Europe and Turkey — Session 1: Nations, Markets, and Media Dominika Moravčíková. <i>The Non-Journey of Others: Temporal Politics and Outsider Exploration of Romani Music in Manuša</i>	Panel: Education, labour market Stefania Toma. <i>Between Inclusion and Reproduction: Roma School Mediators and Policy Bricolage in Romania</i>
15:00–15:30	Ahmad Sawas Najjar, <i>Historical References to Romani Normative Structures, Leaders, and Internal Organization, with Special Regard to the Legal Mechanisms and Principles of Romani Customary Law</i>	Albeniz Tuğçe Ezme Gürlek. <i>A Late-Peripatetic Community In The Shadow Of Neoliberal Urbanization: The Narrative Of The Abdals Of Bağbaşı, Kirşehir (Türkiye)</i>	Jelka Vukobratović. <i>Romani Musicians in the Interwar Yugoslav Record Industry</i>	Stefan Ivanco. <i>Exploring the trajectories and coping strategies of Roma in securing work in the current labour market in Slovakia</i>
15:30–16:00	Ion Duminica. <i>The trinitary value axis of the essential needs for itinerant Roma blacksmiths from the Republic of Moldova: the Horse, the Anvil and the Wife</i>	Annika Schmeding. <i>Necro-Ostracism: Late-Peripatetic Burial, Belonging, and Social Exclusion in Urban Afghanistan</i>	Mojca Piškor. <i>Wavering Degrees of Separation: Romani Musicians and the Changing Social Worlds of Interwar Croatia</i>	Norbert Tóth. <i>Social integration and local tradition set of Roma youth in Hungary</i>
16:00–16:30	COFFEE BREAK			
16:30–17:00		Panel: The Boyash/Rudari Today Petar Radosavljević, Petra Rajić Šikanjić. <i>Funerary Customs of the Boyash Roma in Croatia: Preliminary Results</i>	PANEL: PRECARIOUS INCLUSIONS: Labor, Performance, Representation, and Activism among Romani Musicians in Central/Southeastern Europe and Turkey — Session 1: Nations, Markets, and Media Dominika Moravčíková. <i>The Non-Journey of Others: Temporal Politics and Outsider Exploration of Romani Music in Manuša</i>	Gábor Biczó – Henriett Szabó. <i>The Demystification of Determinism: Sociocultural Backgrounds of Members of the Roma Colleges for Advanced Studies Network in Hungary</i>
17:00–17:30		Ivana Olujić, Petar Radosavljević, <i>Is there a Boyash literature in Croatia/ Postoji li bajaška književnost u Hrvatskoj?</i>	Sonia Seeman. <i>Hidden in Plain View: Turkish Roman Musicians and Affective Musical Labor</i>	Lili Kriston. <i>Reflected Participation: Ethics, Positionality, and Activist Research in Romani Cultural Practice</i>

19.30. Welcome dinner, Restaurant "Pri zvoncu" (address: Ul. Vrbik XII 1, 10000, Zagreb). Optional.

Day 2 — Thursday, 3 September 2026

Time	Room D4	Room D5	Institute of Migration	Ivo Pilar — Multimedia Hall	Ivo Pilar — Council Chamber
09:00– 09:30	Panel: Roma and Christianity Diethard Sawicki. <i>Protestant Mission Efforts towards Gypsy/Roma Communities (17th–21st Centuries)</i>		Panel: National legislation and local practices towards accommodating Gypsies/Travellers in England 1960–2010 David Smith and Sophie Cook. <i>Introduction</i>	Panel: Forgotten places of mass crimes against Roma: Culture of remembrance of Roma victims of genocide Danijel Vojak and Stephane Laederich. <i>Distortions on the Genocide of the Roma in Media and Social Media</i>	Panel: Romani Literature as Empowerment Literature Marina Ortrud M. Hertrampf. <i>Opening note: Romani Literature as Empowerment Literature</i>
09:30– 10:00	Tatiana Zachar Podolinská. <i>The Pillars of Faith: Missionary Strategies of the Charismatic Branch of the Greek Catholic Mission among Roma in Slovakia</i>		Miranda Millan. <i>Case Study One: Ealing</i>	Anna Mišková. <i>From Invisible to Institutionalised: Memorials of the holocaust of Roma and Sinti in the Czech Republic</i>	Edina Kampmann. “Smoky Faces”: <i>Semantic Ambiguity and the Negotiation of Identity in Menyhért Lakatos’s Füstös képek (1975)</i>
10:00– 10:30	Melody J. Wachsmuth. <i>Pentecostal Mission in Transnational Migration: The case of Serbian Roma</i>		David Smith. <i>Case Study Two: Maidstone</i>	Petre Matei. <i>The Deportation of Roma to Transnistria in the Context of Romania’s Genocidal Policies (1942–1944)</i>	Ana Belén Martín Sevillano. <i>Intersecting Sound and Literary Studies: the Inscription of Singing as Romani Literature</i>
10:30– 11:00	COFFEE BREAK				
11:00– 11:30	Panel: Roma and Christianity (continued) Juraj Majo. <i>Minority within a Minority: How Roma Are Welcomed—or Not Welcomed—Within the Largest Protestant Body in Slovakia, the Lutheran Church</i>		PANEL: PRECARIOUS INCLUSIONS: Labor, Performance, Representation, and Activism among Romani Musicians in Central/Southeastern Europe and Turkey — Session 3: Romani Music at the Interface of the Local and Global: Communities, Symbols, and Markets Ali Egi and Huseyin S. Kyuchuk. <i>Playing Together, Living Apart: Thematic Patterns and Cultural Acceptance of Romani Music (Roman Havasi) In Türkiye</i>	Panel: Forgotten places of mass crimes against Roma: Culture of remembrance of Roma victims of genocide (continued) Filip Škiljan. <i>Oral History as a Method for Researching the Suffering of Roma during the Second World War.</i>	Panel: Romani Literature as Empowerment Literature (continued) Karolína Ryvolová. <i>Where to Now? The impact of the existence of an exclusively Romani publishing house on both the growth and dissemination of Romani writing and the topography of the mainstream literary field</i>
11:30– 12:00	Magdalena Slavkova. <i>Evangelising Difference: Ethnicity, Language, and Power among Early Pentecostal Roma in Bulgaria</i>		Mark Forry. <i>Romani tambura musicians at the Tamburica Fest in Deronje (northern Serbia): commercial offerings and social media</i>	Panel: Politics Tamás Attila Hajnáczy. <i>Gypsy Correspondence. Historical sources from Gypsies, with and without “Roma voices”</i>	Panel: Roma in historical and anthropological research (panel in Romani language) Dana Ema Hrušková. <i>Romani Solidarity in Practice: Humanitarian Aid Provided by Czech Roma to Ukrainian Roma in 2022</i>
12:00– 12:30	Kinga Povedák. <i>Sonic Agency and the Reconfiguration of Sensory Regimes in Roma Vernacular Religious Practices</i>		Aleksandra Aleksandrović. <i>Melody, Dance, and Cultural Memory: Variants of Traditional Melody “Cigančica” in Vojvodina, Serbia</i>	Rumyan Russinov. <i>Roma Movement in Bulgaria, the Civic Sector, and Governmental Policy toward Roma after the Political Transformation of 1989</i>	Daniel Petrovski. <i>Codification Of Stereotypes About Roma In Yugoslav Lexicography: From Oral Tradition To Contemporary Representation</i>
12:30– 14:00	LUNCH				
14:00– 14:30	István Povedák. <i>Between Doctrine and Cosmology: Vernacular Authority in Roma Religious Practice</i>	Dalibor Danko. <i>Negotiating Exclusion: Romani Musicians, Trade Unions, and the Regulation of the Bandleading Trade in Interwar Czechoslovakia (1918–1938)</i>	Panel: Historiography & Methodology & Media Ali Egi. <i>Mapping the Margins: A Semi-Systematic Review of Romani Studies in Turkish Academia</i>	Panel: Politics (continued) Martin Kovats. <i>Inequality and the Politicisation of Roma Identity</i>	Vesna Delić. “A Godmother Is Not a Button!” – <i>An Anthropologist Among the Roma</i>
14:30– 15:00	Ryoko Sachi-Noro. <i>One Faith, Many Forms: Roma</i>	Ayako Iwatani. <i>Connecting through Groove: Manele and Imaginative</i>	Punita G. Singh. <i>What do Indians know about their Romani kin? — Insights from a survey across generations</i>	Panel: Roma slavery Viorel Achim. <i>Labour and Taxation of the Gypsy Slaves in the</i>	Markéta Hajská. <i>Romani Language in the Collaborative and Participative Anthropological Research</i>

	<i>Pentecostalism in France and Romania</i>	<i>Empathy among the Romanian Roma and Beyond</i>	<i>and review of their sources of information and misinformation</i>	<i>Romanian Principalities in the Era of Emancipation</i>	
15:00–15:30	Jana Belišová. <i>The Body Between Ecstasy and Discipline: Embodiment, Habitus, and Performativity in Musical and Dance Expressions of Roma Christian Communities</i>	Ewa Nowicka and Maciej Witkowski. <i>Prospects for the Recognition of Indigenous Romani Identity in Polish Society</i>	Gatha Rajagopal. <i>Translating Caste into Race: Colonial Epistemologies and Aryan Thought in the Racialisation of Romani Lives in Britain and Beyond</i>	George Damian Mocanu. <i>The Abolition of Slavery in the Romanian Principalities in Global Context: Gradual Emancipation and Reform</i>	Iveta Kokyová. <i>Stories That Become Insights: Trust, Trauma, and Ethical Challenges in Research with Romani Women</i>
15:30–16:00	COFFEE BREAK				
16:00–16:30	Csaba Oláh. <i>Ethnic and Religious Identity among Roma Jehovah's Witnesses in Hungary</i>	Panel: Anthropology and Ethnography Kai Åberg. <i>Narratives of Otherness and Counter-Narratives: Karelian and Romani Identity in Finnish Film and Social Media</i>		Panel: Roma slavery (continued) Julieta Rotaru. <i>Roma slavery or Karl Marx and the unilinear reconstruction of the transition from slavery to servitude in Romanian historiography?</i>	Simina Neagu and Delia Spatareanu. <i>From Policy Silence to Co-Production: Reframing Roma Ageing in UK Place-Based Health Policy</i>
16:30–17:00	Helena Varga and Lili Kriston. <i>Hallgató and Gospel: Re-ethnicization and lived religion in Romani musical practice (paper and workshop)</i>	Sanni Lindroos. <i>Reclaiming Rosita: Finnish Romani Creative Resistance Across Digital Platforms</i>			Milada Závodská and Lada Víková. <i>The Roma in Uzhhorod during the Interwar Period as Citizens of Czechoslovakia (Specific Features and Parallels with Other Roma Communities in Czechoslovakia 1918–1938)</i>
19:30–21:00	Visit to the Union of Roma in the Republic of Croatia "Kali Sara"				

Day 3 — Friday, 4 September 2026

Time	Room D7	Room D4	Room D5
09:00–09:30	Panel: Romani language and arts (panel in Romani language) Jan Červenka. <i>How to enrich Romani for new language domains: the mechanisms used in neologism creation</i>	Panel: Language, education & translation Debbie Folaron. <i>Translation & Interpreting Studies (TIS): What is it and how can it be useful for Romani Studies?</i>	
09:30–10:00	Sofiya Zahova. <i>Early Romani Literature: Visibility and Interpretation</i>	Martin Gális. <i>Work in progress: Some notes on Field Research in Slovak Romani Communities</i>	Panel: Prejudices and discrimination & marginalisation Maria Manuela Mendes. <i>Populism(s) and anti-Gypsyism in Portugal</i>
10:00–10:30	Huseyin Kyuchuk. <i>Linguistic Analyses of Romani Iljahi Performed by Dervish Roma Of Kosovo And North Macedonia</i>	Kamila Kamala Galjuš. <i>Translating Romani Children's Literature: A Challenge or an Opportunity?</i>	Veronika Bocsi. <i>Patterns Of Prejudice in Hungary – With Special Regard to Prejudice Against Roma People</i>
10:30–11:00	COFFEE BREAK		
11:00–11:30	Panel: Romani language and arts (panel in Romani language) (continued) Lilyana Kovacheva. <i>The Development of the Romani Language through the Translation of Academic Texts</i>	Panel: Oral history / memory studies / nomadism Jekatyerina Dunajeva. <i>Narrating Transformation: Roma Experiences of the Last Socialist Decade and Regime Change</i>	Panel: Prejudices and discrimination & marginalisation (continued) Muhtadi Alabyadh. <i>Social Exclusion and Educational Marginalization of Gypsies in Diwaniyah (Al-Qadissiya) Governorate, Iraq: A Qualitative Study</i>
11:30–12:00	Jana Gáborová Kroková. <i>Šukar laviben: The Transformation and Development of Romani Literature in Slovakia</i>	Yelis Erolova and Behrin Shopova. <i>The 'Tabor' That Does Not Fade Away</i>	Daniel Škobla and Richard Filčák. <i>When Rivers Rise: Flood Risk and the Resilience of Roma Communities in Slovakia</i>
12:00–12:30	Julieta A. Rotaru and Marius Imre Parno. <i>Stabor in public space: the emergence of a label and reconfigurations of Romani customary justice.</i>	Tatiana Sirbu. <i>Roma performers as cultural diplomats: Artistic tours in Czechoslovakia during the Soviet Era</i>	
12:30–14:00	LUNCH		
14:00–14:45	PLENARY SESSION: BOOKS AND JOURNALS PRESENTATION (ROOM D7)) Presentation of the <i>Brill Series Roma History and Culture</i> . Speakers: Elena Marushiakova and Kirsti Doepner (Head of Publishing, Brill) <i>Romani Studies</i> journal. Speakers: Julieta Rotaru and Petre Matei Esther Reinhardt-Bendel, Wolfgang Gretscher, Jülie Hallic, Vojtěch Giňa. Book presentation: <i>Gon mer ham – Wer wir sind</i> , etc. TITLES TO BE ANNOUNCED		
14:45–15:00	BREAK		
15:00–15:30	General Assembly of the GLS Room D7		

OPENING SPEECH

How a Tradition Is Born: From Invisibility to a Voice of One's Own — the Cult of Saint Sara in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, France¹

Tatiana Zachar Podolinská²

Dear esteemed colleagues, scholars, friends, and honoured guests,

It is my honour to welcome you to Zagreb, to the annual meeting of our Gypsy Lore Society. Let me first thank the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, the Institute for Migration Research in Zagreb, and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences — namely Danijel Vojak (Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Zagreb), Željko Holjevac (Director of the Institute of Social Sciences Ivo Pilar, Zagreb), Domagoj Tončinić (Dean of the University of Zagreb, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zagreb), and Marina Perić Kaselj (Director of the Institute for Migration Research, Zagreb) — members of the conference's organising and academic committee, as well as the Croatian Romani Union *Kali Sara*,³ represented by Veljko Kajtazi. Without the dedicated contribution of all of them, this event would not have taken place.

Over the past years, in my opening addresses, I have chosen to speak on themes I considered inspiring, timely, or even urgent: in Prague in 2021, I reflected on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on Romani communities already living under structural inequality.⁴ In Belgrade in 2022, I spoke about post-normality and the necessity of a reflexive turn in scholarship.⁵ In São Paulo in 2023, I addressed the challenges and opportunities of the digital era for Romani Studies. In Sofia in 2024, I turned our attention

¹ Extended, written version of the Opening speech for the *Annual conference of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Zagreb (Croatia), 2nd September, 2026.

² Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava.

³ The organisation was established in July 2007 as the Association for the Promotion of Roma Education in the Republic of Croatia (*Udruga za promicanje obrazovanja Roma u Republici Hrvatskoj* – UZOR) “KALI SARA”. Its founder and first president is Veljko Kajtazi. Since December 2015, it has operated under the name Union of Roma in the Republic of Croatia “KALI SARA” (*Savez Roma u Republici Hrvatskoj* “KALI SARA”).

⁴ Zachar Podolinská, T. (2021). Roma and (Colour-Blind) Racism during the COVID-19 time. *Newsletter of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 44(4): 2-5.

⁵ Zachar Podolinská, T. (2022). On Post-normality and the Science. *Newsletter of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 45(4): 2-3.

to research ethics,⁶ and in Paris last year, I focused on the opportunities and risks that artificial intelligence brings to our lives.⁷

This year the topic of my address was suggested to me — somewhat unconventionally — by the name of the co-organiser of our conference, the Croatian Romani Union *Kali Sara* (“Black Sara”), which bears the name of a saint whose cult in Europe is centred in the crypt of the fortified parish church of Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer, in the small French coastal town of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, the capital of the Camargue.

Since Romani religiosity and spirituality have long been an area of my scholarly interest, in May of this year, I decided to take part in the famous Gypsy pilgrimage and to carry out qualitative fieldwork research there. From 21st to 28th May, I stayed in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. The key focus of my stay was participation in two consecutive processions — the procession to Saint Sara on 24th May and the procession to the Saintes Maries, Jacobé and Salomé, on 25th May — though observing the site and the pilgrims' behaviour before and after the festivities themselves proved equally interesting and empirically valuable. I also used the stay to conduct at least a preliminary mapping of the locally strong cult of the “third Mary” (Saint Mary Magdalene), whose remains rest in the crypt of the cathedral of Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume and whose place of pilgrimage is the cave of Sainte-Baume, as well as of the local cult of the so-called Black Madonnas.

“Being on the spot” was a fascinating experience — humanly, academically, and spiritually. On that note, I will admit that at times I wished I could multiply myself, possess not merely several hands but several bodies: my research ambitions had to make painful compromises, since I wanted, all at once, to observe, to conduct interviews, to photograph the church interior and the pilgrims as the relics of the Saintes Maries were brought down, to watch the simultaneously ritualized and thoroughly private behaviour of pilgrims in the crypt before the statue of Saint Sara, and, at the same time, to document the visually rich acts of performing ethnic and spiritual identity — the display of the load-bearing pillars of the tradition (the crush around the guardians' horses on the small square in front of the church), the arrival of the “Romani pilgrimage banners” and of the local Gitan families privileged to carry the statue of Saint Sara in the procession to the sea, the posing before photographers, the “hunt for the best photograph” and the accompanying struggle for a vantage point, which at times risked a kick from a horse or, at the very least, a step into horse droppings on the square...

⁶ Zachar Podolinská, T. (2024). Ethical Challenges in Romani Studies. *2024 Annual meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society and Conference on Romani studies: Book of abstracts*. Sofia, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, IESA SAS, pp. 6-10. <https://doi.org/10.31577/2024.9788097443481>

⁷ Zachar Podolinská, T. (2025). Centering Roma Voices in Digital Future. *2025 Gypsy Lore Society Annual Meeting and Conference on Romani Studies: Conference Book*. Paris: Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales, IESA SAS, pp. 27-32. <https://doi.org/10.31577/2025.9788069127074>

“Being on the spot,” then, amounted to a constant movement towards and around this place — not only stays in the dark and stifling crypt, lit by hundreds of candles, and repeated visits to the church itself, but also visits to several caravan camps by the sea and on the town's outskirts; observing the behaviour of tourists and pilgrims in the street (outside the church and the procession); watching musical duels among various improvising groups on the squares and in the cafés; the dress code of pilgrims, tourists, and journalists; the conduct of media representatives, priests, and Romani chaplains; and equally the behaviour of vendors and the range of devotional items and everyday goods on offer around the church and at the fair set up behind the church on the way to the sea; the spectrum of services visible in the street, the names and menus of restaurants; and, finally, the organisation of traffic, parking policy, and the provision of water, electricity, toilets, and waste disposal at a time when the town — which geographically has almost no capacity for territorial growth or for accommodating visitors — is overwhelmed by tens of thousands of pilgrims and tourists concentrated in a handful of May days once a year.

“Being on the spot” led me, quite spontaneously, to a number of questions that I will certainly develop into a more extensive scholarly text. Allow me, however, to share with you today at least a few reflections that I consider worth thinking about. I believe that, against the background of this local case and of a tradition that took shape almost “before our very eyes” over the course of a few decades, we can beautifully illustrate the complexity of the process by which the *history of a place is written* — who writes it and how, who decides what becomes tradition, and who has the right to rewrite it, and how.

The concept of *invented tradition* (Hobsbawm & Ranger, Eds., 1983), which several scholars have applied to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer (Bordigoni, 2002, 2005), holds true here, in my view, only in part. First, it is applied selectively, only to the “Gypsy component” of the festival, and not to the Provençal one, even though both emerged at roughly the same time, in a very similar manner, and are organically interconnected. Second, it presupposes an identifiable active *inventor* and a relatively passive *recipient*, thereby reinforcing a model of objectification that the material itself does not confirm.

In other words, what interests me is less the question of to whom Saint Sara belongs, to whom the processions belong, and who and when “invented the tradition”, than the processes through which what is subsequently recognised as tradition becomes established — a tradition that is anything but immutable; on the contrary, it changes very dynamically. One could even say that the pilgrimage takes on different accents from year to year, as ritual and organisational innovations continually emerge — some deliberate, others improvised, in both the “real” world and the digital and social ones — and that it has, moreover, a rich post-procession afterlife that has thus far received insufficient scholarly attention.

Essentially, my broad reflection positions itself against two well-worn interpretive frameworks. This will not be a story of “objectification from above,” in which the “powerful” write history at the expense of “voiceless groups.” Nor will it be the flat antithesis, in which the voiceless ultimately win an emancipated story of their own. Both models capture real aspects of the material, yet neither explains cases in which a powerful actor lost control over the meaning of its own construction, nor cases in which a marginalised group achieved a lasting outcome only through alliance with powerful actors.

In the forthcoming study, I will speak of *co-authorship*, or rather *co-agency* — in our case, an asymmetrical interaction among several actors, at times friendly, at times running in parallel, at times tolerant, at times conflictual, in which no single participant holds full control over the resulting meaning. Ultimately, however, this is also a struggle for dominance in which — quite unexpectedly — the Roma emerged as emancipated authors with respected self-authorship.

I will trace these processes in local history through four phases, documenting: **(1) *invisible presence*** (until the mid-nineteenth century), **(2) *visibility as a product of outside observation*** (1852–1935), **(3) *the shaping of a voice of one's own*** (from 1925), and **(4) *the revision of inherited forms*** (from 1966)⁸. In the text, I will give particular attention to material interventions, processional choreography, ritual innovations, and, for example, the reorganisation of the ritual calendar — that is, to non-verbal authorial acts that do not produce text.

Through a number of selected, representative examples, I hope to show that tradition arises both as the result of *deliberate negotiation* among several actors possessing different resources and types of power, and, at the same time, that there remains substantial room for *ongoing innovation* and *collective improvisation* that has no specific or targeted “authorship.”

The symbol of Saint Sara, or Kali Sara, around whom a distinctive local spiritual tradition initially took shape, has from the outset been extraordinarily plastic: this “humble servant” is able to draw in, synergistically and inventively transform, rewrite, and even invert fragments of diverse traditions, while carrying not only a complex spiritual-religious

⁸ Throughout this address, the terms *Bohémiens*, *Gitans*, and *Roma* are used differentially rather than interchangeably. Each term is employed for the period and register in which it predominates in the historical sources under discussion: *Bohémiens* for the itinerant groups documented before and around the mid-nineteenth century; *Gitans* for the local Camargue community from the 1920s to the 1960s, the period in which its own voice and agency in shaping the pilgrimage become traceable; and *Roma* for the transnational identity that consolidates from the later twentieth century onward. This terminological choice follows the vocabulary of the cited sources for each period and is not intended to imply sharp or absolute boundaries between the groups so named. See also note 9 on the related family of ethnonyms used in the French context.

agenda but also an ethnic, social, and political one. Over the course of the twentieth century we can trace her transformation into a transnational symbol — “Patroness” and Queen of the Bohémiens, Tsiganes, Gitans, Kalé, Manouches, Sinti, Romanichels, Roma, and many groups referred to in France as *Gens du voyage*⁹ or, in the anglophone world, as Travellers — across the world; in the twenty-first century, we see her cult gaining popularity also among non-Romani populations, absorbing, from a spiritual point of view, elements ranging from the ancient cult of the so-called Black Madonnas to the most current occult and esoteric New Age movements.

Against this background, it is important to stress that it is impossible to study the history of the development of what is today the world-famous “Gypsy pilgrimage” without situating it within *local and global context*; this kind of “extraction” is, in the scholarly literature, a procedure that can produce significant interpretive distortions.

(1) Invisible Presence (until the mid-nineteenth century)

The first stage in the history of the cult of Saint Sara, as well as of the presence of groups referred to as “Egyptians” (fr. *Égyptiens*), or “Saracens” (fr. *Sarrasins / Sarrazins*), in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer (hereafter also Saintes), is hazy. If we rely exclusively on written sources, we might get the impression that Egyptians did not appear in Saintes until the mid-nineteenth century. Historical documents from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries contain no mention either of a “Gypsy pilgrimage” or of any particular relationship between Egyptians and Saint Sara. Nor are they mentioned in the local parish archives or in detailed descriptions of the May festivities from the first half of the nineteenth century (Gangneux, 1988; Bergaglio, 2016).

Absence in the sources does not mean (automatically) absence in the history.

Groups referred to as “Egyptians,” and later as “Bohemians” (fr. *Bohémiens*), are documented in Provence as early as the beginning of the fifteenth century. French rulers repeatedly granted them protective letters that allowed them to travel safely through the country and to visit major pilgrimage sites. Archival sources record their presence in Arles, Saint-Gilles, and other towns in the immediate vicinity of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer (Vaux de Foletier, 1961). Saintes itself had been an important pilgrimage centre since the Middle Ages, and its significance grew still further after the discovery of the relics of the Saintes Maries in 1448 (Philippon, 1521). The German pilgrim Hans von Waltheym explicitly describes the town as a stop on his journey to the relics of Saint Mary Magdalene

⁹ In the French context, *Tsiganes* is a broad umbrella term for various Romani groups. *Gitans* generally refers to Kalé/Kaló populations of Iberian origin, while *Manouches* designates Sinti-related groups. *Romanichels* is an older popular label often used for Roma more generally. *Gens du voyage* is a distinct French administrative category for itinerant or formerly itinerant populations and does not correspond to a single ethnic group.

in Provence in 1474 — evidence of its international reach even at that time (Waltheim, 1925 [1474]).

The cult of Saint Sara did not arise as a later “Gypsy innovation.” As early as the late Middle Ages, in parallel with the cult of the Saintes Maries, a Provençal cult of Sara existed as their “chambermaid,” that is, their servant. It is telling that the official protocol of the royal excavation of the relics in 1448 makes no mention of Sara at all — her name does not appear in it. Yet the German pilgrim Hans von Waltheim, in 1474, states explicitly: “In the town of the three Marys... (...) rest ... Mary Jacobé and Mary Salomé — and the body of the *blessed Sara*...” (italics T.Z.P., orig. “beate Sarre”, Waltheim, 1925 [1474]), and Philippon's legendary text of 1521 likewise takes her presence entirely for granted (Philippon, 1521; see also Delage, 1956). Three centuries later, when Labruné (1733) describes the excavations in the church at Saintes, he states that Sara's remains were found together with the relics of the Saintes Maries, and records her as buried in the lower chapel of the church (the later crypt) — without the slightest hint of doubt as to her presence or the circumstances of her discovery; and all later sources cited in this address likewise take her for granted, as a matter of course. The invisibility of Sara's relics in the official record, then, did not prevent tradition itself — orally and in writing — from carrying her forward and attesting to both her presence and her discovery, precisely in the sense that holds for the entire first phase as defined here: *presence precedes visibility*, and once established, *visibility retroactively confirms a presence* that the original source itself did not directly record.

Unlike the relics of the two Marys, which were publicly displayed only on the saints' annual feast days in May and October, Sara's relics were accessible to pilgrims in the lower chapel all year-round. The chapel — later the crypt, in the apse of the church beneath the choir — thus became a natural site of individual devotion also for those pilgrims who did not come to Saintes during the main festivities.

If we bring together these two threads — the documented presence of itinerant groups of Egyptians in the region, and the parallel existence of a stable cult of Saint Sara, of whom period sources (Philippon, 1521) claimed that she wandered through the Camargue and lived by begging alms, in a manner identical to that of the itinerant groups of Egyptians of the time, whom people in Provence also called Saracens (Vaux de Foletier, 1961) — it becomes highly plausible that *they knew and visited this place long before written sources recorded their presence*. This cannot be proven by direct documentary evidence, but the entire historical and local context makes the opposite conclusion unlikely.

The first stage of this history is therefore not a story of absence, but — very probably — one of *presence without visibility*. The Egyptians do not yet appear as recognisable actors in local history; we do not hear their voice in the written sources, yet the cult of Saint Sara and the pilgrimage landscape of southern France were already creating a space in which a long-term religious bond between the itinerant groups and this place could form.

This is precisely why the mid-nineteenth century marks such an important turning point. The Bohémiens do not become pilgrims to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer only in this period; rather, they become, for the first time, visible in the eyes of outside observers. From this moment on, we can trace not only the growth of their visibility but also the gradual assertion of their own voice and agency in co-creating the tradition.

(2) Visibility as a Product of Outside Observation (1852–1935)

The first accounts come from the engravings and reportage of Jean-Baptiste Laurens in 1852 (Laurens, 1852), followed a few years later by Frédéric Mistral's personal recollections of the pilgrimage at Saintes in 1855¹⁰ (Mistral, 1937 [1929]). Their texts are undoubtedly a view from the outside, yet they also capture something extremely important: the Bohémiens no longer appear as anonymous pilgrims lost in the crowd. They become a recognised community with an acknowledged *interpretation of their own* of the pilgrimage site.

Mistral notes, for instance, that the Bohémiens let the largest candles burn before the altar of Saint Sara, while other pilgrims direct their attention chiefly to the Saintes Maries. He also records the explanation he heard from them — that, in their view, Sara is “one of their own nation” (Mistral, 1937 [1929]). This is the very first documented moment in which a “Bohémien interpretation” of this saint appears in the written sources. It is not yet a voice set down by their own hand, but it is already a *mediated auto-voice*.

Equally remarkable is the fact that authors of the period describe the annual gathering of Bohémien groups from across the region. Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer becomes for them not merely a pilgrimage site but also a place of meeting, of renewing social ties, and of affirming shared identity. At the same time, the press of the period produces sensational narratives about the election of a “Queen of the Bohémiens” and about secret rites in the crypt; the first-hand testimony of the disappointed painter Gaëtan Dumas, from 1911, who found in the crypt only a few sleeping pilgrims, refutes these narratives and labels them legend (Dumas, 1911 as cited in Bordigoni, 2002, 2005). The distinction between rejection and fascination is, in terms of outcome, secondary — both approaches construct the same figure (“the otherness of Gypsy devotion”), with which everyone involved subsequently has to reckon.

This *visibility was ambivalent* from the start: the same apparatus of observation produced both *fascination* and *control*. The departmental prefecture banned the presence of Bohémiens at the pilgrimage festivities between 1895 and 1898, and in 1912, the French state introduced a compulsory anthropometric identity card for itinerant populations —

¹⁰ This dating, given the later written recording of these memories, is not entirely certain (Bordigoni, 2005).

the first compulsory identity document imposed on a segment of its own population (Bordigoni, 2016). To be seen, in this period, meant, for the Bohémiens, also to be counted.

It is precisely in this period that the meaning of Saint Sara itself begins to change. Within church tradition, she remains the *servant* of the Saintes Maries. Among the Bohémiens, however, she increasingly and unmistakably becomes their own *patroness*. This shift arises neither from a decision of the Church nor as a product of local elites. It is *born from below* — through the interweaving of ancient traditions and worldview with the yearly repetition of pilgrimages, offerings, candles, prayers, and shared presence before her reliquary in the crypt.

It is important to stress that even at this stage, one cannot speak of a passive group merely described by others. Outside observers do write the texts, but the content of those texts arises from observing religious practices that the Bohémiens already possessed. In other words, the *visibility is mediated from outside*, but its content is created by the pilgrims themselves.

(3) The Shaping of a Voice of One's Own (1925–1966)

In the third stage, the very scene of tradition-making changes significantly. The Gitans are no longer merely objects of observation; they become *active authors* of the pilgrimage tradition — their voice increasingly asserts itself through concrete acts, through negotiation, and through ritual and processional innovation.

One of the first visible expressions of this agency is the decision of the Bohémiens of Béziers, in 1923, to fund a new reliquary of Saint Sara of their own — until then she had been kept in an old chest covered with a century's worth of devout patina; a brass plaque on the new reliquary recorded the collection and its donors (Vaudoyer, 1927). Twenty-eight years later, in 1951, Walter Starkie stood before dawn in the crypt, as he himself writes, together with four Gypsies — two Spaniards from Valencia, an Italian from Reggio Emilia, and one local man — and it was the local man who proudly pointed out to the visitors the brass inscription, explaining that it was “his own tribe that had donated the reliquary to Sara in 1923” (Starkie, 1954). This was no mere symbolic gesture, nor an isolated act: it was a “signed gift,” a public declaration that they no longer considered the cult of Saint Sara merely part of local Catholic tradition, but their *own tradition*, into which they invested their own resources and for which they assumed shared responsibility. From *pilgrims*, they thus became *patrons of their own cult*.

It is in this period that the Marquis Folco de Baroncelli enters the story, one of the most important figures in the history of the Camargue (settled there from 1895). Existing scholarship has often presented him as the man who “invented the Gypsy pilgrimage.” Such a reading is, in my view, too simplistic and mistaken.

When, at the end of the nineteenth century, Baroncelli began working with the local Gitans, they had already been coming to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer for decades. They regarded Sara as their patroness, around whom they had built their own religious practice, and they sought greater recognition of her — and of their own — place in the pilgrimage. It is therefore far more accurate to say that Baroncelli offered a new language and, at the same time, helped open doors, previously closed, to the Gitan actors and to Saint Sara.

In his 1910 theory, Baroncelli claims that after the disappearance of Atlantis, four tribes of the Atlantean race survived at the edges of the abyss — among them the Basques, the Celts, the Egyptians, and the Gitans, whom he thus defines as the original inhabitants of the Camargue, distinguishing them from the nomadic “Bohémiens” who arrived from the East (Baroncelli-Javon, 1910: 16–17, as cited in Bordigoni, 2002). The Church never accepted this legend, nor did most pilgrims. Nonetheless, it proved to have quite exceptional significance for the construction of the tradition: for the first time, it offered an *alternative image* of Sara as a figure endowed with her own authority and dignity, claiming that Sara had been a local Gitan *queen*, an original princess or priestess, who welcomed the Marys onto the land of her forefathers (Baroncelli, 1941). In the end, the Gitans did not adopt Baroncelli's esoteric notions about the origin of their people, but they did adopt — as a counterpoint to the Christian legend — an inverted image of Sara: not a servant, but, on the contrary, a dignified and respected daughter of their nation — a motif that would become a permanent part of the Gitan, and later the Roma, interpretation of her cult.

The decisive moment comes in 1935, when, after long effort, the Gitans succeeded for the first time in having a separate procession with the statue of Saint Sara take place the day before the procession of the Saintes Maries, that is, on 24th May. Baroncelli played an important mediating role in this step in relation to the church authorities. Yet the procession did not arise as his personal project. It was the result of the long-standing effort of the Gitans themselves to secure for their patroness the same dignity and public visibility that the processions of the Saintes Maries had already enjoyed for centuries.

The following decades show that the Gitans did not remain mere participants in the new ritual but also took over its organisation. The privilege of carrying the statue of Saint Sara in the procession to the sea has remained, since the 1930s, in the hands of a single family — the Baptiste family, whose ancestor Manuel Baptiste, nicknamed Coucou, a close friend of the Marquis and dubbed by the press of the time “the prince of the Gypsies,” obtained this right directly from Baroncelli and shared it with his cousin Titi, with whom he ran the family butcher's shop in nearby Saint-Gilles (Bergaglio, 2016). This is thus not a one-off gesture but a hereditary *ritual privilege* and right of local Gitan families, which survived Baroncelli's death, the war, the deaths of both Gitan leaders, and the postwar institutionalisation of the Catholic chaplaincy.

The processional statue of Saint Sara herself has a similar significance. Descriptions of the crypt from 1897 and 1927 consistently record the statues of the Saintes Maries in their boat, but not a statue of Sara; hers is documented only from 1935, when it was carried to the sea for the first time,¹¹ and the restorer who repaired it in the 1950s confirms that it is a modern plaster work (Delage, 1956: 29–30). The cult object, then, did not precede the practice, but arose as a material response to a *successful act of negotiation*, conducted in various ways with various actors: an alliance with influential Provençal figures with contacts to the church authorities, as well as the pressure and social influence of the media, of mass tourism, and many other entirely secular circumstances from the non-Gitan (“Payo”) world, all of which ultimately helped the local Gitans win the right to their own procession.

The third stage, therefore, cannot be understood as a period in which someone “gave” or created a tradition for the Gitans. It is more accurately captured by an image of gradual negotiation, in which the Gitans made use of alliances, invested their own resources, and pushed through new ritual forms, drawing on both deliberate and intuitive forms of agency. Their *voice grew ever clearer* — not yet decisive, but already strong enough that the history of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer could no longer be told without it.

Gitan leaders themselves also played a significant role in this process. In May 1938, Coucou arranged for the *American National Broadcasting Corporation* to be granted direct access to the crypt; following an introduction prepared by the Irish Hispanist Walter Starkie, a message of peace to the Romani community in America was broadcast there in Romani — a documented transatlantic political address by Romani leaders in their own language, thirty-three years before the First World Romani Congress (Starkie, 1939). Their message was addressed not only to the pilgrims present in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, but to all “Gypsies, Romanichels,” to Roma scattered across the world (Starkie, 1939: 20–24).

It is precisely in this period that a new dimension of the cult of Saint Sara begins to emerge. She is no longer merely the local patroness of the Gitans of the Camargue, but a trans-Gitan, Gypsy, and Roma symbol, one that would later serve to connect various groups and communities to one another, without blurring their internal boundaries and distinctions.

¹¹ According to Sophie Bergaglio (2016), the now-common practice of covering the statue with donated cloaks and scarves – today numbering more than one hundred pieces, whereas in the 1950s there were only a handful – does not originate from the Gitanos of the South, but rather from Roma and Manush people arriving from Eastern Europe, who, unlike them, do not prioritise the cult of Sara over the cult of the two Marys.

This growing visibility, however, was not always safe. Four years later, the Vichy regime set up the Saliers internment camp in the Camargue — and its justification drew directly on Baroncelli's theory: since it held the Gitans to be the original inhabitants of the Camargue, the authorities presented their internment as a return to their “predestined” land, while a contemporary assessment by the government architect for historical monuments explicitly recommended giving the camp the “appearance of a village” that would “attract visitors and passers-by” (Bergaglio, 2016). An instrument that in the 1930s had served as a means of visibility, thus also became an instrument of its abuse. It is telling, too, that public discussion of the camp's very existence remained silent until the 1990s, and that a commemorative stele was erected there only in 2006 (Bergaglio, 2016) — the silence of the sources is, as we shall see elsewhere, itself a form of testimony. The co-authorship of which I speak was neither symmetrical nor equally safe for all parties involved.

(4) The Revision of Inherited Forms: From Local Tradition to Transnational Symbol (from 1966)

If the preceding period represented the winning of a voice of one's own, from 1966 onward, we can observe its open assertion.

The introduction of a separate procession for Saint Sara did not end the process of co-authorship, bound up as it was with various forms of negotiation and tension among the actors. It continued through a series of *procedural innovations* and *symbolic reinterpretations*. Although the Church finally agreed, in 1935, to the introduction of a separate Gypsy procession, this was never officially recognised: it did not appear in the official programme of the festivities, and the clergy did not take part in it until the mid-1960s (Bordigoni, 2002). Nevertheless, over more than two decades, this quietly “tolerated” or “ignored” Gypsy pilgrimage drew thousands of pilgrims from around the world and won worldwide media recognition. The presence and visibility of fervent forms of devotion to Saint Sara became, at a certain point, a tourist attraction and a source not only of attention but of income for the entire region. In an effort to legalise the “Gypsy pilgrimage,” the local church in 1958 introduced into the procession a statue of Notre-Dame des Gitans, blessed that same year by the bishop of Lourdes and crowned by Pope Paul VI in 1965 (Bordigoni, 2002), in order to integrate the pilgrimage of the uncanonised Sara into the official Marian framework. The Gitans answered this move with a symbolic act of their own — that same year, for the first time, they *placed a diadem* on the head of Sara's statue (Bordigoni, 2002, 2005), so as to clearly distinguish her from the — suddenly imposed on the procession — Christian legend of the “servant” of the Virgin Mary, and to visually emphasise the inverse, princely version (an internalisation of Baroncelli's version). Here again, we see *negotiation* and the *co-creation* of tradition through direct, non-verbal, unwritten *acts*, entirely within the material and visual register.

The decisive conflict among the various actors came in the mid-1960s. In the atmosphere of post-conciliar liturgical reform, voices arise that consider the procession of Saint Sara theologically problematic and propose its abolition or replacement with a Way of the Cross. Such a step would have meant the removal of the one public ritual in which the Gitans held a central place (Causse, 2001, as cited in Bordigoni, 2002, 2005).

Since representatives of the Gitan families were not invited to the official deliberations on transforming the procession, they had no forum in which to protest. Yet, precisely during the procession itself, the community once again took a direct stand against its abolition. At the first planned station of the Way of the Cross, Baroncelli's son-in-law, then captain of the local guardians, called on the procession not to stop, and the participants followed him (Bordigoni, 2005). Father Causse, who was to give the commentary at each station, had to finish his remarks before a mere handful of priests (Bordigoni, 2005). The procession was ultimately completed in the customary manner, with Saint Sara sprinkled with seawater to the accompaniment of the Guardians on their white horses. This was a demonstrative, *performative act of resistance* and refusal — and this unambiguous *authorship of the pilgrimage* no one has ever since dared to question or rewrite in any way.

The conflict eventually escalated to the point that the Gitans, through their spokesman Jean Fernandez, president of the “Association of Gypsies and Tsiganes of France” (fr. *Association des Gitans et Tziganes de France*), publicly threatened to move the statue of Sara out of the Camargue altogether, to nearby Sausset-les-Pins: “For several years now, the pilgrimage has been emptied of its Gypsy content. A precious part of the Gypsy heritage is being removed, yet no one has officially told the Gypsies that their festival no longer belongs to them” (Bergaglio, 2016). A year later, in 1967, the Archbishop of Aix, Monsignor de Provençères, officially recognised both the cult and the procession of Sara, declaring: “The cult of Saint Sara is an age-old cult. I am therefore leaving it in its traditional form” (Bergaglio, 2016).

Gradually, local Gitan and, increasingly, Roma actors more broadly succeeded in changing the very representation of the pilgrimage, and their visibility came to encompass not only the Gypsy festival but the Provençal feast of the Saintes Maries as well. From the privilege of carrying the boat of the Saintes Maries, through winning a separate procession with the right to carry out Saint Sara at the beginning of the twentieth century, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, they have become the driving spiritual and organisational force of both pilgrimage days. Not only has their physical presence in the pilgrimage space expanded, but so has their symbolic participation in the whole story of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer.

In the last third of the twentieth century, Saint Sara gradually transforms from the *local patroness* of a single pilgrim community into a *shared symbol* of Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, Gens du voyage, and others, across states, languages, and group identities.

The presence and internalisation of the ethnopolitical message of global Romani activism is visible today in Saintes-Maries at every turn: Romani flags in the windows of caravans, the wheel symbol present in the iconography of Saint Sara, Romani-flag motifs on ex-votos in the crypt, but also through the image of Saint Ceferino present on the wall beside Sara's reliquary, rings and chains bearing the wheel motif, and pilgrims wrapped in the Romani flag during the procession. These expressions mingle with the rich local motifs and visual forms of Gitan culture: jewellery with the hedgehog motif ("Niglo"), a flag depicting a hedgehog pulling a caravan, but also a niglo riding a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, or, in AI-generated images, depicted wearing a tie with a cigar in its mouth. This year, on the day before the pilgrimage and the lowering of the reliquaries of the Saintes Maries, Roma pilgrims lit candles in the church beside the Romani flag before the altar — the same gesture with which both the lowering of the reliquaries and the statue of Saint Sara are honoured.

As mentioned at the outset, today's Sara, or Kali Sara, has crossed the boundaries of the crypt, of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, of the Camargue, of France, and indeed of Europe as a whole. Kali Sara today is unambiguously Roma: the local programme of the pilgrimage — thanks also to the establishment, after the Second World War, of a Catholic chaplaincy among the Gitans (the *Aumônerie catholique des Gitans et Tsiganes*, founded by Father Fleury in October 1948)¹² — proclaims not only a Gypsy pilgrimage held before the Provençal feast, but also gives Sara the same title as the blood sisters of the Virgin Mary — that is, "saint". Some Romani authors (Lee, 2002; and, in literary form, Djuric, 1998) have proposed continuity with the Hindu goddesses Kali and Durga, a claim also discussed by other scholars examining this symbolic association (Asavei & Bushnell, 2023; Anwar, 2023). The scholarly literature places Sara among the so-called Black Madonnas, associated with the protection of families and fertility cults (e.g., Oleszkiewicz-Peralba, 2012). Sara herself, however, was never canonised and does not appear in the Roman Martyrology (*Martyrologium Romanum*, 2004). The same two-day structure is ultimately reproduced by the Devlesa Avilan temple in Teresina, Brazil, founded in 2015, where a festival in her honour is held on 24th and 25th May — in a place with no connection whatsoever to the Marian legend (Sousa Santos et al., 2023). In Brazil, indeed, Kali Sara has become an unambiguous symbol of Roma identity, and her day, 24th May, has been declared there "Roma Day."

¹² Parallel to the Catholic chaplaincy, an independent Roma religious movement also emerged: Pastor Clément Le Cossec began his ministry among the Gitanos in Brest in 1952 and formally founded the Pentecostal movement Vie et Lumière in 1954. In the following decades, unlike the originally exclusively non-Roma Catholic chaplaincy, this movement became increasingly led by Roma preachers themselves (Le Cossec, 1991).

If we look, then, at the entire history of the cult of Saint Sara as we have traced it here, in accelerated sequence across the centuries, we see far more than the development of a single pilgrimage tradition. We see how she gradually became the most important saint, symbol, and patroness of the Roma nation.

In the making and consolidation of this tradition, we can see clearly the gradual growth of a Roma voice — from invisible presence, through visibility mediated by the gaze of others, to a voice of their own, and finally to the capacity to reshape an inherited tradition according to their own needs, functions, and meanings.

The story of Saint Sara is therefore not merely the history of a single saint and of a successful, originally asymmetrical negotiation among various actors. It is the story of how the Roma succeeded, through their own means, in asserting their own story — their own cult and their own saint. At the same time, it shows how a marginalized community can, through religious tradition, gradually gain not only visibility and a voice but also the right to help determine the meaning of particular symbols and representations, in its own language, forms, and acts — including artistic, performative, non-verbal, and other registers of expression — in the place itself and in the “non-place,” in the time of the processions and at any other time — in digital, virtual, and other, spiritually and otherwise defined, worlds.

In closing, I would like to add that the very fact that a Romani organisation in Croatia adopted the name Kali Sara, and today also hosts our scholarly conference, is itself proof of the significance and influence of Kali Sara in the processes of the unification of the Roma nation.

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ABSTRACTS (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Åberg, Kai. *Narratives of Otherness and Counter-Narratives: Karelian and Romani Identity in Finnish Film and Social Media*

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This paper explores the construction and negotiation of Karelian and Romani identities in Finnish film and social media from the 1930s to the present, drawing on postcolonial cultural critique and theories of otherness, internal Orientalism, and narrative power (Hall; Bhabha). The study examines how dominant audiovisual narratives have historically produced ethnic difference, while contemporary digital platforms enable counter-narratives and forms of cultural self-articulation. Early Finnish cinema offers key examples of Romani visibility and ethnic representation. The performances of Pertti Tulivuori (1921–1941), Finland’s first Romani film actor, in *Jääkäarin morsian* (1938) and *Aktivisti* (1939) articulate Romani and Karelian cultural markers through costume, movement, and musicality. Similarly, Teuvo Tulio’s (Tugai) films of the 1930s and 1940s construct Romani characters through exoticized aesthetics, melodramatic passion, and folkloristic tropes. These representations often homogenize Romani identity and position it as an internal “Other,” reflecting broader European patterns of internal Orientalism. Mid-twentieth-century films such as *Kulkurin valssi* (1941) and *Muhoksen Mimmi* (1952) continue to frame Karelian and Romani identities through dialect, attire, and music, emphasizing mobility, emotional intensity, and romanticized marginality. While such narratives increase visibility, they also constrain minority identities within stereotypical representational regimes. In contrast, contemporary social media platforms—including *Romano TV* and *Manne maailmalla*—facilitate the production of counter-narratives through humor, irony, and self-representation. The digital circulation of traditional Romani music enables cross-generational transmission, challenges gendered hierarchies, and supports more individualized engagements with cultural heritage. Together, film history and social media reveal an ongoing negotiation between dominant narratives and minority agency in Finnish cultural production.

Key Research Questions

1. How have Karelian and Romani identities been constructed through narratives of otherness in Finnish film history?
2. In what ways do early cinematic representations reflect internal Orientalism and the homogenization of Romani identity?
3. How do contemporary social media practices produce counter-narratives that challenge or reinterpret earlier filmic representations?

4. What roles do music and performance play in mediating identity, memory, and cultural continuity across historical and digital contexts?
5. How do digital platforms reshape generational, gendered, and communal hierarchies within Romani cultural expression?

Achim, Viorel. *Labour and Taxation of the Gypsy Slaves in the Romanian Principalities in the Era of Emancipation*

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The paper deals with the economy of Roma slaves in Wallachia and Moldavia between 1831 and 1856, which was the era in which, in a complicated process, slavery was abolished and former slaves entered the ranks of free people and citizens. It discusses the occupations of slaves, with their specifics and the transformations that occurred in that era, (for the benefit of slave owners and the state) and the issue of the profitability of slavery in the Romanian principalities in the last phase of slavery. It highlights the increasingly strong involvement of the state in the functioning of slavery and the treatment applied to slaves after 1831, when the abolitionist idea began to be promoted, and how these interventions of the authorities influenced the economy of Roma slaves and their transition to freedom.

Alabyadh, Muhtadi. *Social Exclusion and Educational Marginalization of Gypsies in Diwaniyah Governorate, Iraq: A Qualitative Study*

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Although the Iraqi Constitution guarantees free education for all citizens without discrimination, the Gypsies (Kawliya) in Diwaniyah Governorate continue to suffer from social exclusion within the educational system. This is manifested in the refusal to integrate their children into city schools, often through societal pressures exerted on educational administrations to deny them admission. Such exclusion leads to ongoing marginalization and the denial of one of their most fundamental rights. This situation appears to stem not only from societal prejudice but also from the failure of educational policies to effectively address cultural diversity and ensure inclusion and equity. Accordingly, an in-depth study is required to shed light on the lived realities of this marginalized group, amplifying their voices and experiences within the educational system, while also exploring the perspectives of educational staff and local decision-makers. This research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews with local Kawliya representatives, parents, school principals and teachers in Diwaniyah, and staff from the Directorate of Education. It aims to analyze the attitudes and experiences that reveal the underlying reasons for the exclusion of Kawliya children from formal education and to explore the extent of the disconnect between constitutional principles and actual practices. The study is grounded in theoretical frameworks such as institutional discrimination, social exclusion, and the concept of “otherness,” in order to understand the mechanisms behind Gypsy marginalization within the educational system itself. Through this analysis, research seeks to offer practical recommendations to support the development of more inclusive and equitable educational policies that recognize cultural diversity and uphold the rights of all citizens without exception.

Aleksandrović, Aleksandra. *Melody, Dance, and Cultural Memory: Variants of Traditional Melody "Cigančica " in Vojvodina, Serbia*

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This paper explores melodic and performative variants of the Romani paired dance Cigančica ("Gypsy Girl") in the three regions of Vojvodina (Banat, Bačka, and Srem). Based on ethnomusicological fieldwork, I documented several versions of this traditional melody as performed in local Romani communities. The research includes musical transcription into staff notation, comparative melodic analysis, and video recordings of the dance, allowing me to examine the close relationship between music and movement, as well as performer-specific interpretation. One of the main aims of this work was to record and preserve these variants at a time when rapid social change and contemporary musical influences increasingly affect traditional practices. Many of these melodies are transmitted orally and are rarely written down, which makes them particularly vulnerable to disappearance. By transcribing and systematizing these versions, I seek not only to analyze their musical structure – such as mode, rhythm, phrasing, and ornamentation – but also to contribute to their long-term preservation. In this sense, documentation becomes a way of safeguarding cultural memory and supporting the continuity of Romani cultural identity in changing social conditions. The paper also considers the social context of performance: who plays and who dances Cigančica, when and where it is performed, and how musical and choreographic knowledge is learned and passed on between generations. I reflect on differences between community-based performances, such as weddings and family celebrations, and staged folklore presentations, where the dance may acquire new meanings and forms. As a Romani ethnomusicologist and musician, my position within the community shapes this research. My work is both scholarly and personal, aiming to document my own cultural heritage while contributing to broader discussions on minority representation, cultural preservation, and the visibility of Romani artistic practices.

Beissinger, H. Margaret. *Racism and Romani Musical Labor: Lăutari Performing for Non-Roma*

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Slavery of Roma in the Romanian Principalities (Wallachia in the south and Moldova in the northeast), which lasted from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century, paved the way for the systemic racism that continued to exist after abolition (in the mid-1850s), effectively perpetuating and enabling the conditions of anti-Romani prejudice in today's Romania. *Lăutari*--Romani professional traditional musicians who performed music and song and entertained the landowning class, nobility, and Orthodox clergy--were enslaved for hundreds of years, along with other Roma whose services permitted the running of elite households and various other institutions. Margareta Matache calls the bondage of Roma in the Romanian Principalities and subsequent years a "system of racialized slavery," defining "anti-Roma racism as a systematic form of oppression, domination, and dehumanization" (2026:3). In this paper, I explore the history of this racism, especially with regard to *lăutari*, from the Medieval period through the 21st century. What was the nature of the musical labor that *lăutari* performed for non-Roma—first as slaves for elite society; then following abolition; later, during the 20th century and communist period; and finally in the post-communist world? How has racism informed performance as musical labor among a class of hereditary professional artists? In order to construct this narrative, I draw from historical accounts as well as my own observations conducting fieldwork (from the late socialist period through the present) among *lăutari* and their families in southern Romania. This paper offers a preliminary exploration of how racism and musical labor have intersected throughout the long history of artistry and performance for non-Roma by Romani musicians in Romania.

Belišová, Jana. *The Body Between Ecstasy and Discipline: Embodiment, Habitus, and Performativity in Musical and Dance Expressions of Roma Christian Communities*

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Corporeality in Roma Christian communities is prominently expressed through musical, vocal, and dance practices that serve as key sites for shaping religious experience. This paper compares Pentecostal communities with more conservative church environments, particularly Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic contexts, highlighting contrasting regimes of embodiment enacted through musical expression. In Pentecostal settings, music and singing are highly performative and central to worship. Religious experience emerges through collective practices of singing, rhythmic movement, dance, and embodied gestures closely integrated with dynamic musical structures. Following theories of performativity, faith is continuously constituted through repeated bodily and musical acts. The use of Romani language, expressive musical styles, and strong rhythmic intensity contribute to a habitus characterized by spontaneity, emotional engagement, and collective participation. This fosters a synchronization of bodily and emotional expression within the community. In contrast, conservative church environments regulate musical and bodily expression more strictly, limiting physical participation. Singing is oriented toward contemplation, with movement subordinated to liturgical norms. This configuration can be understood through Foucault's concept of disciplinary power, where bodily expressions are regulated, structured, and internalized. Music functions primarily as a medium for reflection rather than bodily activation. These divergent musical practices reflect distinct configurations of embodiment and religious identity, ranging from collective, rhythmically embodied spirituality to disciplined, introspective forms of musical devotion.

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The contribution was prepared within the Project APVV-22-0389 (RELIROMA) "*Research of Religiosity, Spirituality and Non-Religiosity among the Roma in Slovakia*".

Bendel-Reinhardt, Esther — Gretscher, Wolfgang — Halilic, Jùlie — Giňa, Vojtěch.

Book presentation: Gon mer ham – Wer wir sind

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In the book *Gon mer ham – Wer wir sind* [*Gon mer ham – Who we are*] Sinti and Roma speak for themselves. They talk about their life realities, their families, historical continuities, and their hopes for the future. The book addresses stereotypes and the rejection that Sinti and Roma have been experiencing in majority society. Instead of others speaking about them, the contributors decide what they want to share and how they want to tell it. The book combines personal narratives and oral history with valid research and modern recording methods. Sinti and Roma take control of the narrative about their own communities in this book. It gives space to voices that have often been ignored or silenced. Many readers from the community may recognize parts and patterns of their own lives. By making these voices heard—also in a publishing world where Sinti and Roma have long been overlooked—the book strengthens self-representation and offers an authentic statement from within the community. *Gon mer ham – Wer wir sind* thus can be read as an act of self-assertion and empowerment.

Biczó, Gábor — Szabó, Henriett. *The Demystification of Determinism: Sociocultural Backgrounds of Members of the Roma Colleges for Advanced Studies Network in Hungary*

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Disadvantage among Roma populations - manifested in educational inequality, labour market marginalization, and residential segregation - is frequently interpreted in both public discourse and academic literature through a lens of deterministic sociocultural impact, whereby ethnic origin and associated structural conditions are seen to strongly constrain life trajectories. This paper critically examines the limits of such deterministic interpretations. The analysis draws on a 2025 empirical study conducted among 337 students participating in the Hungarian Roma Colleges for Advanced Studies Network, a system of 11 higher education institutions established to support Roma students' academic advancement and social integration. Since its inception, 867 students have got a diploma in the program. Focusing on students' sociocultural backgrounds and educational pathways, the anthropological study investigates how institutional support mechanisms mediate the relationship between structural disadvantage and educational mobility. In doing so, it explores whether and to what extent the network disrupts deterministic patterns typically associated with Roma marginalization. Theoretically, the study engages with boundary-making and inclusion concept developed by Michèle Lamont and Andreas Wimmer, alongside the theory of liminality, to analyze how students navigate and renegotiate socially imposed boundaries. By demonstrating how targeted institutional interventions can reconfigure the effects of deterministic sociocultural constraints, the paper contributes to broader debates on structural integration and social inclusion of ethnic minorities in Europe.

Bocsi, Veronika. *Patterns of Prejudice in Hungary – with Special Regard to Prejudice against Roma People*

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The aim of our analysis is to assess, using the European Values Study 2017 database (EVS, 2020), what is the level of prejudice in the Hungarian subsample over the age of 30 (N = 1220) and which background variables shape these attitudes. The level of prejudice is higher in Eastern Europe toward religious, ethnic, and immigrant minorities (BELL ET AL., 2021), and the predictors of prejudice are also well known – for example, the presence of financial difficulties or gender identity (BAL ET AL., 2024). KERESZTES-TAKÁCS ET AL. (2016) emphasize that prejudice against Roma people in Hungary can be considered a socially accepted norm. The present paper analyzes attitudes toward people of other races, immigrants/guest workers, homosexuals, Muslims, Jews, and Roma people. In addition to the Hungarian subsample, we also used data from Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, as well as the EVS average. In the research, prejudice was measured by the rejection of having members of these groups as neighbors. In our analysis, we calculated means, ranked levels of prejudice, and ran binary regression models – the latter were applied only to the Hungarian subsample. Based on the results, we can conclude that the rate of rejection toward the examined groups is higher in Hungary than in the overall sample. This relationship was also observed in the other countries included in the study. In Bulgaria, Slovakia, and in the European sample average, prejudice against Roma people was the most prevalent; however, this was not the case in Hungary and Romania. The regression models were conducted on the Hungarian subsample. The set of explanatory variables differed across groups, but the political left-right axis, income deciles, religiosity, and type of settlement had explanatory power in several cases. Rejection of Roma people was significantly influenced by financial status, political orientation, and level of education.

Červenka, Jan. *Sar te barvaľarel e romaňi čhib vaš o neve čhibakere domeni: o mehanizmi so hin chasňarde te keras neve lava / How to enrich Romani for new language domains: the mechanisms used in neologism creation*

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Romaňi čhib imar but berš ekspandinel andro neve čhibakere domeni: romanes pes vakerel the lekhavel andre politika, andro medija, andre romaňi čhib has imar butvar thodĩ e Biblija, sikhavel pes andro školi u keren pes romane paneli pro ekspertna konferenciji (GLS vaj ERIAC). Vaš o neve funkciji kampil te buchľarel sa e čhibakeri struktura. Kampil neve stili, kampil nevi syntaksa, neve lava the aver. Andre miro referatos vakerava ča pal o droma, so lenca keras neve lava.

Sikhavava detailnones štar anglune droma, sar aven andre romaňi čhib neve lava:

- 1) Džanľipnaskeri (semanticko) kreacija
- 2) Lavengero jekhetaňiben
- 3) Derivacija
- 4) Adaptacija avre čhibendar

O mehanizmi sikhavava jekhbuter pro egzempli pal o internetovo Lavengero romane neologizmendar, so les kerav le kolegenca imar le beršestar 2010.

Romani language has expanded to new language domains already for quite a long time: Romani has been spoken and written in politics, in media, the Bible has been translated into Romani many times, the language has been taught at schools, and, also, panels in Romani have been organized within scientific conferences (GLS, ERIAC). It is necessary to extend the whole language structure for this purpose. There is a need of new styles, new syntax, new lexicon etc. I will follow only the mechanisms of word formation (or borrowing) in my paper.

I will demonstrate in the detailed mode four basic ways how new words get into Romani:

- 1) Semantic creation
- 2) Joining words
- 3) Derivation
- 4) Adaptation (loaning) from other languages

These mechanisms will be illustrated primarily through examples from the Dictionary of Romani neologisms, that has been created by me and my collaborators since 2010.

Danko, Dalibor. *Negotiating Exclusion: Romani Musicians, Trade Unions, and the Regulation of the Bandleading Trade in Interwar Czechoslovakia (1918 – 1938).*

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This paper analyses the strategies adopted by Romani musicians in response to the legislative measures restricting their access to labour as well as to the exclusionary practices of trade unions representing Czech musicians in interwar Czechoslovakia (1918 – 1938). It draws on an extensive body of archival records produced by state bureaucracies, parliament, municipalities and trade unions. Of particular importance are the documents concerning the regulation of bandleading trade (*kapelnícka živnosť*) and the trade unions of Romani musicians uncovered during this research. In the 1920s, commercial law in Czechoslovakia was characterised by legal dualism, which had a profound impact on the regulation of musical professions. While Romani musicians performing in bands were recognised as “artists” and thus exempt from commercial law in Slovakia, upon entering the Bohemian Lands, they were classified as “craftsmen” and subject to regulation under the provisions of the bandleading trade. The trade unions of Czechoslovak musicians, in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade, sought to draft legislation that would declare bandleading a trade statewide and standardise the requirements for obtaining a licence. The preliminary research suggests that the underlying motive was, under the guise of professionalisation, to exclude Romani musicians from competition in Slovakia and fill vacant positions with Czech musicians arriving from the Bohemian Lands. To facilitate the implementation of the measures at the regional and local level, trade union representatives established branches in Slovak cities, and, with the support of local authorities, imposed regulations on the so-called “Gypsy bands” performing in public venues. They frequently employed a colonial language, framing their expansion as the “claiming of a territory” and legitimising it as part of a broader mission to enhance musical culture in Slovakia. Drawing on the contemporary press of trade unions, the paper analyses the stereotypical representations of Romani musicians mobilised by non-Romani actors. At the same time, it examines the impact of the measures on the condition of urban Romani musicians in Slovakia. Finally, the paper sheds light on the set of practices and strategies developed by Romani musicians, with particular emphasis on the formation of Romani trade unions. During the interwar period, five distinct Romani trade unions were established in the Slovak cities of Bratislava and Košice. Preliminary research indicates that these unions were founded as a direct response to the regulatory measures and the exclusionary practices of non-Romani musical trade unions.

Delić, Vesna. *“A Godmother Is Not a Button!” – An Anthropologist Among the Roma / „Kuma nije dugme!“ – Antropološkinja među Romima*

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This presentation problematizes the choice of a field of scientific work and the professional development of a graduate ethnologist and anthropologist, as well as the way this choice has influenced both professional and personal positioning within society. The aim is to present, after nearly twenty years spent among the Roma community in Montenegro, the complex processes that occur between researchers and minority groups. In these processes, the anthropologist is identified by the Roma as one of their own, while at the same time being marginalized by the majority society and institutions, much like the Roma themselves. As a result of choosing Roma sociocultural systems as the subject of study, anthropologists often become a “trigger” for the expression of attitudes and markers of ethnic identity in situations where they are no longer conducting research, but instead become the subject of observation themselves. Consequently, through long-term analysis of situational relationships in which I have been a participant, a number of questions have emerged, including: To what extent does research on marginalized communities stigmatize the researcher? How has this juxtaposition contributed to the quality of scientific work? What is the role and function of the anthropologist within the social system, and to what extent can they contribute to improving the position of the Roma community? Ultimately, why is it that a Roma godmother is definitely not “a button”?

Duminica, Ion. *The trinitary value axis of the essential needs for itinerant Roma blacksmiths from the Republic of Moldova: the Horse, the Anvil and the Wife*

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In the past, blacksmithing practiced by itinerant Roma was a necessary profession in any peasant household in the East-Carpathian region. Unfortunately, currently this craft become an unprofitable profession, practiced in a fragmented manner “only for assurance of the food support for the family”. Consequently, now this traditional craft of iron processing with only the hammer, fire and anvil is “fading away with the disappearance of blacksmiths,” it is imperative to ethnographically preserve the last “left traces of this good and precious craft” in the Eastern Carpathian area. The paper will examine the trinitary value axis of the essential needs for itinerant Roma blacksmiths from the Republic of Moldova: the *Horse*, the *Anvil* and the *Wife*. *The Horse* – first existential element in the families of Roma blacksmiths; for a long time, blacksmithing was an itinerant craft practiced by the Roma. Without the horse, they could not travel to various localities and find customers to perform the blacksmithing craft, remaining without sources of livelihood (especially food support). In the vision of the Roma: “movement is life, and without a horse – there is no movement and no life”. Thus, the horse was considered a sacred animal: affirmative oaths made on a horse – were considered the most authentic oaths, and the loss of a horse – was considered one of the most terrible misfortunes. *The Anvil* – second existential element in the families of Roma blacksmiths; without the anvil, the Roma could not practice blacksmithing and support their families. The other tools used in the craft of blacksmithing: hammers, bellows, tongs, punchers, chisels, files – could be easily purchased or made; but the anvil was a unique instrument (“the soul of the blacksmith”). According to the unwritten Romani traditions – the anvil is a transgenerational sacred heritage which must be strongly preserved in the families of Roma blacksmiths. *The Wife* – third existential element in the families of Roma blacksmiths; in the absence of a wife – the blacksmith was considered “a half piece of a man”. Consequently, in order to perform quality work, the blacksmith needs a viable and comfortable domestic space, which is provided by a caring wife, responsible for daily multi-task household activities: to maintain the house (“to be the soul of the house”), to prepare hearty and tasty meals (“from the disponible alimentary products in the home”), to be always around the children and take care lovely of them.

Dunajeva, Jekatyerina. *Narrating Transformation: Roma Experiences of the Last Socialist Decade and Regime Change*

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Academic research has heavily focused on Roma being the “losers” of post Socialist transformation, facing dramatic declines in employment, worsening poverty levels and deepening marginality. As part of these studies, structural outcomes were studied and critiqued, analyzing patterns of Roma exclusion after regime change. Yet, our understanding regarding how Roma experienced this period and how they narrate these changes, as well as how memories of the socialist past shape their understanding of inequality and belonging in contemporary society, is much scarcer. This paper is aimed to address this gap by drawing on more than a decade of ethnographic work among Roma communities across Hungary. Past fieldwork was conducted with the goal of unpacking a wide range of academic inquiries (such as identity formation, education, community life and others), yet many respondents—particularly those who first-hand memories of the late socialist decades—repeatedly situated their biographies in relation to the transformation in the 1980s and 1990s. Across a large corpus of semi-structured interviews and life history narratives, they returned to themes such as disappearance of stable work (industrial or agricultural), the rise of localized poverty, the narrowing of opportunities after transition and overall prohibitively expensive prices even for necessities. Many also experienced negative moral change, voicing their nostalgia for the past. Re-reading this longitudinal material with a focus on memory and subjectivity, the paper reconstructs how Roma interlocutors remember the process of regime change from below, through their lived experiences. Rather than treating the transition as a discrete political event, regime change appears as a lived turning point, which for many symbolized the onset of enduring economic precarity, the hardening of ethnic boundaries (or ethnicization of identities, earlier defined through ideological prism), and a moral re-evaluation of society in which “people changed” and “trust eroded,” as some interviewees put it. At the same time, some of these stories also foreground strategies of adaptation within peripheral local economies. By centering these bottom-up, community-level accounts, the paper complements existing analyses of Roma exclusion and contributes to broader debates on “Perestroika from below.” The paper also aims to show a distinct perspective on how systemic change is experienced and interpreted through the eyes of Roma residing in Hungary’s peripheral locations.

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Academic interest in Roma communities in Türkiye has increased significantly in recent years; however, the existing body of literature has not yet been systematically evaluated in terms of its thematic, disciplinary, and temporal dimensions. This study aims to map postgraduate-level research on Roma/Gypsies in Türkiye along these axes. The study is based on a semi-systematic literature review. A comprehensive search was conducted in the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) National Thesis Center database using keywords such as Roma, Gypsy, Kipti, Poşa, Lom, Abdal, and Dom. After excluding irrelevant records, the resulting dataset was analyzed using MAXQDA. The analysis examines which topics have gained prominence in specific periods, which disciplines have engaged with the subject, and which areas have remained invisible, in relation to the conditions of knowledge production and the broader political context. As of the end of 2025, a total of 315 postgraduate theses (67 doctoral and 246 master's) were identified. The findings indicate a marked acceleration in academic production, particularly after 2017. In terms of disciplinary distribution, sociology, history, and music emerge as leading fields, while thematically the literature is concentrated in music, culture and arts, education, identity and ethnicity, and urban studies. However, the analysis also reveals significant structural gaps alongside these thematic concentrations. Notably, language-related studies are represented by only two theses, while fields such as law, civil society, and health remain underexplored. Overall, the study highlights the uneven and fragmented structure of knowledge production in Roma studies, making visible the neglected areas within the field. The findings presented here constitute preliminary results of an ongoing research process, which will be further developed through more comprehensive analyses and theoretical discussions.

Egi, Ali — Kyuchuk, S. Huseyin. *Playing Together, Living Apart: Thematic Patterns and Cultural Acceptance of Romani Music (Roman Havası) in Türkiye*

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This study examines the relationship between Romani music in Türkiye - particularly in the form of “Roman dance tunes” (*Roman havası*) - and popular culture, focusing on the thematic patterns that emerge within this musical genre. No longer limited to being merely the cultural expression of a minority group, this music has expanded into a wide circulation space ranging from weddings to digital platforms, becoming a prominent element of popular culture. The study is structured around two main issues. First, it asks whether commonly observed themes in contemporary Roman dance tunes - such as money, display, quality, status, competition, jealousy, and malice - show historical continuity. Preliminary findings suggest that these themes are not solely products of modern popularization; rather, they also existed in the past with similar sociological tones, albeit expressed in more implicit ways and embedded within everyday life practices. Today, however, these themes appear in more visible, direct, and consumption-oriented forms. In this sense, while such themes were already present in earlier Romani songs, they were often conveyed through a more subtle narrative that transformed deprivation into humor. In contrast, contemporary versions reframe these themes through a reversed discourse and present them with a production style aimed at broader audiences. Second, the study explores whether the level of cultural acceptance achieved by Romani music in Türkiye points to a value system distinct from European contexts. Roman dance tunes, which bring together different social groups in weddings and entertainment settings, create a shared ground that enables intercultural interaction even in contexts where social distance persists. Supported by YouTube data and ethnomusicological literature, this study argues that musical acceptance does not necessarily correspond to social equality; however, the shared experience built around entertainment serves as a unique space for intercultural integration.

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In 1966, one of the most exclusive attractions on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast was established – the ‘Gypsy Tabor’ (*Tsiganski tabor*) bar-variété in the Golden Sands resort. From a contemporary viewpoint, this exceptionally modern tourist site is a paradox that attracts scholarly attention from various perspectives. On the one hand, under the management of the state-owned monopoly operator ‘Balkantourist’, this thematically-oriented restaurant created a romantic and exotic notion of the Gypsy culture through the tents and carts in its interior, the colorful costumes of the artists, the spirited music, the dances, and the reenactments of customs they performed. It established itself as one of the most prestigious artistic stages, not only for Roma musicians, singers, and dancers but for Bulgarian performers as well. On the other hand, the popularity of the ‘Gypsy Tabor’ stood in contrast to the controversial socialist policies of sedentarization, integration, and ethnic assimilation of the Gypsy community in Bulgaria during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The restaurant’s promotion successfully sold to foreign tourists the idea of a minority culture, or rather, the mythologized notion of it. Although the ‘Gypsy Tabor’ was controlled by state authorities and targeted at ‘western’ tourists, it gained widespread popularity within both the Roma community and Bulgarian society. Today, the restaurant is remembered as one of the emblematic symbols of the ‘golden age’ of Bulgarian seaside tourism. For many Roma from Bulgaria, it also serves as a site of memory for the recent past, when their talent was recognized and the Gypsy artist, in the spotlight, was highly valued – in contradiction to contemporary stereotypical political narratives. After 1989, the restaurant fell into decline and today it lies in ruins. The paper presents and analyzes data from various sources: archival material, biographical and scholarly literature, postcards and brochures, media publications, and interviews.

Folaron, Debbie. *Translation & Interpreting Studies (TIS): What is it and how can it be useful for Romani Studies?*

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The study of translation and interpreting often evokes an image of learning languages to work as a translator or interpreter in spaces like the EU or UN. Yet, it embodies much more. Despite thousands of years of practice, translation and interpreting were only formalized as professions and university academic disciplines in the 20th century. Since the 1970s, this ‘interdiscipline’ has grown and expanded exponentially, benefiting from the integration of models and theories from many other fields and disciplines. All of these approaches to translation research have contributed to a more profound understanding of translation in myriad contexts. No matter the ‘native’ language of any population on earth, communities of speakers have always had recourse to written or oral translation when encountering others from different language and cultural milieus, whether at home or abroad. The global nature of TIS exemplifies the very principle of translation itself: a linguistic-cultural bridge that connects different ways of communicating and expressing human needs, emotions, feelings, creativity, and traditional and innovative ways of thinking and knowledge-making. The conventional pillars of TIS emphasize comparative linguistic and literary analyses between source language (SL) and target language (TL), and source text (ST) and target text (TT). They seek to answer questions like ‘What makes a translation accurate or equivalent?’ or ‘What elements ‘domesticate’ or ‘foreignize’ a ST in translation?’ or ‘How can we analyze translation from inter-lingual, intra-lingual, and inter-semiotic perspectives?’ (Jakobson 1959). The Romani language, through all its dialects, is rich in history and diversity, as are the cultural references and concepts that it embodies. Equally predominant in traditional TIS is the concern for terminology. Languages with a long history of standardization still notably have areas of specialized terms and words and expressions that differ according to where the same language is spoken (Canada/UK/US/Australia). What techniques does a translator or interpreter use to adequately adapt in the Romani context? More recently, a sociological approach to translation asks critical questions with regard to translation and translator practices. What are a translator’s decision-making processes and strategies in different settings? What, where, how, and why are translations produced, and within what kind of power dynamics? What codes of ethics are followed when translating/interpreting? What challenges are there for representation? The language pairs and directions, whether between Romani and non-Romani languages or between non-Romani languages used by Roma (e.g., Hungarian and English), will reflect certain differences and similarities in the transfer of cultural information during translation and interpreting – all of which are vital to consider in TIS. Other areas are also fertile ground for Romani studies. Historical approaches within TIS study the roles and impacts of oral traditions, writing, and oral

histories/testimonies on the narration of a history of translation in relation to a people's languages, nations, and nation-states. One critical aspect is translation of the Bible and other sacred texts. What role does translation play for language harmonization, or in historical contexts of colonization and proselytization? Today, technology approaches in TIS are critical too. They examine how established translation technologies are used to create bilingual and multilingual corpora, and how new technologies like GenAI and neural machine translation (NMT), e.g. Google Translate, are managed by users in the creation and translation of digital content for social media, social services, academic writing, and other purposes. Lastly, what are the roles of self-translation and of interventionist or activist strategies by translators and interpreters designed to manage power dynamics and cultural differences with the goal of lessening miscommunication risks and potential harm?

Forry, Mark. *Romani tambura musicians at the Tamburica Fest in Deronje (northern Serbia): commercial offerings and social media*

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Since the beginning of Roma's engagement with *tambura* music – a complex of multi-ethnic string band practices in Central and Southeastern Europe – they have been professional musicians, offering their services to customers for celebratory occasions. Their commercial offering is commodified in the context of "carousing" in *kafane*, where they are paid directly by clients during their engagements. In general, Romani *tamburaši* (*tambura* musicians) are active principally in the live participatory context of *kafana*, not in the presentational context of stage performances or in audio and audiovisual recordings. Nonetheless, since the mid-20th century, some Romani *tamburaši* have also appeared extensively in audio and audio-visual media: sound recordings, film, and radio and television broadcasts. This activity in the "mediascape", apart from a modest supplement to their income, greatly enhances the musicians' reputations and hence earning power as live entertainers in *kafane*. In 2008, a new commercial opportunity arose with the creation of the festival "TamburicaFest" in Deronje, a village in northern Serbia that has long been renowned among *tambura* aficionados for its Romani *tamburaši* and for opportunities to hear them in local *kafane*. This renown gained wider recognition through two films of the Yugoslav "Black Wave" movement: *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* (orig. title *Skupljači perja*), which included depictions of Deronje and local *kafana* life; and *It Rains in My Village* (orig. title *Biće Skoro Propast Sveta*), in which Deronje musicians figure prominently in the narrative and the music. References to these films were present from the festival's initial occurrence; festival performers included Olivera Katerina – a star from the first film whose post-film career included extensive performances with Romani *tamburaši* – and the Romani *tambura* ensemble Biće Skoro Propast Sveta – who named themselves after the second film and which included family members of the film's musicians. In this festival, Romani and non-Romani *tamburaši* performed onstage, and they were also able to play in small temporary *kafane* constructed around the festival stage. The infrastructure of the festival was thus established so that Romani *tamburaši* had participatory opportunities in addition to their presentational requirements. Although Romani *tamburaši* rarely appear in on-stage presentational events, their TamburicaFest appearances – on-stage, in *kafane*, and later online video captures, all in the same event – constitute a new and unique approach to their representation. In addition to providing the musicians with expanded opportunities for advertising and revenue, the non-Romani festival organizers were able to exploit the musicians' "Gypsyess" to attract festival attendees and to establish "tambura in Vojvodina" as a multicultural brand. The festival began at a time when international social media – in particular, YouTube and Facebook – were beginning to gain momentum. Biće

Skoro Propast Sveta was one of several Romani ensembles who established social media presences at this time. Their Facebook page, like those of their colleagues, include content from the Deronje festival and later appearances, and advertisements for engagements, as well as personal content about family and friends. Their presence was strengthened by numerous postings from the *tambura* community, including pre-festival amateur videos from a *kafana* appearance in 2000, a professional short documentary, and video captures from television programs. Although short-lived (2008–2012), the TamburicaFest in Deronje exemplifies Romani *tamburaši's* ability to adapt their market logistics to shifting cultural values, a process which continues to this day. The festival also coincides with the emergence of Romani *tamburaši's* self-representation in social media, an active and evolving aspect of their musical practice.

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This paper presents the current stage of a long-term field research project conducted in Romani communities living primarily in Slovakia. The research is oriented toward the documentation of linguistic practices, dialectal variation, derivational and word-formation processes in diverse community settings. Particular attention is devoted to the internal diversity of Romani varieties spoken in Slovakia, the influence of Slovak, and to a lesser extent other contact languages, on contemporary speech, as well as to the sociolinguistic factors that shape communication within and across communities. The presentation will outline the principal aims of the research, the methodological challenges associated with fieldwork, and the strategies employed in the collection, processing, and analysis of linguistic data. Special consideration will be given to the treatment of naturally occurring language material and to the documentation of forms that vary according to locality, generation, degree of bilingualism, and intensity of contact with the majority language. The paper will also address practical and analytical obstacles related to the interpretation, classification, and lexicographic processing of field data. A central objective of the presentation is to demonstrate how field research contributes directly to ongoing lexicographic work on Slovak–Romani and Romani–Slovak dictionary resources. Empirical data gathered in the field make it possible to document current vocabulary, dialectal variants, semantic shifts, borrowings, and patterns of actual usage that are often insufficiently represented in existing descriptions. In this respect, fieldwork is not only a tool of linguistic documentation, but also an essential foundation for the development of reliable and up-to-date bilingual lexicographic resources. The paper therefore situates field research within a broader effort to support the codification, description, and teaching of Romani through dictionary-making, grammatical analysis, and the preparation of educational materials. By presenting preliminary findings, the paper seeks to contribute to a more precise understanding of the current state of Romani in Slovakia and to underline the importance of sustained fieldwork for the documentation and analysis of underdescribed language varieties. At the same time, it highlights the broader relevance of such research for lexicography and for the preservation and practical use of Romani in both academic and community contexts.

Galjuš, Kamala Kamila. *Translating Romani Children's Literature: A Challenge or an Opportunity?*

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This paper examines translation strategies used in the translation of children's and young adult literature, especially when the translation is done from one's native language rather than in the usual direction – from a foreign language into the mother tongue. It focuses on the specific challenges and possibilities such translations present in the context of culturally marked texts. The paper also explores the potential of children's and young adult literature created in Slovakia by non-Slovak authors, specifically members of the Romani minority writing in Slovak. Their works are considered in comparison with texts by non-Romani authors who portray Romani characters and environments. Special attention is given to the translation of cultural realia related to Romani culture and to the ways these elements are transferred across linguistic and cultural contexts. Through this perspective, the contribution addresses the broader question of how smaller literatures function within the framework of larger literary systems and how they may influence dominant literatures through translation. Finally, the paper highlights the importance of fostering greater sensitivity toward minority cultures within majority cultural contexts and discusses the role of translation and cultural initiatives in promoting minority-created works.

Gürlek, Ezme Tuğçe Albeniz. *A Late-Peripatetic Community in the Shadow of Neoliberal Urbanization: The Narrative of the Abdals of Bağbaşı, Kırşehir (Türkiye)*

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Across different geographies across the world, Abdals have long been marked as “other” and subjected to marginalization and stigma. This study approaches them as a late-peripatetic community whose historically itinerant, music-centered lifeworld persisted into modernity in altered forms. Although Abdals now live in many parts of Türkiye, Kırşehir holds a special place for them because musical practice there is not only a form of cultural production but also a dense social world. In this city, where stories of Abdal bards still circulate orally and songs continue to voice sorrow, reproach, and a longing for justice, music remains embedded in everyday relations. For the Abdals of Bağbaşı Neighborhood, a place associated with figures such as Muharrem Ertaş, Çekiç Ali, and Neşet Ertaş as well as many lesser-known folk musicians, the neighborhood signifies more than a cultural site of representation; it is an enduring home. Bağbaşı, widely known as the “Abdal neighborhood,” emerged through a migration process that began with a few squatter houses in the 1940s and expanded until the 1970s. After 2000, it became one of the main sites of spatial intervention in Kırşehir. As the neighborhood was remade, familiar street life, neighborly rhythms, and everyday forms of publicness began to erode. For local Abdals, this transformation was not limited to changes in the built environment. It also involved sharper boundaries, differentiated statuses, new forms of surveillance and control, and an increasingly common feeling captured in the phrase, “this is no longer our neighborhood.” At the same time, Kırşehir gained new global visibility through the intertwined discourses of the “music city” and the “land of Abdals” after its admission to UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network in 2019. This recognition appears to promise appreciation, but this research shows that symbolic visibility does not automatically generate social empowerment. While Abdal culture is selectively displayed and celebrated, the neighborhood in which that culture is lived becomes increasingly commodified and less livable for the community itself. In this sense, distinct yet connected neoliberal projects produce a shared contradiction: Abdals are turned into heritage and urban brand value at the very moment their space is exposed to commodification and gentrification. By reading neighborhood transformation together with the UNESCO Music City process, this study examines how neoliberal urbanization operates in a small Anatolian city and how, for Abdals, it reshapes belonging, everyday life, spatial practices, and relations within and beyond the community. It argues that visibility does not necessarily lead to public power, that investment can undermine the capacity to remain in place, and that apparent status gains may reproduce stigma in new forms. Alienation thus moves from the scale of the city to the neighborhood, and from there to the household and the body. Methodologically, the study combines long-term

ethnographic engagement since 2014 with an interpretive, constructivist grounded theory approach. Through interviews, observation, and field-based conceptualization, it traces how the reproduction of space is intertwined with the heritagization of Abdal culture, the branding of Kırşehir through Abdals, and the commodification of both culture and space.

Hajnáczy, Attila Tamás. *Gypsy Correspondence. Historical sources from Gypsies, with and without “Roma voices”*

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The prevailing view in the academic community to date is that there are no historical sources from the period before the Second World War that come from Gypsies. However, thanks to the Roma Interbellum project, a number of sources have emerged from the end of the 19th century until the outbreak of the Second World War, in which so-called “Roma voices” are heard, i. e. they originate from or are associated with Gypsies. One such group of sources are letters penned or dictated by Gypsies. They include both official and private letters, as well as open letters. The presentation attempts to present, organize, and analyse this letter group of sources in detail. I also attempt to create a typology from Gypsy correspondence. Furthermore, in addition to the historical examination of the persecution and exclusion of the Gypsies, these letters open up new avenues of research. Letters from Gypsies can be divided into three main groups and several subgroups, which highlights the fact that the Gypsies had many ties to non-Gypsies and to the authorities. In other words, they did not live in isolation within society. Finally, a content analysis of the letters also revealed that not all sources originating from Gypsies feature “Roma voices.”

Hajská, Markéta. *Romani Language in the Collaborative and Participative Anthropological Research / Romani šib ando kolaborativno taj ando participativno anthropologicko rodimo*

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This contribution focuses on presenting the ROCIT project (*Unequal Citizenship and Transnational Mobilisation of Polish, Czech and Ukrainian Roma in the Face of the War in Ukraine*) as an example of a highly collaborative and participatory research project. The research teams include both Roma and non-Roma scholars. Roma are recognized as key actors in the production of knowledge about Roma, and members of the target group, Roma from Ukraine with recent migrant experience are also involved in the research team. The contribution will primarily address multilingual collaboration and knowledge production. The composition of the team created a specific communication: in addition to English, Romani is the common language spoken by most of the team, with some team members having a better command of Romani than English. Therefore, Romani is not only a research tool for studying Romani communities, but also a key communication code in a multilingual, international team. While reflecting on the typical hegemony of English as the dominant academic language, the paper will also focus on the role that Romani can play in such research, describing the ways in which Romani is used in the team's work. It will also deal with limitations and challenges resulting from the use of Romani in scholarly work, as Romani is a language that challenges linguistic hierarchies in academia. It still faces structural barriers in research and publishing and has limited access to technology and AI tools.

Kadi prezentácija sikavela o than la romaňa šibako ando antropologicko maškarthemutno projekto ROCIT (*Unequal Citizenship and Transnational Mobilisation of Polish, Czech and Ukrainian Roma in the Face of the War in Ukraine*), so si jekh but kolaborativno taj participativno rodimo. O rodimo pa Rom andaj Ukrajina keren khetanes le gažikáne taj le románe akademikura, taj si amenge importantno, ká te tord'on le Rom vaj le Romňa pi importante than taj pi expertno pozicija, so vezetin o rodimo pa Rom, taj te aven ando projekto integrujime vi le Rom andaj Ukrajina, so phírenas andej thema sar migrantura, pala kodo, so ašilas o marimo pi Ukrajina. Muri vorba žala anglunes pa situacija le šibenca ando amaro tímo, ká vorbinas taj iskirinas maj bute šibenca taj khetanes šaj vorbinas na feri englišicka, de vi romanes. Na sako žanel romanes, de but manuš vorbin romanes maj feder sar englišicka. Anda kodo, i romani šib naj fere o módo, sar šaj keras o rodimo pa Rom vaj le Romenca, de vi importantno šib, so šaj vorbinas taj keras teoriji taj konceptura, so aven avri anda amaro rodimo. Sikavou, soski zuráli taj dominantno pozícija ando akademicko rodimo inkrel i englišicko šib, taj vorbinou pa

kado, ande če momentura si aver l pozicija la romana šibaki, taj so ame keras a romana šibasa ando amaro tímo. Anda amaro rodimo avel avri vi kodo, hoj andi akademicko búti si but limitura taj bariéri, anda save si pháro te iskirij taj te vorbij romanes, ke andi akademicko luma inkrel nadon zuráli pozicija i englišicko šib. O báro bajo si, hoj naj ame sar te keras profesionálno búti la romána šibasa: naj ame či AI, či aver technológia.

Hertrampf, M. Ortrud Marina. *Opening note: Romani Literature as Empowerment Literature*

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The development of Romani literature varies across different parts of Europe due to the different living situations of Roma people. However, what is evident in all its different forms, apart from the archiving of collective and cultural memory in the media, is the desire to assert group identity. Romani literature therefore always pursues a function that is at once reparative and ethical, and at times even decidedly political . In my talk, I will provide a brief overview of selected milestones that demonstrate how Romani literature, as a form of “minor world literature”, contributes to empowerment and the strengthening of agency.

Hrušková, Ema Dana. *Romani Solidarity in Practice: Humanitarian Aid Provided by Czech Roma to Ukrainian Roma in 2022 / Romaňi solidarita andre praksija: humanitarno utoru ukajinskone Romenge andro berš 2022*

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This paper focuses on the role of informal humanitarian aid organized by Czech Roma for Ukrainian Roma who were fleeing the war that followed the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. It is based on the author's direct field experience at the Main Station in Prague and in assistance centers KACPU, where she witnessed the arrival of refugees and the initial responses to their situation. The paper documents how Czech Romani communities responded spontaneously to insufficient institutional support by creating their own systems of assistance. These included organizing financial and material donations, providing food, offering temporary accommodation in private homes, and supporting refugees in navigating the aid system, including transportation to assistance centers. This form of community solidarity was crucial during the first weeks of the war in ensuring the basic needs of Ukrainian Romani refugees, who often arrived without financial resources and without access to formal support. The paper also argues that Romani solidarity represented not only a humanitarian response, but also an expression of shared experience with marginalization and a strong capacity for community self-organization. Based on these findings, the paper raises broader questions about the role of informal networks in crisis situations, the importance of community-based support in contexts where institutional mechanisms fail or are inaccessible, and the potential of Romani communities as active actors in humanitarian response.

O vakeriben vakerel pal oda, sar pes ačhelas naformalno humanitarno žutori (sajipen), savi organizinenas čechika Roma perdal o ukrajinska Roma, so denašenas andal o mariben pal e rusko invazija andre Ukrajina andro berš 2022. Avel andal rodipnaskeri buťi pre Bari štacija (o Hlavní nádraží) Prahate the andal asistenčna centra KACPU, kaj e autorka dikhlas, sar avenas o ukrajinska Roma the save has o ešebne reakciji pre lengri situacija. O vakeriben dokumentinel, sar o čechika romane komuniti prosto reaginenas pre űisavo institucionalno žutori the kerenas peskere romane žutoriske mehanizmi. Džalas jekhbuter pal oda, te orgaűizinel finančno the materialno humanitarno žutori, anenas o chaben, džalas pal e orientacija andre socijalno sistemas, he sar te ľidžal le Romen andro asistenčna centra. Kadi forma andal e komunitno solidarita sas andro ešebna kurke andro mariben nekbareder buťi, so kerenas o čechika Roma pro dživipen perdal o ukrajinska Roma, save avenas bi o love u ačhile bi o formalno humanitarno žutori. O vakeriben del duma pal oda, hoj romaňi solidarita na has ča humanitarno reakcia, aľe he kolektivno resľuvipen la marginalizacijaha the la zoraha, savi e komunita

džanel korkori te kerel the te organizinel pes. Pal kada o vakeriben phuterel bare phučibena pal o than, so perel pro naformalno žutori andro kajse krizova situaciji, komunitno žutori andro kontekstos, kaj abo kana o institucionalna mehanizmi na funginen vaj pes na dochuden odoj, kaj lenge kampil, the sikavel o potencijonalos, savo hin andre romaňi komunitno zor, sar he bare aktivna akteri perdal o humanitarno žutori.

Ivanco, Štefan. *Exploring the trajectories and coping strategies of Roma in securing work in the current labour market in Slovakia*

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Roma in Slovakia face various disadvantages in the labour market and improvements addressing their situation in this area remain limited. The presentation outlines preliminary data from ethnographic dissertation research exploring coping strategies of Roma in securing work in the current Slovak labour market. While anchored in critical ethnography, the research explores how Roma navigate their lives towards securing work in Slovakia, amid disadvantages driven by ethnic discrimination as well as other social, political and economic determinants. The dissertation research examines how these determinants currently influence the access of Roma to work. The presented preliminary ethnographic data come from two localities from the districts of Spišská Nová Ves and Kežmarok - Prešov Region, with a proportion of Roma inhabitants, which differ in a degree of their marginalisation as well as economic, social and cultural capital. This allows for analysing different determinants affecting their situation at a local level and capture a broader range of coping strategies of Roma in securing work. Although in both localities, a significant labour migration abroad exists - many Roma choose different trajectories in securing work. They seek employment in retail, nearby and more distant factories, in the educational sector, in local governments or other settings. Local Roma entrepreneurs, particularly in the construction industry, represent another career path for Roma men. The preliminary research results capture a wider range of these trajectories and narratives of Roma revealing their decision makings, struggles as well as experiences with precarious working conditions in the current Slovak labour market. The preliminary results indicate that increasing labour immigration of foreign workers to Slovakia is among particular determinants influencing the access of Roma to working opportunities. The situation of Roma women in the labour market is examined with regard to their ethnic and gender identities being among potential markers of their disadvantages. Conceptually, the research echoes scholarly voices stressing the importance of analysing social and power interactions between the dominant majority and Roma minority in Slovakia, and the role of non-Roma agency in maintaining the existing power asymmetries in these interactions (Šotola at all, 2018). Methodologically, the conducting qualitative research relies on recurring visits in the selected localities over a longer time with ethnographic observation, in-depth recurring interviews and case study research.

Acknowledgement

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Iwatani, Ayako. *Connecting through Groove: Manele and Imaginative Empathy among the Romanian Roma and Beyond*

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Manele, a genre of Romanian pop-folk music, has long been controversial because it is associated with Balkan and Roma cultures, which are often regarded as backward or vulgar by those who position Romania within a European framework following its accession to the European Union. However, since the late 2010s, manele has gained increasing popularity among young people and migrant workers. Manele is characterized by vivid imagery and simple lyrics that appeal to people's desire to survive in a materialistic world. Its spontaneous lyrics, repetitive rhymes, and distinctive melismatic style blur and reconfigure established social categories, fostering imaginative empathy among those who share its sounds and rhythms. By examining various musical settings—such as Roma parties in Romania and the U.K., a live manele concert in Bucharest, a nightclub frequented by Romanians in London, and online spaces where manele circulates as memes or is used to support electoral candidates—this presentation demonstrates how manele both connects and divides different groups of people across ethnic and territorial boundaries. It also considers manele as a diasporic art form and situates it within the broader context of so-called “Gypsy” music.

Kampmann, Edina. *"Smoky Faces": Semantic Ambiguity and the Negotiation of Identity in Menyhért Lakatos's Füstös képek (1975)*

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Menyhért Lakatos's novel *Füstös képek* (1975) is regarded as one of the key works of Hungarian Romani literature. It tells the story of a Romani community in southern Hungary between the early 20th century and the Holocaust. The narrator and protagonist, Peter, recounts the story from an insider's perspective as he is himself a member of the community. At the same time, he is in contact with non-Roma majority society, enabling him to view his own community from a reflective distance. This dual perspective combines individual memory with a broader experiential space of collective history. This contribution pays particular attention to the semantic structure of the title. As documented in the standard dictionary of the Hungarian Academy (ÉrtSz.), the term *füstös* is deeply linked to the marginalized living conditions of 'smoky huts' (*füstös kunyhó*) while simultaneously serving as a racialized marker for skin color. Meanwhile, *képek* can denote both 'pictures' and 'faces'. This ambiguity is largely lost in many translations of the novel, such as the English edition *The Colour of Smoke* (2015) or the German translation *Bitterer Rauch* (1978). However, the semantic ambiguity of the title already points to a central device of the novel: by narratively producing *füstös képek* (images or faces of a community) collective identity is not merely depicted, but performatively generated in the very act of storytelling. Consequently, this investigation examines how the semantic tension of the title interacts with the narrative structure of the novel and explores how literary narration can serve as a platform for articulating collective experience and communal identity. Drawing on performativity theory, the focus lies on how Lakatos's novel transforms literary narration into a site of cultural agency. Through narrative memory, linguistic ambiguity and the narrator's position of reflection between the Romani community and majority society, a literary space emerges in which collective experience can be articulated and communal identity negotiated. In this sense, Romani literature emerges not only as a medium of memory, but also as a literary practice of cultural self-positioning and narrative agency.

Kokyová, Iveta. *I vorba, so del amen pinžárimo: Paťavimo, i trauma taj etickívo apelo ando rodimo le románe žuvlenca / Stories That Become Insights: Trust, Trauma, and Ethical Challenges in Research with Romani Women*

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Kadi vorba žal vorta pa pomenimo taj agensia le románe žuvlengo, taj avel avri anda amaro etnograficko rodimo, pa kado, sar trajinas le románe migrantura, so nášle tar andaj Ukrajina po távasi taj milaj 2022. Andaj but vorbi, so lam tejle le žuvlenca pa Ukrajina, sikavav i vorba le románe žuvlengi, pa kado, so trajinenas ávri taj če bajura gejele perdal taj so vi del ame metodologicka taj eticka phušimáta. Le románe žuvla andaj Zakarpattia vorbinas amenge pa pesko zourasa kerdo drom andaj Ukrajina, perdal o Ungro, Čecho taj áver thema. Vorbin pa kado, sar zumade o rasizmo, pa penge trajura, sar či bešenass mišto, ká sas báro nasulimo. Lenge vorbi sikaven, sar naj místo la žuvlake vaj la dake, kana si bilouvengo, de vi kadej site trádel le šavourenca andej thema site lel aminti pe peske šavoura. Maj but žuvla andaj Ukrajina zumade i diskriminacija taj o rasizmo le gážendar, de kodo sas lenge inke maj pháro, kana či kamenass le te del i humanitárno žútouri. Varesave romane žuvla či kamenass te vorbij amenca ando amaro etnograficko rodimo, ke daranas pa kado te vorbij, de sas vi kecave romňa, so vorbinass vorta pa penge trajura taj droma, taj pa kado, so kerenass lenca le manuš, so bešenass ká lende, če bajura gejele perdal khote, vi seksuálno zour, sar bikinkernas le manušen, taj daravnas le ávri taj či likrenass o sistematično le manušesko čáčimo. Le žuvlengi vorba si nad'on bári, na feri anda kado, pa sos vorta žal, de vi anda kado, ká šaj dikhen, hod' paťass lenge, taj vi voun amenge, taj kadej kerdílass o jejkhetánimo ando amáro rodimo. Kadi vorba sikavel o pomenimo le románe žuvlendar, so telaj zouraki migrácija andaj Ukrajina but berš trajinas andi dár. Sikavel, sar kecavi vorba tejle márel i humanitárno žutouri taj čáčimo, so trajinde le románe žuvla. Sikavel, sar o traumaticko trajo žal maj dúr, taj sar apal le žuvla či kamen te vorbij prá pe.

This contribution to the debate on narratives, memory, and agency among Romani women focuses on ethnographic stories that emerged from a collaborative research project examining the experiences of Romani forced migrants from Ukraine living in the Czech Republic since the spring of 2022. From dozens of interviews conducted with Ukrainian Romani women, I wish to present stories of Romani women whose content transcends individual experience and raises fundamental methodological and ethical questions.

Roma women from Transcarpathian Ukraine recount their repeated forced displacement between Ukraine, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and other countries, their experiences with racism, and their lives in substandard housing marked by violence and uncertainty. Their stories illustrate how the position of women and mothers in times of financial and

social instability, coupled with frequent relocations, requires a constant balancing act between survival and protecting their children. Like other Romani women from Ukraine, they face structural discrimination and racist treatment from the surrounding society, a situation further exacerbated by the unequal distribution of humanitarian aid. Unlike other respondents, who encountered significant distrust when asked about their individual migration trajectories, they openly describe their experiences with extortion by landlords, violence, sexual abuse, human trafficking, intimidation, and systematic human rights violations. The stories of these Romani women are important not only for their content but also for the relationship of trust that enabled the narrators to participate in the research.

This article presents the testimonies of Romani women who, during their forced migration from Ukraine, found themselves in constant danger for years. It demonstrates how such stories challenge the dominant humanitarian discourse and contribute to epistemologies grounded in the experiences of the Romani women themselves. However, it also illustrates how traumatic experiences are reflected in their agency as active participants

Kovacheva, Lilyana. *The Development of the Romani Language through the Translation of Academic Texts* / Buhlijaripe E Romane Čhibijakoro Turijal Ko Nakhavipe (Boldipe) Akademikane Texturja

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The Romani language has existed for centuries, primarily as an oral language, in its numerous dialectal forms. Written forms began to emerge in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, developing two main orthographic systems: Cyrillic, used in Russia, the former Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria; and the Latin script, used in Central and Western Europe. Texts in Arabic script have also been documented. In its early written phase, the Bible was translated into Romani by both non-Roma and Roma missionaries and pastors. At the same time, Romani activists began producing written slogans and messages for their communities. By the end of the nineteenth century, poetry was being composed in Romani, and oral traditions—including ritual songs, proverbs, blessings, and curses—were being collected and documented. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a growing body of Roma newspapers, magazines, some in Romani language, and books in Romani had appeared. This literary development was later followed by feature films incorporating the Romani language, such as *I Even Met Happy Gypsies* by Aleksandar Petrović (with Romani texts by Rade Uhlik), *Gadjo Dilo* by Tony Gatlif, and *Black Cat, White Cat* by Emir Kusturica. A landmark scholarly contribution, *Romani Literature* by Sofia Zahova, provides an overview of books written in Romani across different dialects. More recently, annual conferences of the Gypsy Lore Society have included panels in which papers are presented in Romani. This represents an important step toward establishing Romani as a language of academic discourse and scholarly production. My own participation in the translation of academic texts into Romani is part of the project of Elena Marushiakova and Vesselin Popov *e-History of Roma Emancipation* (Project No. 09I01-03-V08-00001), funded by Next Generation EU through the Recovery and Resilience Plan for Slovakia, conducted at the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. This project builds on the earlier European Research Council project *Roma Interbellum*. The translation process has raised a number of linguistic, methodological, and sociolinguistic questions that I propose to discuss in the Romani-language panel. In particular, I aim to reflect on the challenges encountered in translating academic discourse into Romani and the solutions developed in practice. The development of Romani as a language of scholarship requires engagement with several key questions: (1) the standardization of orthography; (2) whether the dominant dialect, spoken by the largest number of Roma and represented by the largest body of written works, should serve as the basis for standardization, or whether multiple dialects should be developed in parallel; and (3) how existing linguistic resources — such as grammars, conference

proceedings, and Romani language portfolios — can be made more accessible to Romani-speaking communities, including through translation into Romani, potentially with the support of Roma students and community-based initiatives.

E romani čhib egzistuinel katar but šelbershipeta andi vakerdi forma, ande savore ververutne dialektija. Ando agor ko 18 thaj ko nagluni kotor 19 šelbershipe ikliovela vi hramosardi forma ando duj ortografies – ki kirilica andi Rusija, eks Jugoslavija thaj Bulgaria. Andi Maškarutni thaj zapadnuni Evropa hramosaren andi Latinica. Varesave Roma hramosarde vi arabicka ortografia. Maj anglal nakhavena e Biblija thaj aver devlikane lila Roma thaj gaže pastorijsa. Palpale ahtarena te hramosaren gasave lozungija thaj varesave poslanija karik ko Roma o romane aktivistija. Ando agor ko 19 beršimata hramosarena em ikalena poežija ki romani čhib, kidena pes avtentikano narodno folklore – ritualnune gilija, gogijaver alava, bahtalijaripeta thaj armanija. Predal ko agor ko dešuenijato šelbershipe ikliovena but nevimata, žurnalija em lila, nesave lender andi romani čhib. Palal lende iklena vi filmija ande romani čhib – *Skupljači perja* katar o Alexander Petrović (nakhavde andi romani čhib katar o Rade Uhlik), *Gadžo dilo* katar o Toni Gatlif thaj *Parni mačka, kalo mačaroki* katar o Emir Kusturica. Me nakhavgiom andi romani čhib gasave akademikane tekstija katar rodipera pal ko projekto savo si phiravdo katar Elena Marušijakova thaj Veselin Popov – *e-History of Roma Emancipation* (Project No. 09I01-03-V08-00001), finansirimo katar o Next Generation EU prekal o Recovery and Resilience Plan for Slovakia, kerdo ando Institute pe Ethnologia thaj Socialno Anthropologia Slovakiake Rodimaskero Academia. Kado projekto vazdel opre o maj angluno projekto anda ERC RomaInterbellum. Biškaj nakhavavas o akademikane tekstija iklile but pučimata – lingvistikani, metodologikani thaj sociolingvistikani, save kamava te diskutirinasa ando panelo ki romani čhib thaj te ulavav save arakhipeta uklile anglal mande, save si phangle e nakhavipasa thaj save dizicies arakhliom. Kana jekh čhib buhljargiovela, kamela pes te irinel pes ko varesave pučimata, mesalijake: 1/Standartizacija baš ki ortografija; 2/ Kamela li pes o maj buhljardo romano dialekto, saveste vakerena maj but manuša thaj si ikalde maj but lila, te avel sar baza ki standartizacija e čhibakiri, vaj savore dialektija te buhljargioven kupate; 3/ O materialurija katar o lingvistikane konferencies baš ki romani čhib, o ikalde gramatikes ande varesave dialektija thaj o portfolio katar o Evropikano konsilo te keren pes andi romani čhib katar o romane studentorija, te ašti te resen džik ko Roma.

Kovats, Martin. *Inequality and the Politicisation of Roma Identity*

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This paper examines the politicisation of Roma identity over the last 40 years in light of Kenan Malik's thesis that race and racism arise from the tension between Enlightenment universalism and the exploitation and inequality upon which those values are institutionally promoted (Not so Black and White, 2023). It connects the construction of a unique process of continental ethnic governance (EU Roma Strategy) with the dramatic increase in inequality arising from postcommunist transition and the European integration. The paper contrasts inclusive institutional rhetoric with the underwhelming impact of Roma policy (as demonstrated by FRA and other surveys) to argue that institutional engagement with Roma issues is primarily symbolic aimed at managing rather than resolving inequalities and social divisions. The paper asserts the value of a materialist analysis to explain political cause and effect and argues that the politics of Roma represents a case study of contemporary racialisation, an example of how race and racism are reproduced by systems that are explicitly anti-racist.

Kroková, Gáborová Jana. *Šukar laviben: The Transformation and Development of Romani Literature in Slovakia*

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Štúdia mapuje genézu rómskej literatúry na Slovensku v kontexte druhej polovice 20. storočia. Sleduje kľúčovú transformáciu rómskeho slova od ústneho podania (*šukar laviben*) k etablovanej písomnej tvorbe ako prostriedku národnej identity. Práca je rozdelená na štyri etapy: od priekopníckych diel Eleny Lackovej venovaných holokaustu, cez rozmach v období politického uvoľnenia (časopis *Romano ľil*), až po literárnu reflexiu asimilačných tlakov a následný prechod k slobodnej tvorbe po roku 1989 a 2000. Kada geňiben vakerel pal e genaza la romaňa literaturatar andre Slovakiya le dujte kotorestar 20 šelberšipen. Dikhel pre o da sar pes prečerinel o romano vakeriben (*šukar laviben*) kio lekhave buča save sikaven e romaňi identita. E študija hiňi thodži andro štar seri: jekhto dikhel pre buči savi kerdä e Elana Lackovo pal o sa murdaripen, paľis dikhel sar barolas e romaňi literatura kana polokes odžanas o asimilačne politiki (o literarne buča andro *Romano ľil*) u predžal paš e literatura savi barolas kana o Roma ačhle narodoske u šaj vakere nas the irinenas andre peskeri čhib (1989 the 2000). The study maps the genesis of Romani literature in Slovakia in the context of the second half of the 20th century. It traces the key transformation of the Romani word from oral tradition (*šukar laviben*) to established written work as a means of national identity. The work is divided into four stages: from Elena Lacková's pioneering works dedicated to the Holocaust, through the boom in the period of political liberalization (the magazine *Romano ľil*), to the literary reflection of assimilation pressures and the subsequent transition to free creation after 1989 and 2000.

This paper examines the methodological and ethical implications of conducting long-term, practice-based research within Romani cultural contexts, focusing on the entanglement of activism, curatorial work, and academic inquiry. Rather than treating these roles as separate domains, the study approaches them as mutually constitutive practices, shaped through what I define as *reflected participation*. The research is grounded in sustained collaboration with Romani Design, a Roma-led fashion studio and cultural initiative in Hungary and is informed by a hybrid methodological framework combining participant observation, action research, and autoethnography. Within this context, I introduce the concept of the “*bridge person*” to describe a situated research position that mediates between artists, institutions, and academic discourse, while simultaneously assuming responsibility for decisions regarding visibility, representation, and knowledge production. Central to the paper is a critical reflection on positionality. As a young female researcher embedded in long-term collaborative relationships with Roma creators, my work operates within a dynamic insider–outsider continuum. This position enables forms of access and trust, while also reproducing structural asymmetries related to academic authority, representation, and voice. Rather than seeking to resolve these tensions, the paper argues for their continuous negotiation as an ethical and methodological necessity. Engaging with recent debates in Romani Studies on research ethics, representation, and lived experience, the study situates its approach within broader critiques of extractivist knowledge production, epistemic injustice, and decolonial feminist scholarship. It adopts the principle of “nothing about us without us” not as a rhetorical stance, but as a practical framework guiding decisions about what knowledge may be made visible, and under what conditions. These approaches emphasise the importance of community participation, accountability, and culturally embedded forms of knowledge production in Romani contexts. The paper further examines the role of gatekeeping as an inherent feature of research practice, particularly in contexts involving historically marginalised communities. Drawing on field theory, decolonial methodologies, and recent discussions on cultural ownership and representation, it argues that decisions regarding publication, omission, and representation are not neutral, but constitute forms of intervention with social and political consequences. By highlighting the ethical dilemmas of participation, mediation, and responsibility, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions on activist research, collaborative methodologies, and the politics of knowledge production in Romani Studies. I propose a shift from the binary of “activist researcher” versus “researcher

activist” towards a relational understanding of research as a continuously negotiated, accountable practice embedded in lived social and cultural contexts.

Kyuchuk, S. Huseyin. *Linguistic Analyses of Romani Iljahi Performed by Dervish Roma of Kosovo and North Macedonia / Lingvistikane analize e romane Iljahienge kerde katar Dervish Roma andar o Kosovo thaj katar o Nordo Makedonia*

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27 songs in Romani performed by Dervish Roma of Kosovo and Republic of North Macedonia are linguistically analyzed. The songs are dedicated to Mohamed and to Allah. The dialect used for creation of the texts of the songs is Arlija spoken in Kosovo and North Macedonia. The presentation will give historical information about the development of the Dervish religious movement in these two countries based on interviews with the followers of the Dervish religion movement in these two countries based on interviews with the followers of Dervish religion. However, the focus of the presentation will be the linguistic analyses of the songs. The lyrics of the songs are transcribed and lexical and syntactic analyses are performed. The code-switching to Arabic singing in Romani and the syntactic structures of the songs will be analyzed.

27 giljenge pe Romani čhib giljabade katar e Derviš Roma andar o Kosovo thaj andar o Nordo Makedonia si kerde lingvistikane analize. E gilja si kerde ando anav e Mohamedeske thaj e Devleske. O dialekto ando savo si giljabade e gilja si Arlijsko dialekto kaj vakerel pes andio Kosovo thaj Nord Makedoniya. I presentacija ka del historikani informacija sar e Dervišengi religija barilo maškar e Roma ande akala duj thema bazirime pe intervjuja e manušensa kaj pakjan ande Dervišengi religia. Numa, o fokuso e prezentaciako ka ovel e lingvistikane analize e gilengi. E gilengi tekstura si transkribirime thaj keren pes leksikane thaj sintaktikane analize. Ka analizirinel pes o kod-switchingo e Arabikane vorbengi, kana gilaben andi Romani čhib thaj kerel pes sintaktikani analiza e gilengi.

Lindroos, Sanni. *Reclaiming Rosita: Finnish Romani Creative Resistance Across Digital Platforms*

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Providing new opportunities to share personal stories and creative projects directly with wide audiences, the digital realm is becoming a significant site of visibility and alternative knowledge production for the Finnish Roma. This abstract calls for recognizing the epistemic value of digital artistic and creative expression as a form of resistance, focusing on how online platforms are utilized to reclaim agency over contemporary Finnish Romani identities and representations. The proposal is based on my ongoing doctoral dissertation research, which will be conducted in dialogue with the Finnish Romani creators behind the digital projects. A growing number of creative media products, including Facebook live streams, podcasts, short films, and a crowdfunded music video celebrating Finnish Romani women, function as interventions in the hegemonic, problem-centered narratives about Finnish Roma in mainstream media. Furthermore, the openly accessible content demystifies Finnish Romani culture and fosters dialogue between Romani and non-Romani Finns, offering audiences a plurality of counter-narratives which simultaneously entertain, educate, and challenge them. The interdisciplinary dissertation research, drawing on critical Romani studies, performance studies, gender studies, and media studies, aims to emphasize the significance of localized lived experiences and digital modes of knowledge production, community-building, and resistance. With Indigenous scholar Eve Tuck's notion of desire-based research (2009) as its methodological point of departure, the project centers Finnish Romani agency, creative expression, and storytelling as the driving forces behind a paradigm shift in how Finnish Roma cultural heritage is shared, preserved and celebrated.

Majo, Juraj. *Minority within a Minority: How Roma Are Welcomed—or Not Welcomed—Within the Largest Protestant Body in Slovakia, the Lutheran Church*

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This paper examines the position of Roma believers within the Lutheran Church in Slovakia, drawing on field research and interviews conducted in two parishes with Roma majorities. The mainline Lutheran Church occupies a middle ground between the Catholic tradition and Pentecostal movements in both theology and practice. It maintains specific rules regarding church membership—particularly in terms of financial contributions—and fosters a form of affiliation that is not strictly tied to regular church attendance. This relatively loose model of belonging, characteristic of the majority population, is also evident among Roma members. The study compares the strategies of two congregations in Central and Eastern Slovakia that share the same denominational framework but operate in markedly different local contexts. These differences shape their approaches to pastoral care, integration, and Roma participation in parish life. The paper also explores the relationship between established Lutheran communities and the Pentecostal and Adventist congregations active in the same areas, focusing on how these groups are perceived and evaluated by local Roma believers.

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The so-called Romani Kris (also known as Sendo/Syndo, Meshare/Mesharyava, Dzhudikate, Daviya, etc.) has long been a central focus of ethnographic inquiry within Romani Studies, most often approached as a customary institution embedded in the moral and social life of Romani communities. While earlier scholarship has tended to document its normative structures and ritualised procedures within ethnographic, anthropological, and legal pluralism frameworks, less attention has been paid to its ongoing transformation amid digital mediation and intensified transnational mobility. Drawing on ethnographic materials collected among Romani communities in the post-Soviet space (including Romani refugees from Ukraine) and in Bulgaria (including mobile labour Roma in the EU), this paper traces how the Romani Kris is reconfigured in practice through the incorporation of social media and other communication technologies. Rather than treating the Kris as a fixed institution, the analysis treats it as a set of situated practices enacted across physical and digital spaces and continuously renegotiated by community members. In the post-Soviet context, ethnographic observation reveals the emergence of new forms of participation structured by online platforms. Although not formally recognised as decision-makers within the Kris, women occupy a highly visible and active role in these mediated arenas. They comment on ongoing cases, raise accusations, and engage in public shaming that extends and amplifies the Kris's moral reach beyond its conventional settings. Disputes frequently unfold through digitally mediated exchanges, culminating in the public performance of oath-taking to assert credibility in situations of contested testimony. In practice, many such cases centre on issues that lead to the designation of *magerdo* status and the subsequent exclusion of individuals from the community. In contrast, ethnographic evidence from Bulgaria points to a different configuration of practices, in which the Kris remains primarily oriented towards the regulation of financial and relational obligations, often linked to business dealings and arranged marriages. Here, the growing recourse to appeals and the repeated reopening of cases are salient features of contemporary practice. These processes are closely tied to the Kris's material dimension, including the remuneration of participants, and have led to observable tensions within the community. Informants articulate competing positions: some advocate limiting the right of appeal to preserve the authority of decisions, while others defend the current practice as a means of ensuring fairness and negotiation. These ethnographic cases suggest that the Romani Kris is not merely adapting to new technological conditions but is actively reshaped by everyday practices across local and transnational contexts. Despite significant variation, a shared orientation persists: the effort to contain conflict resolution within the community's

moral and social boundaries, even when disputes unfold in highly public, digitally mediated spaces. In this sense, the Romani Kris remains a key arena for producing social cohesion, negotiating authority, and articulating collective identity in a rapidly changing social landscape.

Acknowledgement

The paper is output of the project *Identity of Roma in Transcarpathian Ukraine: past and present* (VEGA, Project No. 2/0057/24) and the project *Research of Religiosity, Spirituality and Non-Religiosity among the Roma in Slovakia* (APVV-22-0389, RELIROMA).

Matei, Petre. *The Deportation of Roma to Transnistria in the Context of Romania's Genocidal Policies (1942–1944).*

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This paper examines the deportation of Roma populations to Transnistria between 1942 and 1944, situating it within the broader framework of Romania's wartime policies under the regime of Ion Antonescu. While the persecution and deportation of Jews have been more extensively studied, the case of Roma deportations remains comparatively underexplored, particularly in terms of its administrative logic and implementation. The paper adopts a comparative approach, highlighting both the parallels and divergences between the deportation of Roma and Jews. It argues that, although both groups were subjected to forced displacement, the criteria for deportation differed significantly. In the case of Roma, categories such as "nomadism" and "social dangerousness" played a central role, reflecting a combination of racial and social profiling. These distinctions were also evident in the logistical organization of deportations, the degree of bureaucratic documentation, and the conditions encountered in Transnistria. Drawing on archival data and recent historiography, the study also addresses the spatial dimension of deportation, including routes, points of embarkation, and patterns of settlement in Transnistria. By integrating comparative analysis with spatial perspectives, the paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Romania's participation in genocidal policies during WWII, while emphasizing the specificities of the Roma experience.

Mendes, Maria Manuela. *Populism(s) and anti-Gypsyism in Portugal.*

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Despite the significant improvements in living conditions brought about by the 25 April 1974 revolution, Roma people in Portugal continue to face historically and structurally unequal living conditions compared to the general population. Furthermore, the (re)emergence of populist (right-wing) parties and movements with radical ideals, both in Portugal and internationally, as well as the pandemic crisis, have contributed decisively to the spread and proliferation of anti-Roma public discourse and news coverage. Anti-Gypsyism, historically rooted in our society(ies), is a specific form of racism based on the ideology of racial superiority, which dehumanises Roma people, relying on institutional racism and processes of historical discrimination, and which manifests itself, for example, in violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the denial of opportunities, ultimately (re)producing structural disadvantages. Based on a qualitative approach (documentary analysis, analysis of interviews with Roma people and bibliographic analysis), the aim is to produce a reflective and comprehensive analysis of these parties' narratives in a national context (with a brief foray into the European context) regarding Roma, and to reflect on the strategies of resistance and empowerment employed by Roma against these parties and movements that denigrate them and strip them of their humanity.

The London Government Act 1963 created the London Borough of Ealing in 1965, consolidating a largely urban, highly developed area in West London. Ealing had undergone extensive residential expansion during and after the Second World War, leaving very limited undeveloped land by the 1960s. This urban character is critical to understanding local policy. The borough sits along the A40 corridor, a key route linking London with South Wales and ferry ports to Ireland, and historically used by travelling groups. “Gypsy Corner” at North Acton reflects this legacy though despite this, Ealing lacked a long-standing embedded “cultural memory” of nomadic economic roles, such as agricultural labour, that were more visible in rural counties. In the 1960s–1980s, the travelling population in Ealing was predominantly composed of Irish Travellers. The 1962 Middlesex survey recorded relatively small numbers (six sites, six caravans, 13 adults and 17 children) in Ealing, yet encampments were frequent and highly visible across areas such as Northolt, Greenford and Southall. The “problem” as constructed by the council and much of the local population centred on unauthorised encampments, perceived nuisance, car breaking/salvage and pressure on land rather than on welfare or cultural accommodation. Consequently, the policy aim was less about integration or provision and more about containment, regulation, and, where possible, avoidance—evidenced by repeated attempts to secure “designation” to exempt the borough from site provision duties. Only two official sites emerged: a temporary site at Kensington Road (1974–1984) and the permanent Bashley Road site (opened 1986). Several interrelated factors shaped outcomes. First, land scarcity in a densely built urban borough significantly constrained options and was repeatedly cited to justify inaction. Second, the economic “function” of Travellers in a non-agricultural urban economy reduced political incentives for accommodation. Third, institutional arrangements mattered: licensing powers were delegated to the Public Health Committee, while planning remained separate, potentially framing the issue as one of sanitation and control rather than housing or community provision. Financial considerations were also central, with high costs of site development (nearly £1 million for Bashley Road) and ongoing eviction expenses shaping debate. Finally, external pressure was decisive—central government intervention and legal threats, alongside action by the Gypsy Council, ultimately forced the council to act in the mid-1980s. Local residents and ratepayer groups were consistently influential, largely opposing site provision on grounds of cost, land use, and perceived disorder. Councillors and MPs across party lines frequently echoed these concerns, with some rhetoric reflecting racialised or exclusionary attitudes—potentially intensified by the Irish Traveller identity of the population. Traveller voices were largely absent from formal decision-making until the 1980s, when some representation emerged in local media. The

Gypsy Council played an advocacy role from the 1970s but was not always aligned with local Traveller perspectives. Ultimately, however, it was central government that exerted the most decisive influence: through coercive pressure and planning leverage, it compelled the development of the Bashley Road site.

Míšková, Anna. *From Invisible to Institutionalised: Memorials of the holocaust of Roma and Sinti in the Czech Republic*

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This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of monuments and memorials commemorating Roma and Sinti victims of the Holocaust in the Czech Republic. Drawing on an original dataset of all 36 documented commemorative sites, the study combines quantitative mapping with in-depth case analysis of three representative memorial models to identify the key patterns shaping the culture of remembrance of Roma genocide in Czech lands. The research reveals a pronounced "delayed memory" — while Jewish victims were commemorated already in the immediate post-war period, Roma victims remained virtually invisible in official discourse until the 1980s, with a more substantial commemorative wave emerging only after 2000, some 40 to 60 years after the genocide itself. This temporal gap reflects the structural marginalization of the Roma community and its historically weak position in the symbolic space of national memory, compounded by Communist-era policies that universalized victims of fascism while deliberately suppressing ethnically specific narratives about Roma persecution. The paper identifies three distinct memorial models in the Czech landscape: the majority pattern of subsequent integration, whereby Roma victims were belatedly added to pre-existing war memorials; the minority pattern of dedicated Roma memorials conceived from the outset as such; and decentralized contemporary forms such as Stolpersteine. The geographic concentration of sites in Moravia — home to established sedentary Roma communities before the war — is shown to reflect both the historical settlement patterns of Czech and Moravian Roma and the differential nature of their persecution compared to nomadic Bohemian Roma. The paper pays particular attention to the two main camp memorial sites at Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu — long-neglected or actively dishonoured places of mass atrocity that have only recently been transformed into dignified commemorative spaces through sustained advocacy, institutional support from the Museum of Romani Culture, and eventual state investment. Together, these cases illuminate the contested and non-linear path from forgotten crime sites to recognized places of memory.

Mocanu, George Damian. *The Abolition of Slavery in the Romanian Principalities in Global Context: Gradual Emancipation and Reform*

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The study of Roma slavery in Romanian Principalities lacks a certain comparative perspective, the proposed presentation aims to examine the abolition of slavery during the first half of 19th century in a comparative and global perspective. The emancipation of Roma slaves in Wallachia and Moldavia was part of the wider nineteenth-century age of abolition, while also reflecting a distinctive regional social and political trajectory. In contrast to Atlantic slavery, which has dominated the historiography of abolition, slavery in the Romanian principalities developed outside the colonial system and was based on the Byzantine legal system. Yet its dismantling followed patterns that invite comparison with other societies: gradual reform, debates over property rights and compensation, the influence of liberal and humanitarian discourse, and the tension between legal emancipation and continuing social marginalization. The presentation will focus first on the internal development of abolition in the Romanian lands. It will show that emancipation was not introduced at once, but unfolded in stages between the 1830s and the mid-1850s. Only gradually did a true abolitionist current emerge, shaped by the post-1821 reform era, the spread of Western liberal ideas, and the efforts of Romanian intellectuals who increasingly denounced slavery as incompatible with modern civilization. The successive emancipation of state-owned Roma, monastery slaves, and finally privately owned slaves in Moldavia (1855) and Wallachia (1856) reveals a process marked by political caution. The second part of the paper places this process in a wider comparative framework. The Romanian case will be analyzed alongside the abolition of slavery in the British Empire, France, the United States, Brazil, and selected Latin American states. This comparison will highlight both parallels and differences. By bringing the Romanian Principalities into dialogue with global abolition history, this presentation seeks to contribute to both East European and comparative slavery studies. It argues that the abolition of Roma slavery should be understood as part of the broader nineteenth-century redefinition of freedom, citizenship, and state power. At the same time, its specific chronology, social structure, and aftermath make it a crucial case for rethinking what slavery and emancipation meant beyond the Atlantic world.

Moravčíková, Dominika. *The Non-Journey of Others: Temporal Politics and Outsider Exploration of Romani Music in Manuša*

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“We live together on this earth,” wrote Júlia Kozáková about her music project Manuša, “and we have many differences and quirks that can enrich one another. And so it has been for me: as a person without Romani roots, traditional Romani songs have enriched my journey.” As a non-Romani singer from Bratislava, Slovakia, Kozáková’s stated aim across the albums Manuša and Manuša II (“people” in Romani) has been to experience the “adventure” of traditional Romani music and to share it beyond niche Romani communities. The albums have received numerous accolades, and Manuša II was ranked the best album in Europe in January 2026 by the World Music Charts Europe. While performing a rigorously researched repertoire of traditional Romani songs, Kozáková disrupts the traditional family model of a Romani band emerging from kin, domestic ecologies and a specific gender configuration. Instead, she assembles top-tier male Romani musicians and cultivates an alternative affective relationality only partially grounded in a shared Romaniness. At the same time, Manuša centers the individual journey of the non-Romani singer, positioning the Romani musicians as highly skilled yet interchangeable accompanists. They are constructed as a collective, abundantly generative entity rather than as individuals capable of the same intensity of affective exploration and “journey” attributed to Kozáková. This paper interrogates the politics of this representation, which renders a version of Romani culture appealing to non-Romani audiences through visual aesthetics, promotional strategies, and even vocal timbre. It traces both the affective value gained and the value lost when traditional Romani repertoire is situated within the de-localized, universalist nexus of world music that attracts expert praise and commercial appeal while sidelining or displacing the social and emotional rootedness of Romani culture. Ultimately, the paper argues that the Manuša project positions Romani musicians as stagnant and fixed, while casting the non-Romani leader as dynamic, experimenting, and evolving. Drawing on James Sykes and his critique of identity episteme, as well as considerations on musical hybridity and cosmopolitan constructions of Otherness, this paper negotiates the relevance of identity while carefully observing the disjunction between the temporal dynamism afforded to the non-Romani singer and the non-temporality and non-journey of Romani band members. I argue that this imposed asymmetry disallows an equal, non-hierarchical affective exchange between the two cultures.

Najjar, Sawas Ahmad. *Historical References to Romani Normative Structures, Leaders, and Internal Organization, with Special Regard to the Legal Mechanisms and Principles of Romani Customary Law*

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This paper proceeds from the premise that Romani customary law is not primarily manifested in historical sources as a single, codified, and universally uniform system of rules, but rather as a set of normative structures, authorities, institutions, and principles recognized in different periods and cultural settings as part of the internal order of Romani communities. The first part of the paper examines historical references to Romani leaders, bearers of authority, and forms of acknowledged internal organization in Arabic and European sources, with particular attention to documentary, legal, and literary material, including diplomatic records, narrative accounts, and poetic texts. At the center of this inquiry lies the question of how different sources recorded the existence of Romani hierarchies, mediating roles, and mechanisms of internal self-regulation. The second part of the paper offers an overview of the legal mechanisms and principal norms of Romani customary law. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of leaders and councils of elders, on procedures of mediation and reconciliation, on the preservation of honor, communal order, and social balance, as well as on the principles of responsibility, reciprocity, publicity of decisions, and the socially binding force of norms. The central argument of the paper is that historical sources from diverse settings do not confirm the existence of a single universal Romani legal system, yet they do clearly attest to the long historical visibility of Romani normative structures and to the existence of recognizable concepts and principles within Romani customary law. In addition to medieval, early modern, and Renaissance materials, the paper will also draw on selected contemporary sources concerning Romani customary law. The concluding section offers a brief reflection on more recent forms of institutional recognition of this theme, while maintaining the paper’s main focus on historical sources and contexts.

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In this paper, we draw on our long-term research conducted within the Romani community in Poland and its non-Romani surroundings, carried out using a multisited ethnography approach. We interpret the empirical data obtained by referring to Francis Fukuyama's theory of identity-based struggles for recognition. Following international paradigms, the Romani elite in Poland expect not only guarantees of equal treatment but also recognition and respect for their own cultural distinctiveness, as defined within their own ethnic community. This is a necessary element of emancipation because existing ways of understanding Romani identity are perceived as burdened by the problem of structural discrimination. The responsibility for creating a narrative describing the content, scope, and moral significance of Romani identity should lie with the Romani minority community, and in particular its elites. The Romani elites themselves believe that Romani identity is cognitively inaccessible to non-Romani; it cannot be understood, but should only be respected without being subjected to external moral judgment. In the opinion of our interviewees, the acceptance of such a narrative by non-Romani is a necessary element of genuine—rather than merely superficial, as has been the case so far—support for this ethnic group. In this paper, we intend to analyze two frequently recurring elements of Roma self-description regarding identity. Both are largely responsible for tensions between Roma and non-Roma at the local level:

- 1) a sense of having been pushed into a marginal position economically and socially;
- 2) the necessity of preserving cultural privacy, cultural exclusivity, and the transmission of culture solely within one's own family environment.

These claims are met with partial misunderstanding and a negative attitude on the part of non-Roma local communities, as well as local officials. In conclusion, we argue that the success of recognizing Romani identity based on indigenous principles depends on the ability to develop a coherent identity narrative among individual Romani groups and to take into account the perspective of non-Romani local communities.

This paper explores the interaction between ethnic and religious identity among Roma Jehovah's Witnesses in Hungary, with particular attention to how ethnicity is articulated within a religious denomination that does not organize itself along ethnic lines. Unlike many Christian communities in which explicitly Roma congregations may emerge as distinct religious and social spaces, Jehovah's Witnesses do not establish ethnically defined congregations. At the same time, congregations may develop on a linguistic basis, including Romani-speaking groups, which creates an important space where ethnicity, language, and religious belonging intersect. The paper asks how Roma identity is expressed, negotiated, and transformed within such a universalist religious framework. Particular attention is given to differences between Romani-language congregations and ethnically mixed congregations. In Romani-speaking settings, ethnicity may be more visibly present through language use and community dynamics, while in mixed congregations it often appears in more indirect forms, such as patterns of social relations, belonging, and everyday negotiation of difference. The paper argues that even within a denomination that emphasizes a shared spiritual identity over ethnic distinctions, ethnicity does not disappear. Instead, it is reconfigured and expressed through subtler social and cultural practices. This produces a field in which Roma believers navigate both participation in a global religious movement and their continued connection to Roma community identities. By focusing on this understudied topic, the paper contributes to broader discussions on religion, ethnicity, minority identity, and the ways universalist religious structures interact with lived ethnic experience.

Olujic, Ivana — Radosavljevic, Petar. *Is there a Boyash literature in Croatia?*

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Given that Romani written literature emerged in the 20th century (Council of Europe) and that an increase in the number of publications in the speech varieties of Boyash Roma has been recorded in Croatia in the 21st century, a natural question arises – one that this paper seeks to address: Is there a Boyash literature in Croatia? Starting from a broader understanding of literature, that is, not limiting the analysis to fictional literature alone, the paper also considers records of oral literature, including life stories (Museum of Personal Stories), although the emphasis is placed on literature in written form. For this purpose, the analysis examines texts published within the framework of linguistic research, periodical publications (e.g. Glas Roma – Romano Akharipe – Graju alu Căganjilor (1994–1999) and Phralipen (2017–)), various leaflets and brochures, collections of poems, picture books, and educational materials intended primarily for preschool and school-aged children, including those designed for use in schools, i.e. for the subject Language and Culture of the Roma National Minority (currently taught in two primary schools in Međimurje). The aim of the paper is to examine to what extent these texts can be regarded as literary expressions of the Boyash Roma and to explore the role they play in the processes of linguistic visibility, standardisation, and cultural affirmation of this Roma group within the Croatian social context.

Parno, Marius Imre — Rotaru, Julieta A. *Stabor in public space: the emergence of a label and reconfigurations of Romani customary justice / Stabor ande publikane thanes: i aparicija e jekh etiketaki thaj i pherdipe e řomaneske obitsejaske justicijaki*

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This article examines the vocabulary of traditional Romani justice institutions in Romania, focusing on the term *stabor*, which is very common in the media and public discourse, yet is oddly poorly attested in major academic Romanian dictionaries. Romani customary justice, often referred to as « *Judecata țigănească* » or as *romani kris*, is an autonomous conflict-resolution mechanism based on orally transmitted norms and implemented by recognized members of the community (often called *krisinitorja*, “judges”). The study asks two questions: how are the terms *kris*, *sfăto* (linked to Romanian *sfat*, of Slavic origin), and *divano* (borrowed from Romanian *divan*, of Turkish origin) distributed, and how do they compete? How can we explain the emergence and diffusion of *stabor*, a term perceived sometimes as traditional and sometimes as recent, and whose social value is the subject of debate? The approach relies on a mixed methodology based on three sets of sources. First, a lexicographic and textual analysis (*RomLex*, systematic review of historical and contemporary Romanian dictionaries) situates Romani designations in two main etymological families: derivatives of *kris* (from Greek κρίσις, “decision/judgment”) and terms stemming from the Slavic root *sud-* (“court/tribunal”). Second, a qualitative field study based on semi-structured interviews (20 participants, several regions) examines recognition, frequency of use, and meaning distinctions attributed to *kris* and *stabor* (assembly, broader jurisdiction, “elite”). The study also includes an in-depth interview with Dorin Cioabă, a judicial authority in the Kalderaš milieu, whose position contrasts *romani kris* (community legitimacy, oral tradition) with *stabor* (a contested term associated with contemporary reconfigurations). Finally, archival documents (15th–18th centuries) relating to jurisdictional regimes and the relative autonomy of certain communities provide a historical framework for regional legal pluralism. By reconstructing a chronology of uses and mediations (literature, media, field practices), the article interprets *stabor* as a modern label with a strong social charge, capable of reshaping public understandings of Romani justice, while also revealing internal tensions around legitimacy and the formalization of customary norms.

Akava artikolo egzamininel o vokabularo e tradicionalne řomaneske justicijake institucijendar ande România, fokusind pe o termino *stabor*, savo si but komuno ande

media thaj ande publikano diskurso, numa si čudno sar na si lačhes rakhado (atestime) ande maj bare akademikane rumunikane diksionarura. Řomani običejaski justicija, so butivar phenelpe “Judecata țigănească” vaj *řomani kris*, si jekh autonomo mehanizmo te rešinel konfliktura, opre oralno tradime normura, thaj implementirime andar prindžarde manuša e komunitetestar (butivar akharde *krisinitorja*). O studijo pušel duj pučimata: sar si distribuirime o terminura *kris*, *sfàto* (phandelpe e rumunikane *sfat*, andar slavično origeno) thaj *divano* (lelpe andar rumuniko *divan*, andar turčiko origeno), thaj sar konkuririn? Sar te expličirin i aparicija thaj i difuzija e *stabor*-eski, jekh termino savo kana perčepirinelp e sar tradicionalo thaj kana sar rečento, thaj savo leski sociali valoarea si ando debato? O drom (metodologia) temelalpe pe jekh mixto kerimos, opre trin setura e sursendar. Anglal, jekh leksikografikani thaj tekstualni analiza (*RomLex*, sistematikano review e historikane thaj kontemporane rumunikane diksionarura) situirinel e řomaneske designacijura ande duj etimologikane familijura: derivatura andar *kris* (andar gričko κρίσις, “decision/judgment”) thaj terminura andar slavično koreno *sud-* (“court/tribunal”). Dujto, jekh kvalitativno tereno-studijo, bazime pe semi-strukturime intervjura (20 participanti, but regionura), egzamininel o rekognition, i frekvenca e uzimaski, thaj o meaning distinkcijura so atribuirinelp e *kris*-ke thaj e *stabor*-eske (assembly, buter jurisdikcija, “elite”). O studijo isi thaj jekh in-depth intervju bi Dorin Cioabă, jekh judicial authority ande Kalderaš miljeu, savo kontrastel *řomani kris* (community legitimacy, oral tradition) bi *stabor* (jekh contested termino asočijime e kontemporane rekonfiguračijenca). Pala, arhivikane dokumentura (15-to–18-to šel), relacime e jurisdikcijake regimencar thaj e relativi autonomijatar e jekh-jekh komunitetura, den jekh historikano framework palal regionalo legal pluralizmo. Sar rekonstrujilpe jekh kronologija e uzimatar thaj e medijacijendar (literatura, media, tereno-praktika), akava artikolo interpretil o *stabor* sar jekh nevi etiketă, pharo socialo šargosa, savo šaj te pherel o publikano gindo palal řomaneski justicija, thaj te sikavel andar andral o tensionura palal legitimacija thaj formalizacija e običejaske normendar.

Petrovski, Daniel. *Codification of stereotypes about Roma in Yugoslav Lexicography: From oral tradition to contemporary representation / Kodificiripe o stereotipija baš Roma ani jugolovenijaki leksikografija: taro mujlo mothovdipe dži savaxutno sikavdipe*

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Lexicography, as a scientific discipline, systematizes and presents the knowledge of a people within a formalized framework. The concepts interpreted and published in lexicographic works do not merely describe language, but also function as scientific media that convey particular social perceptions. This paper analyzes the codification of stereotypes about Roma in the South Slavic context, as expressed through folk tradition and incorporated into authoritative lexicographic works. Within these works, popular knowledge about Roma reflects a perception of otherness, in which their cultural practices are often viewed as deviation from what is considered normative. Based on such representations, a body of folklore emerges—stories, proverbs, sayings, and explanations of various folk events—most often carrying negative connotations. Through the process of lexicographic interpretation, these representations are formalized into published texts and thereby acquire the status of officialized knowledge, creating a uniform perception that reinforces stereotypes about Roma. Methodologically, the paper is based on the analysis of eight lexicographic editions published between 1880 and 1986. Through comparative and discourse analysis of definitions, examples, and figurative meanings of terms related to Roma, the study examines how authors have used folklore as illustrative material for explaining specific concepts. The final section also considers the contemporary context in North Macedonia. While modern academic and institutional literature shows a tendency to reduce the use of terms with stereotypical content, oral tradition and everyday speech continue to exhibit tendencies of disparagement.

I leksikografija, sar bare džanlimaski disciplina, sistematizirinela thaj sikavela o džanlipe jekhe selesko ano formalizirimo pervazi. E lafija save so mothovenpe thaj štembilirinenape ano leksikografijake ikaldina, na salde so prezentirinena o xramovipe e čhibjako, numaj si thaj bare džanlimaske mediumija save legarena ververikane percepcije. Akaja buti, analizirinela i kodifikacija e stereotipengiri baš o Roma ko jugoslavijako thanaripe, prekal e selesko mothovdipe ano avtoritetna leksikografije. Ani lende, e selesko džanlipe baš o Roma, astarela percepcije baš o „averipe“. E romengere kulturake praktike džidživdinenpe sar devijacija ja palem ikljovipe taro „normalno“. Telal i funda taro asavko prezentiribe, bajrovela thaj vi e selesko mothovipe ano paramiča, phendimata thaj vi o mothovipe selikane čipote, sakana negativnikane konotacijasa.

Prekal o proceso e leksikografijako mothovdipe, akala prezentiripa ovena formalizirime ko publikuimo teksti thaj ko asavko čhani, o terminija, andolena oficijalnikano džanlipe, kreirindor percepcija e Romenge taro negativnikano aspekti. Metodologikane, akaja buti si fundirime prekal analiza 8-to leksikografijake ikaldina ano periodi taro 1880 dži 1986 ber. Prekal komparacijaki thaj diskursno analiza e lafengje, misalenge thaj legardo džanlipa e terminenge baš o Roma, šaj te dikholpe sar thaj ko savo čhani o autorija istemalkergje o folklori sar ilustracijako materijali baš mothovdipe disave terminija phanle e Romencar. Ano agorutno kotor, dikhljakerelape thaj o savaxtutno konteksti ani Makedonija. Džikana ano savaxtutno baro rodjaripe thaj institucionalnikani literatura, dikhljargjola tendencija baš tiknarkeripe o istemalkeripe terminenge stereotipnikane saikeripaja, sa panda ani mujali tradicija thaj sakovadivesesko lafikeripe, isi tendencija baš diskriminacija upral ko Roma.

Piškor, Mojca. *Wavering Degrees of Separation: Romani Musicians and the Changing Social Worlds of Interwar Croatia*

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Even though existing musicological and ethnomusicological literature on interwar music in Croatia rarely addresses the role played by the Romani musicians – thereby effectively contributing to their invisibilization – the scattered traces of their involvement in both urban and rural musical life suggest that their role may have been considerably more significant than previously recognized. The paper presents findings from ongoing research on the lives and livelihoods of Romani musicians who earned a living by playing music for diverse audiences in both Zagreb and rural and small-town communities in the eastern regions of Croatian territories in the first half of the 20th century. Drawing on insights gained from a range of scarce and scattered sources – including periodical press, archival material, literary works, commercial recordings, ethnological collections, as well as preserved testimonies of WWII concentration camp survivors – the author will attempt to address the question of potential role music and musicianship might have had in the re-drawing of lines of separation between Romani musicians, their non-Romani audiences, and broader society in the turbulent interwar years.

Povedák, István. *Between Doctrine and Cosmology: Vernacular Authority in Roma Religious Practice*

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This paper examines how vernacular religious authority emerges and operates in contexts of social marginalization and moral uncertainty. Focusing on a Hungarian Roma religious specialist known as “Kalapos Zoli” (Hat-wearing Zoli), the presentation explores how an individual belonging to a disadvantaged minority, burdened by persistent negative stereotypes, becomes a respected opinion-shaping authority among both Roma and non-Roma communities. Zoli is a deeply devout Roman Catholic Roma man whose religiosity and rich material culture offer a compelling entry point into the study of vernacular religion, traditional belief narratives, and religious kitsch. His practices reveal a dynamic interplay between adherence to institutional Catholicism and critical engagement with its representatives and structures of authority. Through everyday acts, storytelling, and ritual practices, Zoli negotiates tensions between official doctrine and local cosmologies. The paper argues that Zoli’s religious activities might function as vernacular responses to various forms of crisis—social exclusion, ethnic stigmatization, and moral disorientation—while also fostering processes of reconciliation within and across community boundaries. His belief narratives and ritual practices simultaneously preserve and transform Roma cosmologies, reinforcing collective identity while enabling adaptive responses to changing socio-political realities.

Povedák, Kinga. *Sonic Agency and the Reconfiguration of Sensory Regimes in Roma Vernacular Religious Practices*

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This paper examines how competing aesthetic formations create religious conflict in contemporary Roma religiosity in Hungary. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and collaborative research on Roma religious musicking, I argue that ongoing transformations in 'Roma Christianity' are best understood not as purely doctrinal shifts, but as conflicts between distinct sensory regimes that (re)-organize religious experience, authority, and belonging. Building on the concept of vernacular religion as "religion as lived", I focus on how Roma believers actively negotiate inherited Catholic traditions and emergent Pentecostal-charismatic practices in their everyday lives. Central to this analysis is the question: what happens when long-standing sensory affordances embodied through generations of Marian devotion are no longer recognized as orthopraxy? I suggest that this shift marks not simply a change in belief, but a transformation in what counts as proper religious mediation and experience. Following Birgit Meyer's notion of aesthetic formations, I conceptualize these traditions as competing sensory regimes: a Marian, image-centered formation structured around icons, pilgrimage, and devotional objects, and a Pentecostal pneumatic-sonic formation centered on praise and worship music, testimony, and embodied worship practices. These formations generate tensions within families and communities, as they entail different understandings of religious authority, mediation, and legitimacy. The shift from Marian devotion toward Pentecostal practices, often framed locally as a move away from idolatry, involves a reconfiguration of sensory hierarchies, in which music and sound increasingly displaces visuality as the primary medium of divine encounter. By foregrounding these conflicts as sensory and aesthetic negotiations, I conceptualize sonic agency as a central force in the reconfiguration of religious experience.

Radosavljević, Petar — Rajić Šikanjić, Petra. *Funerary Customs of the Boyash Roma in Croatia: Preliminary Results*

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In Croatia, Roma are one of the 22 recognized national minorities. According to the 2021 Census, a significant proportion of the Roma population lives in Međimurje County, where the Boyash (Bayash) community - a distinct subgroup characterized by specific linguistic and cultural features - is predominantly situated. Their first language is the Transylvanian variety of Boyash Romanian, which differs in several respects from standard Romanian and related Daco Romanian varieties. Despite everyday challenges, including restricted access to education, employment, and healthcare, as well as social distance from the majority population, the Boyash community has preserved strong elements of identity, ethnic distinctiveness, and cultural heritage. Research on Roma death rituals and mortuary practices in Croatia remains scarce and is largely based on studies conducted in other national contexts. This reveals a significant gap in understanding how such traditions are maintained and expressed locally. This study addresses this gap by presenting findings from a pilot study conducted in a micro-location in Međimurje, focusing on members of the Boyash Roma community. The research methodology includes semi-structured interviews with community members and an analysis of gravestone features. Interviews, based on predetermined but open-ended questions, aim to explore beliefs and practices surrounding pre-funeral and funeral rituals, as well as customs related to graves and headstones. Inscriptions and monument design make graves a valuable source for understanding cultural, religious, and social beliefs, traditions and practices connected to death. The study also includes a linguistic component, examining Boyash Romanian lexicon and terminology relevant to funerary practices. The gathered data will provide insight into the continuity and transformation of funerary customs within the contemporary Boyash community and contribute to a deeper understanding of their cultural practices in Croatia.

Rajagopal, Gatha. *Translating Caste into Race: Colonial Epistemologies and Aryan Thought in the Racialisation of Romani Lives in Britain and Beyond*

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This paper argues that the racialisation of Romani communities in Britain and beyond must be understood through the intersection of caste and race, produced within and sustained by colonial knowledge systems. It conceptualizes this as a process of “double-layered racialisation,” in which Romani people were simultaneously constructed as racially non-European and caste-marked as socially and morally degraded. Tracing the origins of this framework, the paper begins with Heinrich Grellmann’s 1783 intervention, which introduced the Hindu varna system into European accounts of Romani origins by locating them within the Shudra varna. This origin theory was established at a critical historical juncture when European racial thinking was evolving towards a more rigid, biologised framework and when British colonial influence in India was intensifying. This convergence created ideal conditions for his theory to gain significant traction among British scholars, who could draw parallels between their colonial knowledge of Indian castes and their observations of domestic Romani communities. The colonial understanding of caste itself was shaped by orientalist ethnography and mediated through a predominantly Brahminical point of view. This understanding, reflected in colonial administrative writings and ethnographic accounts published in forums such as the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, produced a textualised and hierarchical model of caste that emphasized fixity, descent, and social stratification. These epistemologies were mobilised in the metropole, where writers such as John Hoyland and Charles Leland drew upon them to construct and stabilise Romani identity through caste-based logics, simultaneously influenced by colonial reports as well as Grellmann’s model. Meanwhile, elsewhere in Europe, the orientalist apparatus fed into Aryanist thought to produce civilisational hierarchies grounded in notions of purity, origin, and hereditary difference, which in turn informed the racialization of Romani communities. Examining these transnational knowledge networks and their circulation between India and Europe, the paper demonstrates how caste and race became mutually reinforcing categories in the production of Romani difference. It situates anti-Roma racism as a product of the interwoven histories of orientalism, Aryan thought, and empire.

Rotaru, Julieta. *Roma slavery or Karl Marx and the unilinear reconstruction of the transition from slavery to servitude in Romanian historiography?*

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Karl Marx's work has often been read through ideological filters rather than sustained historical analysis. In twentieth-century Romania, historical materialism was frequently applied as a rigid interpretive scheme, which shaped both what was studied and what was left aside. A moment of surprise came in the 1960, with the discovery of an unpublished manuscript containing historical and social observations about Romanians, in the Marx-Engels Fund of the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, by a Polish researcher, Stanisław Schwann, professor at the University of Economics in Szczecin, Poland, and the University of Leipzig. Four years after the discovery, the manuscript has been translated and published under the supervision of the Director of the Institute of History of the Academy of the Romanian Socialist Republic: *Karl Marx Însemnări despre români (Manuscrite inedite)*, [Notes about the Romanians (Unpublished manuscripts)], published by A. Oțetea and S. Schwann, Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 1964, 185p. In these unpublished notes Karl Marx has amply addressed the subject of Romanian subservient peasantry but remained silent over the subject of Roma slavery. Marx's work remained unanchored to the study of Gypsy slavery in Romania, until the study of Leonardo Piasere (2016). The author analyses Karl Marx's conception about the slavery of Gypsies in the Romanian Principalities. The conclusion of the study contradicts Marx, perceived to be confused and "troubled by the slavery of the Wallachian Gypsies in the unilinear reconstruction of the transition from slavery to servitude" (2016: 237). The sources of information and, implicitly, the level of knowledge of Karl Marx regarding the status of slavery in Wallachia and Moldavia have been established in the Introduction of the Romanian edition. Hence, Piasere's investigation reveals a paradox: although well informed, Karl Marx does not analyse "the relationship between the situation of the enslaved Gypsies and the servitude of the serf peasants." The perplexity of Leonardo Piasere is expressed in questions and hypotheses. Our analysis opens two interpretations: 1) Karl Marx had documentation about the situation of the social classes in the Romanian Principalities only from his time, which did not give him the possibility of an in-depth analysis of the Gypsy slavery or, 2) Karl Marx knew well the historical past of the rumâni subservient peasants, actual slaves until the liberation in 1746. In 1746 the Wallachian ruler of Greek extraction from Fener quarter in Constantinople, the great reformer and intellectual Constantin Mavrocordat abolishes rumânia (serfdom) but does not abolish the robia (slavery) of the Gypsies. After 1746 the rumâni became free and they could no longer be sold and had the right to live wherever they were accepted. Nevertheless, they remained dependent on the plot of agricultural land which they cultivated. Thus, a classification of Gypsy slavery different from peasant

servitude was not relevant for the demonstration of Karl Marx about the accumulation of surplus and formation of capital.

Russinov, Rumyan. *Roma Movement in Bulgaria, the Civic Sector, and Governmental Policy toward Roma after the Political Transformation of 1989*

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Existing scholarship on Bulgaria's policies toward Roma, the role of the donor and non-governmental sector, and the development of Roma activism after 1989 has largely examined these themes separately and within fragmented analytical frameworks. This study seeks to overcome such limitations by analyzing the interrelations among these three dimensions within the broader socio-political field of the "Roma issue" in post-socialist Bulgaria. It argues that state institutions, donor organizations, civil society actors, and Roma activists have operated within a shared political space shaped by cooperation, dependency, negotiation, and conflict. Such an integrated perspective enables a deeper understanding of both the internal dynamics of this field and the structural causes underlying its achievements and limitations. The analysis is structured around three major historical periods: 1989–1997, 1997–2007, and the period from 2007 to the present. The first period may be described as a formative phase of Roma mobilization, during which Roma organizations emerged organically within the expanding post-communist civil society. Established primarily by Roma intellectuals without substantial donor support, these organizations focused on political participation, democratic inclusion, and the recognition of Roma identity. The second period, corresponding to Bulgaria's EU accession process, was marked by the professionalization of the Roma NGO sector and the growing influence of donor organizations and EU funding on the priorities of Roma-related initiatives. The third period, following Bulgaria's accession to the European Union in 2007, has been characterized by the gradual withdrawal of international donor engagement, declining political support for Roma inclusion, and the intensification of anti-Roma rhetoric across Europe. The presentation advances three main arguments. First, despite limited organizational capacity and financial resources, Roma organizations during the period 1989–1997 retained considerable autonomy in defining their agendas and priorities. Second, although the period 1997–2007 saw the emergence of numerous professionally organized Roma and pro-Roma NGOs, many operated primarily within donor-defined frameworks rather than pursuing independent political priorities. In many cases, donor institutions marginalized the experience of the first generation of Roma activists and organizations established immediately after 1989. As a result, many initiatives concerning Roma inclusion became projects about Roma rather than projects led by Roma themselves. Third, the study argues that governmental policies toward Roma integration in Bulgaria were characterized more by declarative rhetoric than by the implementation of coherent and sustainable policy measures.

Ryvolová, Karolína. *Where to Now? The impact of the existence of an exclusively Romani publishing house on both the growth and dissemination of Romani writing and the topography of the mainstream literary field*

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In 2019 in Reykjavik, I presented the successful transformation of an online, volunteer-run publishing house of Romani letters, est. in 2012, into a regular small publisher with its first printed volume, I. Ferková's *I'll Have Another One*, Lida and numerous public literary events. Since then, the publishing house KHER has released more than twenty titles by Romani writers from all over the world, joined the booksellers' distribution network, collected a number of literary and graphic awards, expanded to Slovakia and brought out its first volume in English – among other things. Its presence on the Czech market is to be counted with, and it is actually changing the face of the local literary industry. Kher's undeniable success has encouraged many more writers to submit their manuscripts in the hope of seeing their works published. However, greater visibility comes with graver responsibility and multiple ethical questions and reputation issues have emerged. Does a Romani publishing house require all members of staff to be of Romani origin? What to do about manuscripts by Non-Roma on Romani topics? Is KHER obliged to accept all manuscripts by Romani writers, no matter what the quality? What is the role of an editorial board and plan and what is the publishing house's future? My case study of KHER's development since 2019 will try to address these issues, show how they are dealt with on a day-to-day practical basis, and use specific titles in point to illustrate the latest developments in Romani writing in the Czech Republic.

Sachi-Noro, Ryoko. *One Faith, Many Forms: Roma Pentecostalism in France and Romania*

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This paper examines Roma Pentecostalism through a comparative ethnographic study of Manouche churches in France and Roma churches in Romania, challenging prevailing ethnonationalist interpretations in the literature. Previous scholarship has tended to emphasize pan-Romani identity, transnational unity, and narratives such as "the chosen Gypsy people" as central features of Roma Pentecostalism. However, fieldwork in both countries reveals a different picture: believers consistently prioritize Christian identity over ethnic identity, framing their faith in universalist terms rather than ethnocultural ones. Despite this shared theological orientation, the two communities exhibit notable differences in worship practice. French Manouche services center on personal testimonies, informal pastor-believer relations, and a relatively egalitarian congregational atmosphere, reflecting broader Manouche social patterns. Romanian Roma churches, by contrast, feature multiple pastoral sermons, stricter discipline, a stronger emphasis on repentance and collective moral transformation, and a more hierarchical authority structure, which may reflect broader patriarchal social patterns. Emotional and bodily expression also differs: Romanian Roma worshippers frequently kneel and weep during prayer, while Manouche worshippers tend to pray more quietly, with women often covering their heads. Musical practice also diverges: while both communities use recorded music from smartphones, Manouche services rely primarily on congregational singing, whereas Romanian Roma churches are distinguished by performances from professional musicians playing synthesizers, saxophones, and electric guitars, creating a dense, emotionally charged soundscape. These differences are not mere localization. Rather, they illustrate how a universalist theology is enacted through culturally embedded sonic, bodily, and organizational forms. Ethnic and cultural specificity surfaces not in explicit discourse but in practice. These findings suggest a need for a methodological reorientation: instead of focusing on ethnic narratives, scholars of Roma Pentecostalism should attend to worship aesthetics, church discipline, and social structure. The paper concludes that diverse cultural practices do not undermine religious universalism—they actively constitute it.

Sawicki, Diethard. *Protestant Mission Efforts towards Gypsy/Roma Communities (17th–21st Centuries)*

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The contribution, conceived as a co-organiser's framing intervention, connects the panel's subject to the broader context of historiography on Protestant mission and the potentials of the IZP as a research institution in Central Germany. The paper outlines key research lines by highlighting central analytical axes, including missionary motivations and strategies, Roma agency and resistance, institutional and transnational networks, processes of representation and othering, and the enduring legacies of mission encounters. By foregrounding methodological challenges and emerging perspectives—particularly the integration of Roma voices and the critical reassessment of established narratives—the presentation delineates the panel's contribution to ongoing debates in Romani Studies and religious history. In addition, it introduces relevant research resources and scholarly infrastructures associated with the IZP in Halle, including archival holdings on mid-twentieth-century “Gypsy mission,” early modern correspondence concerning the admission of Roma children to the orphanage of the Franckesche Stiftungen, and regional case studies on the influence of Protestant organisations on Roma communities in Prussia during then 19th century. Emphasising Halle's role as a research hub for Early Modern and Modern protestantism, the presentation will highlight the potential for further interdisciplinary and collaborative inquiry in this field.

Schmeding, Annika. *Necro-Ostracism: Late-Peripatetic Burial, Belonging, and Social Exclusion in Urban Afghanistan*

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This paper examines how stigmas attached to peripatetic nomadic communities in Afghanistan became entrenched over time, ultimately extending beyond the lives of individuals into the domain of death and burial — a process termed 'necro-ostracism'. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork conducted in Kabul, Herat, and Mazar-e Sharif, the paper traces how social stereotypes, hardened through successive pressures of displacement and economic precarity, came to justify the exclusion of the dead alongside the living. Rather than a static condition, this marginality is understood as a dynamic process in which the war economy progressively narrowed the social and legal ground on which peripatetic communities could stand, rendering their claims — to land, to belonging, and ultimately to burial — increasingly vulnerable. The paper situates these dynamics within the broader transformations unleashed by the US-led military intervention of 2001, which dramatically intensified competition over land — including cemeteries — as a vehicle for political patronage and economic accumulation. In this context, burial space itself becomes an arena in which late-peripatetic marginality is reproduced and contested. By focusing on inter-community negotiation and the role of burial gatekeepers, the paper illuminates how former peripatetics actively navigate, and at times resist, the structures that seek to exclude them — even in death. The Afghan case thus extends the late-peripatetic framework into the domain of mortuary politics, showing how global modernity's disruptions reach into the most fundamental moments of social life.

Seeman, Sonia. *Hidden in Plain View: Turkish Roman Musicians and Affective Musical Labor*

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It is an open secret that Romani musicians contribute to a large proportion of the Turkish national musical labor force. What is less known is that most of these musicians immigrated from Greece and Bulgaria. The invisibility of these immigrant Romani musicians is due to multiple levels of exploitation at the economic level: 1) their status has become conflated with that of the instruments they play, dehumanizing their subjectivity; 2) the value of their labor became tied to the low status of the immigrant patrons that they served; 3) the value of their symbolic capital as well as economic capital could only increase through service to the state and non-immigrant communities, thus causing their own traditions to disappear. Academic scholarship has contributed to the invisibility of these musicians by adopting Western European value systems that valorize “the music itself” while erasing the laboring bodies that produce musical sounds. Further, academic study of Romani musicians has compounded this problem: 1) Romani craftsmanship and skill continue to be discursively represented as “natural gifts of their race” rather than understood as a form of labor; 2) their status as immigrants has only been recognized within the context of their contributions to “folklore”, and thus viewed as an expression of collective consciousness rather than individual or family labor. Academic reluctance in Western Europe and the US to recognize music as a form of labor has contributed to making laboring bodies invisible. I draw on fieldwork data from extensive fieldwork with immigrant Romani musician families, primary historical documents and Turkish academic discourses from writings, interviews and observation. Framed by theoretical frameworks from Marxist analysis of labor and Hannah Arendt’s philosophical understanding of the human condition, I investigate the saliency of music-as-labor in light of musicians’ strategies and indigenous terminology to better understand the relationship between economic exploitation, social stigma, and the ethno-national project.

Sevillano, Ana Belén Martín. Intersecting Sound and Literary Studies: the Inscription of Singing as Romani Literature

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The inclusion of oral textuality in literary studies is usually restricted to the text or lyrics, leaving outside performative or musical traits that have substantial weight in the meaning. In the case of Romani storytelling, the archive that has been compiled, which is scarce, has registered exclusively the textual dimension, with no allusion to paratextual or performative elements. Furthermore, collections of traditional storytelling have been grammatically and semantically edited, erasing uses of the language and the vocabulary that add important meaning to the content. In the case of songs, closely related to storytelling in origin and function, literary language and the acoustic apparatus work in synchronicity to convey meaning and emotions. This presentation will reflect on the methodology and theoretical tools that would allow literary studies to register and analyze oral textualities (storytelling and singing) as literature without excising its performative or acoustic dimension.

Singh, G. Punita. *What do Indians know about their Romani kin? — Insights from a survey across generations and review of their sources of information and misinformation*

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The average Indian sadly knows little about the Roma if anything at all. Even the most educated have scant awareness about their origin, language, migration or kinship with India. Following up on classroom surveys done earlier with university students in ‘Romani Music and Culture’ courses, a more formal approach was taken to assess awareness about Roma across generations. Around 100 respondents of different ages spanning eight decades answered a questionnaire designed to explore what they know about Roma and when and how they received this knowledge. Older people (beyond 50) knew about ‘gypsies’ from books read in childhood, with Enid Blyton emerging as a much-beloved author. They had not, however, connected the word ‘Gypsy’ with ‘Roma’ and had no awareness about the Indian origin. Not surprisingly, younger people born in the internet age with fingertip-access to television, films and social media were more aware, though their sources of information were also dubious—mainly Instagram reels and posts, and Netflix series like ‘Peaky Blinders’. A review of these sources underscores how they can function as conduits of information as well as misinformation. They can dispel or reinforce stereotypes and prejudices. Enid Blyton books published before the 70s had evident xenophobic references, though Indian readers seemed oblivious to them. Later editions have sanitized Blyton’s books, expunging or replacing ‘Gypsy’ with more acceptable words like ‘Romany’ or ‘Traveller’. Steven Knight’s gritty Netflix series ‘Peaky Blinders’ has won numerous accolades and has a cult following around the world, but intentionally confounds timelines and sub-cultures, mixing fiction with reality in an appealing but ultimately misleading manner. Instagram reels are perfectly sized for short attention spans and some such as those by @floridian.florian and @hristiyanmitkov showcasing similarities in Indian and Romani dialects have gone viral in India. While appreciating the passion and effort of these youngsters and the easy access and democratic nature of social media, it is becoming increasingly challenging to cut through the clutter and find credible sources. In India, with limited opportunities for personal engagement with Roma or Romani Studies, online channels offer an attractive alternative for imbibing and imparting content. With news media, corporations, NGOs and educational institutions all turning to digital platforms to assert their presence in the world, academia will have to be hypervigilant in leveraging modern communication methods to share information while safeguarding authenticity from hype and hyperbole.

Sîrbu, Tatiana. *Roma performers as cultural diplomats: Artistic tours in Czechoslovakia during the Soviet Era*

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The title and content of this presentation concern an ongoing research project supported by the National Scholarship Programme of the Slovak Republic and hosted by the Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology at the Slovak Academy of Sciences about cultural administration patterns regarding Roma performers and artistic ensembles in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc, from the end of WWII to the end of the Cold War. This research has the main objective of highlighting not only the artistic activity of Roma artists as mere performers, but also their role in the circulation of cultural products labeled “Roma” by cultural and administrative institutions. The most important means of circulating and disseminating these cultural products was the artistic tours. Hence, the artistic tours of Soviet Roma artists outside the USSR offer a privileged analytical angle for approaching the Soviet cultural diplomacy, an aspect to which these Roma artists often contributed.

Slavkova. Magdalena. *Evangelising Difference: Ethnicity, Language, and Power among Early Pentecostal Roma in Bulgaria*

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Evangelical missionary work among Roma communities in Bulgaria during the first half of the 20th century (then commonly referred to as “Gypsies”) evolved from a “civilizing” into an ethnocultural approach that increasingly recognized the Roma as a distinct group with their own language, identity, and cultural traditions. This change contributed to the emergence of a Roma evangelical elite - men and women who acted as intermediaries between their communities and the broader evangelical movement. Missionaries actively supported individuals, both male and female, who demonstrated literacy, curiosity, and commitment to evangelical doctrine, encouraging them to become spiritual leaders within their communities. An important component of this work was the promotion of the Romani language in religious life and translations of religious texts and hymns. Figures such as Ioto Tatarev, a Pentecostal missionary active across southern Bulgaria, and Duda Karagyzova, one of the first female converts in the Yambol region, illustrate the roles of mobility and gender in this process. Both stressed divine healing and the active presence of the Holy Spirit in believers’ lives as Pentecostal followers. Originally president of the Orthodox Christian Society “Rodina” (Homeland), Tatarev later became a Roma missionary working mainly among Muslim Roma. He collaborated with the Gypsy Evangelical Mission, founded in Sofia in the 1930s, which envisioned a large-scale, transnational effort to evangelize Roma populations across the Balkans - an ambition ultimately constrained by the political instability of the period. He also compiled texts into Romani, including *Romane somnal gilya* (1936), and contributed to Pentecostal periodicals such as *The Gospel Call*. Duda Karagyzova actively hosted religious services in her home and joined male preachers on missionary tours throughout Roma communities. However, missionary work remained shaped by paternalistic assumptions, as Roma converts were expected to remain under non-Roma supervision. Despite facing limited opportunities and influence, early Roma missionaries and activists established the foundations of Pentecostalism among the Roma, shaping its lasting role in the community. Examining such individual trajectories reveals the complex interplay between cultural recognition and power in early Roma evangelicalism.

Smith, David — Cook Sophie. Introduction

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Will locate the case-studies within their historical and policy background; outline the rationale for the study and its aims/objectives before introducing the three case study locations.

Smith, David. Case Study Two: Maidstone

Maidstone, Kent in south-east England contains one of the UK's largest Gypsy/Traveller populations with three of its five districts recording the highest numbers in the country. Apart from Maidstone town it is a largely rural area, and the presence of Gypsy/Travellers reflects their historical role in fruit and hop-picking, which were major local industries particularly from the 19th until the mid-20th century. Due to the size of its nomadic population Kent was at the forefront of policy discussions concerning how to resolve the accommodation crisis facing Gypsy/Travellers in the postwar period. A survey conducted in 1951/1952 found 1,150 people stopping on 18 camps and 350 more on individual sites across Kent and concluded that just over 10% were of "true Romany families". Kent County Council (KCC) endorsed this view and its approach was driven by efforts to contain further growth of its itinerant population and the number of sites it had to provide, through distinguishing 'genuine' Gypsies from other caravan-dwellers who, it was anticipated, would enter housing as supply increased. Secondly by prioritising 'local' Gypsies for public sites over outsiders who, it argued, entered the county due to it having provided sites. KCC's 10 site policy was based on figures from the 1962 Survey and it refused to accommodate the surplus it argued had entered the county between the 1962 and 1965 Surveys. Concerns at growth in its nomadic population grew after the 1968 Act and the 15-pitch criteria for London Boroughs which KCC argued, was pushing Gypsy/Travellers out of London into Kent. Maidstone, which contained a high number of small private sites initially resisted providing sites. However, facing a large rise in unofficial camps after the 1960 Act exacerbated by the decline in winter-quarters, and with increasing demands that the authorities take action, Maidstone exercised its powers under the 1960 Act and by 1967 was the only Kent district with two public-sites. KCC's objective was to achieve county-wide designation and despite making progress in site delivery and in tipping the balance between authorised and unofficial camps, by the late 1970s it was acknowledged that 'adequate' provision was not achievable through public sites due to the size of the commitment this entailed. KCC's Gypsy Policy (1982) therefore promoted a mixed-approach with public-sites one element alongside private-sites, council-housing and allowing families to stop on farms at the end of the season. Maidstone was a high priority area and a heavy reliance on private-sites was planned with

licensing of existing sites the quickest and most expedient way to achieve designation. Consequently, there was a significant rise in licensed private-sites in the district from 26 in July 1982 to 68 in January 1983, although much of this was achieved through regularising those with existing-rights or following appeal due to the district's strong enforcement policy. By 1987 half of the 156 caravans on Kent's private-sites were in Maidstone. Housing was seen by officials as a desirable end in itself, but more immediately as a means to reduce unauthorised-camps and would assume a more central role in accommodating families displaced from sites from the 1980s, facilitated by changes in housing-allocation criteria. Despite residents' opposition to sites this generally dissipated after sites were established, and a coalition of support-groups advocated for site provision on both humanitarian grounds and to lessen the negative impacts of unregulated camps in their localities. The Gypsy Council and Romany Guild were both active – scrutinising KCC's record in site delivery and lobbying KCC to fulfil their obligations under the 1968 Act. More decisive in stimulating site delivery were policy changes introduced after the Cripps report (1976) e.g., the 100% government grant and district-level designation and between 1980 and 1985 Kent's public-sites increased capacity from 26% to 40% of caravans. By the time of Maidstone's designation in 1987 its share of caravans on public sites was significantly lower at 26% compared to 60% on private-sites, notably higher than Kent's total of 19%.

This paper examines how Roma communities and ageing are represented within UK policies promoting integrated, place-based approaches to health and wellbeing. While such policies increasingly emphasise inclusion, community engagement and co-production, the paper argues that Roma communities, particularly older Roma, remain structurally absent from these frameworks, and that co-production offers a meaningful mechanism for re-designing more inclusive approaches to ageing in place. Drawing on the RomaPlaceAge project (2024–27), the paper develops this argument across three strands of empirical work. First, a scoping review of 132 UK policy documents explores how ageing, inclusion and minoritised communities are framed within place-based health and wellbeing policy. The review finds that Roma communities are almost entirely absent from policy discussions on ageing. Where Roma are mentioned, they are typically subsumed within broad Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) categories, with little attention to the specific experiences of Roma communities or to later life. Ageing itself is constructed as a largely universal process, obscuring how ethnicity, marginalisation, and structural inequality shape ageing experiences. Second, Knowledge Café workshops held in Glasgow, Peterborough, and Luton (UK) brought together policymakers, practitioners and Roma community members to collectively identify barriers to inclusion and to begin articulating practical pathways for more responsive, place-based interventions. Finally, a series of co-produced storytelling workshops built on these insights to develop and refine locally grounded policy and practice interventions. By centring Roma lived experience, these workshops moved beyond critique to collaboratively generate context-sensitive responses, demonstrating how co-production can function as a process for designing more inclusive place-based approaches to ageing. The findings suggest that addressing the marginalisation of Roma ageing requires more than adding underrepresented voices to existing frameworks. It demands sustained, community-led co-production as a mechanism for actively re-shaping the normative assumptions through which place-based health policy is designed and delivered.

Škiljan, Filip. *Oral History as a Method for Researching the Suffering of Roma during the Second World War*

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Oral history as a method for researching the suffering of Roma in Croatia during the Second World War is of exceptional importance due to the lack of written sources and the marginalization of the Roma community in archival records. Since Roma were often excluded from administrative documentation or records about them were destroyed, testimonies of survivors and their descendants represent a crucial source for reconstructing experiences of persecution, deportation, and genocide. The method of oral history enables the collection of personal narratives that complement official documents and provide insight into everyday life, survival strategies, and patterns of violence against Roma. It also reveals local specificities of suffering that are often absent from general historiographical overviews. In the Croatian context, such research is particularly important for understanding the fate of Roma within the framework of the Independent State of Croatia, where Roma were systematically persecuted and killed. At the same time, oral history presents methodological challenges, such as the subjectivity of memory, temporal distance, and the transmission of traumatic experiences across generations. Nevertheless, through critical analysis and comparison with other sources, it is possible to obtain a reliable and multi-layered understanding of the past. Oral history thus represents an indispensable tool in researching the suffering of Roma, as it allows the voices of victims and their communities to become visible in historiography, contributing to a more comprehensive and humane understanding of past events. Through two case studies of Roma suffering in Draškovec and Radigojna, the author will seek to demonstrate how oral history can be effectively used in the absence of written sources.

Acknowledgement

Research for this paper was carried out as part of the project “Forgotten Places of Suffering of the Unsuitables: Genocide of Roma in the Independent State of Croatia: Research, Memorialization, Education – FORGOT-GENROMISC,” funded by the European Union Programme NextGeneration EU (01/08-73/23-2519-8).

Škobla, Daniel — Filčák, Richard. *When Rivers Rise: Flood Risk and the Resilience of Roma Communities in Slovakia*

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Natural hazards, especially floods, arise from extreme natural processes and are increasingly intensified by climate change, placing significant pressure on both the environment and human communities. According to the National Strategy for Security Risk Management of the Slovak Republic, natural hazards in Slovakia are categorized into four groups based on their level of risk. Among these, climatic hazards—especially floods—represent the most serious threat to society. In Slovakia, many Roma settlements are located in environmentally unstable areas with a high exposure to natural hazards, including both fluvial (river-related) and pluvial (rainfall-related) flooding. As a result, these communities experience recurrent flooding events. One of the most devastating floods occurred in 1998 in Jarovnice, when the Svinka River surged violently, destroying approximately 35 Romani homes and causing the deaths of 47 Roma residents. In 2010, widespread flooding forced the evacuation of more than 100 Roma from settlements in Nižný Tvarožec and Lukov. More recently, in 2025, floods again affected Jarovnice—home to the largest Roma settlement in Slovakia—damaging modest housing and leaving behind significant debris. This paper examines at-risk Romani settlements located in the floodplains of the Topľa River and Torysa River. It focuses on the analysis of flood risk mitigation measures implemented by local authorities and the state in selected municipalities. In addition, the study explores perceptions of flood risk among both local authorities and the Romani population. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the socioeconomic conditions of flood affected Roma communities, based on the assumption that higher socioeconomic status and improved living conditions are directly linked to greater resilience to flood risks and natural hazards more generally. Methodologically, the research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative component is based on a questionnaire survey examining the socioeconomic status of Roma households, conducted on a sample of 186 households. The qualitative component employs the Rapid Rural Appraisal technique, a cost-effective approach for gaining insights into rural communities and their resources, complemented by semi-structured interviews and archival research.

Acknowledgement

This research was supported by the APVV-22-0428 *Marginalized Roma concentrations in the context of natural hazards and social inequality*.

Toma, Stefania. *Between Inclusion and Reproduction: Roma School Mediators and Policy Bricolage in Romania*

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This paper examines the Roma School Mediator programme in Romania as a case of how transnationally circulating inclusion policies are reworked in local educational practice. Drawing on long-term ethnographic research rural localities, complemented by several urban case studies, the paper traces how the mediator role moved from NGO-supported pilot initiatives to formal institutionalization within the education system. Rather than treating mediation as a straightforward inclusion tool, I argue that the programme has ambiguous implementation mechanism and outcomes. Mediators can expand access to schooling, facilitate communication between Roma families and schools, and reduce everyday administrative and relational barriers. At the same time, they may also become incorporated into arrangements that reinforce segregation, compensate for institutional failures. Conceptually, the paper links policy transfer to policy bricolage, showing how inclusion devices are not simply implemented but assembled, adapted, and repurposed under local constraints, identifying the institutional and relational conditions under which mediation is more likely to support educational inclusion and those under which it becomes part of the reproduction of inequality.

Tóth, Norbert. *Social integration and local tradition set of Roma youth in Hungary*

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The results of educational sociology research on the Hungarian Roma/Gypsy community draw attention to the fact that a positive trend has been observed in the last decade in terms of educational translation from the aspect of educational indicators of the Roma/Gypsy population, but the gap between the education of the Hungarian Roma and the majority society has not decreased. Researchers working on the topic emphasize that one of the main obstacles to the social integration of the Hungarian Roma is low educational attainment. At the same time, in the past decade, the phenomenon of middle classification has also been observed in the Hungarian Gypsy/Roma community, and partly due to the expansion of higher education, more and more young people of Gypsy/Roma origin have had the opportunity for social mobility. Starting from this basic concept, in our research we undertook to examine the mobility channels provided by the education system through the life histories of young Gypsy/Roma who have embarked on the path of social mobility, as well as to map the socio-cultural environment and local traditions that condition the possibility of social integration in many respects. The empirical research presented in the presentation relies on a qualitative technique. We conducted semi-structured interviews with young people of Gypsy/Roma origin who have a higher education degree or are active university students (N=25). Through the life stories of the informants, we gain a comprehensive picture of the process of successful social integration and the characteristics of the local set of traditions.

Varga, Helena — Kriston, Lili. *Hallgató and Gospel: Re-ethnicization and lived religion in Romani musical practice (paper and workshop)*

Romani Design; University of Szeged, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology)

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This hybrid artistic workshop explores Romani religious musical practices as embodied forms of cultural knowledge, memory, and identity construction, with particular attention to the relationship between the *hallgató* (slow, expressive Romani songs) and contemporary Romani Christian worship music. Led by Romani artist and performer Helena Varga, the session draws on her long-term artistic and ethnographic engagement with Oláh Roma communities in Hungary, especially in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county. The workshop combines live performances of traditional Romani songs with narrative reflection in Lovari Romanes (with English interpretation), foregrounding language, voice, and affect as central epistemic tools. The workshop is grounded in ongoing research conducted within the Trauma and Creativity project at the University of Szeged Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, led by Povedák Kinga PhD. It builds on longitudinal material spanning from the 1990s to the present, including Ms Varga's documentation as participant-observer of Romani congregational movements and recent video-elicitation-based fieldwork. Conceptually, the session engages with the notion of re-ethnicization in Romani religious music, suggesting that even within transformed religious contexts, earlier musical structures and expressive forms persist and are rearticulated. Drawing on scholarship in ethnomusicology and Romani Studies, the workshop frames music as a dynamic site where ethnic identity, religious transformation, and cultural representation intersect. Special attention is given to the shifting relationships between Catholic traditions-particularly Marian devotion - and the rise of Pentecostal and charismatic movements among Romani communities. Within these transformations, music functions as a key medium of emotional intensity, embodied religious experience, and collective participation, while also serving as a tool of cultural continuity and adaptation. Through comparative presentation and interpretation of song texts, the workshop highlights structural parallels between the traditional *hallgató* and contemporary worship songs. These parallels demonstrate how global Christian musical forms are localized through Romani expressive traditions, rather than simply adopted. Methodologically, the workshop is informed by principles of collaborative and community-based research, aligned with applied ethnomusicology approaches, and grounded in the ethical framework of "nothing about us without us." Helena's dual role as artist and cultural insider enables a mode of knowledge production

that challenges conventional anthropological distance and foregrounds emic perspectives. By combining performance, translation, and critical reflection, the workshop offers a multisensory and reflexive engagement with Romani religious music as both artistic practice and social knowledge. It ultimately proposes an expanded understanding of scholarship in which voice, language, and lived experience are not supplementary, but central to the production of knowledge.

Verbuč, David. *Beyond Binary Opposition: Complexities of Social and Music Interaction Between Romani/Sinti and Non-Romani/ \Non-Sinti People in North Slovenia*

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Throughout the history and up to the present, Romani and Sinti people experienced many forms of inhumane mistreatment by the majority societies with which they were in contact. This has also been widely acknowledged by scholars. However, other types of relations such as acceptance and solidarity also existed between the minority Romani/Sinti populations and the majority societies surrounding them, and while these kinds of interactions are sometimes mentioned in scholarly literature (often in passing), they are rarely systematically researched. It is therefore important to move beyond the reductive binary and “oppositional” perspective (i.e., about negative relations and essentialist differences between both groups) and to acknowledge and study a wider range of social interactions that exist between Romani/Sinti and non-Romani/non-Sinti populations, especially regarding the Romani / Sinti relationships with a peasant society in the countryside. Based on ethnographic, archival, and other sources, this study therefore explores a wide range of various types of social relations existing in the contact zone between Romani/Sinti and non-Romani/non-Sinti populations in the Upper Savinja valley, north Slovenia, in the decades before and after the WWII. It specifically focuses on two Romani and Sinti families from the region and examines the complexities and contradictions of their social, and musical interchange with peasants and townspeople. Finally, this analysis adopts a dialectical perspective of understanding cultural differences in relation to human similarities, positive social relations between both populations in relation to negative, informal in relation to institutional, and rural in relation to urban.

Vojak, Danijel — Laederich, Stephane. *Distortions on the Genocide of the Roma in Media and Social Media*

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Roma were victims of the genocidal policy of the Nazi authorities and their allied countries before and during the Second World War. The demographic destruction of the Roma population is a direct consequence of this genocidal policy. After the war, the culture of memory of the Roma victims was marginalised, a fact especially visible in the absence of recognition that Roma were victims of a racially based genocide. There were no commemorations for Roma victims, and their suffering was not systematically and scientifically studied. The genocide was not included in the education system. In parallel to the marginalisation of the culture of memory for Roma victims, these minimising the suffering of Roma or completely denying it are still circulating. Such reflections, while often expressed in public by marginal individuals, aim to impose distorted theses about the genocide of the Roma in the mainstream media and the public. Distortion on the genocide of the Roma often starts with the denial of the racial nature of the persecution, builds on negative stereotypes about Roma, and tends to relativise or minimise the impact of the genocide. On the other hand, one also sees exaggerations from activists. The Roma Foundation in Zurich launched a survey examining the prevalence of distortion in social media, as well as in comments on media articles in various countries. Analysis focused on articles in media and social media on the Genocide of the Roma in Croatian, Czech, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Serbian, and Ukrainian between 2013 and 2025. We will present the results of this analysis.

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Research for this paper was carried out as part of the project “Forgotten Places of Suffering of the Unsuitables: Genocide of Roma in the Independent State of Croatia: Research, Memorialization, Education – FORGOT-GENROMISC,” funded by the European Union Programme NextGeneration EU (01/08-73/23-2519-8).

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The literature about the Romani musicians in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia is practically non-existent. Unlike the lacking scholarly focus of the time, the music industry, because of its profit-orientation, displayed a relatively free and opened space for the production of music and musicians who largely remained outside of the national music canons. Within the record production in the first Zagreb record factory, Edison Bell Penkala, during the late 1920s and 1930s, Romani ensembles were present among the regular performers on the record labels, mostly indicated as a specific category of music – a “Gypsy band” (ciganska kapela). Results of the recently finished musicological research project about the first decades of the domestic record industry in Croatia also showed that most of the recorded Romani musicians migrated between Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo, playing an important role in supporting various music scenes of the Yugoslav major cities. This paper will bring forward some of their activities and contributions.

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This presentation aims to clarify the concept of late-peripatetics, emphasizing its analytical potential and various forms. It introduces the "Late-Peripatetic" framework to theorize the resilience and active participation of relevant groups in modern global contexts. By the 1980s, anthropologists and sociologists had developed several terms to describe the socio-historical phenomenon of non-pastoral nomads, including "non-food-producing nomads," "symbiotic nomads," and "commercial nomads." These labels sought to address the confusion stemming from overloaded folk terms like "Gypsy" and "Paryatan." Aparna Rao and Joseph C. Berland proposed the term "peripatetic," which has become the most widely recognized and theoretically refined concept for identifying this phenomenon. Historically, the concept of the peripatetic has allowed for diverse interpretations. Its originators did not perceive nomadism as an absolute condition but rather as a specific mode of spatial mobility utilized among client communities as necessary. However, the framework established by this original concept does not fully capture the range of adaptations made by groups whose ancestors were peripatetics. The concept of "Late-Peripateticism" represents a more recent contribution intended to deepen this scholarly discussion. The early waves of globalization, particularly in the 19th century, imposed significant changes that challenged peripatetic groups. As their clients increasingly demanded modern industrial products and services, many former peripatetics lost their group identity and merged into broader urban or rural populations as individuals or family units. Nevertheless, some managed to retain cultural and linguistic elements from their past, leading to the emergence of modern ethnic groups, such as the European Roma middle class. Conversely, others preserved their group identity and connections, strategically using them to integrate into new economic niches within both formal and informal economies. For example, Roma flower sellers in Western Turkey—who were once basket makers and blacksmiths—illustrate this late-peripatetic adaptation. They have successfully leveraged the public perception of "Gypsies" to establish a resilient niche in the urban economy. Groupings among Roma tobacco workers, who migrated from Greece to Turkey during the Turk-Greek Population Exchange of 1923-24, highlight both late-peripatetic adaptations and integration into broader working-class culture, influenced by their level and quality of engagement with wage labor and industry. These case studies effectively illustrate the late-peripatetic concept and explore other possibilities for former peripatetic groups.

Wachsmuth, Melody J. *Pentecostal Mission in Transnational Migration: The case of Serbian Roma*

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Much research has been done regarding Roma groups and migration in recent years and scholars have even problematized the entire identification of “Roma migration”. Christian faith has long intersected with Roma mobilities which has been researched in regards to, for example, the revivals in France and England. In fact, such intersections are part of the larger story through history of migration and Christian faith. However, less research has been attentive to more recent intersections between Roma mobilities and Pentecostalism. This paper will look at the transnational communities of Roma from Serbia who live in Germany and Sweden to assess at how Pentecostal media, transnational relationships, and host cultures shape Pentecostal communities in the diaspora. How do the diaspora communities differ in faith and praxis as they are influenced by their host cultures and churches and what kind of influence to churches from Serbia have on them? How do leaders see themselves and their communities in diaspora in terms of church and Pentecostal mission? This paper will take an empirical approach to these questions utilizing participant observation and interviews and will place it in the wider research of Christian faith and mobility.

Zahova, Sofiya. *Early Romani Literature: Visibility and Interpretations / Angluni romani literatura: dikhimata thaj gindimata (pa late)*

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Building on historical approaches, the paper argues that Romani literary production developed in parallel with broader literary, print, and nation-building processes in Europe rather than outside or after them. As recent scholarship has shown, Roma authors participated in the same patterns through which vernacular languages acquired written traditions, and adapted these processes to the specific historical circumstances of Roma communities. This is discussed on the example of two nineteenth-century authors, Ferenc Sztojka and Mathuas J. Mathiassen Skou. Their published works are explored as part of wider cultural and intellectual developments of the period. The paper further explores the problem of visibility and interpretation in the history of Romani literature. It suggests that the recognition and reading of Romani texts have always depended on the wider discourse of a given period concerning Roma/Gypsies. As a result, Romani literature has often been framed through categories such as orality, folklore, marginality, or cultural otherness, rather than approached as literature developing within the same historical horizons as other literatures. The paper argues that interpretative discourses on Romani literature are inseparable from broader political and cultural discourses about Roma, and that a historical reassessment of early Romani authorship can reposition Romani literature within European literary history.

Butivar gindinena thaj phenena kaj e romani literatura si feri vakeribnaski, paramisaki, žal muj mujestar thaj nadulmut avelas ramome. Kado vorta, numa naj celo/intrego čačimos. Kon phenel kado či dikhel, či žanel vaj či prindžarel opre kaj vi e romani literatura si la purane lila aj si dolmutni. Vi voj geli pe dromeske avere evropikane literaturenge thaj si la tuj-trin lila anda sajekh data lenca. Kado divano mothol po anglunipe romane literaturake thaj sikavel kaj romane lila sas ramosarde (kerde, arakhadine) sajek sar aver literaturna lila/džela ande Evropa. Romane lila thaj romane skriitorja sasas kotor katar o baro kerdipe nacijatar thaj skirime kulturake. Anda kodo šaj phenas kaj vi e romani literatura sas kotor evropake literaturatar. O akademikano rodimos so me kerdem nadulmut sikavda kaj o maj anglune romane lila na ramosarde pala/posle vaj rigate. Kana astarde te ramosaren lila, romane skriitorja kerenas kado so avere skriitorja pe lenge šiba. Me kamav te phenav duj-tin vorbi pe duj romane autorenge/skriitorenge kon ramosarde thaj dinde avri lila po deštahenjato šelbešipe. Me zumavav te sikavav kaj kadale rom, Ferenc Sztojka aj Mathuas J. Mathiassen Skou, von pačanas e bare gindurenge pe vramako. Atunči, avel o pušimos po dikhimata romane lilenge thaj gindimata lenge. Kana thaj kon alosarel aj dikhel o lila ramosarde romendar sar literatura romani? Muro arakhipe si kaj o žanglimos thaj o akharimos romane lilenge žana vast vastenca e gindimosa pe rom kaj si

majzuralo/dominanto andi kodi vrama. Avere vorbenca, o žanglimos romane literaturake žana khethane e gindurasa pe rom, e bare politikasa pe rom e vramatar. Aba kana dikhas kaj vi e romani literatura si la purane lila save sas kerdile romendar jekh shelberšipe thaj dopaš majanglal, si ame pravo te das lake aver than ando mothavimos pe istorija e ramome lilenge ande Evropa.

Zachar, Podolinská Tatiana. *The Pillars of Faith: Missionary Strategies of the Charismatic Branch of the Greek Catholic Mission among Roma in Slovakia*

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This paper examines the conceptual and pastoral architecture of missionary strategies developed by the charismatic branch of the Greek Catholic mission among Roma communities in Slovakia. Framed through the notion of the “five pillars of faith,” it explores how spiritual renewal, social inclusion, and cultural adaptation intersect within the mission’s evolving praxis. The first pillar concerns spiritual formation and charismatic experience as tools of personal and communal transformation. The second highlights education and social empowerment as integral to evangelisation, connecting catechesis with everyday survival strategies. The third focuses on ritual and material expressions of faith, including music, prayer meetings, and Marian devotion as mediums of belonging. The fourth pillar addresses intercultural dialogue within mixed parishes and mission environments, negotiating Romani identity and ecclesial authority. Finally, the fifth pillar emphasises institutional and leadership dynamics that sustain continuity and legitimacy within both Church and community contexts. Based on ethnographic observation and interviews, the paper situates these pillars within broader debates on charismatic Christianity, ethnicity, and religious renewal in post-socialist Slovakia. It argues that this mission fosters a hybrid model of faith and action that redefines the boundaries of pastoral care and vernacular religiosity among Roma believers.

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Závodská, Milada — Viková, Lada. *The Roma in Uzhhorod during the Interwar Period as Citizens of Czechoslovakia (Specific Features and Parallels with Other Roma Communities in Czechoslovakia 1918–1938) / O Užhorodská Roma maškar duj bare maribena sar o Čechoslovaki (špecifiki the paraleli avre romane komunitenca andre Československo republika 1918–1938)*

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In December 2026, we will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the “Gypsy School in Uzhhorod”. Drawing on the current knowledge of the school, this paper will focus on the interconnectedness of the emancipation movements within Romani communities across Czechoslovakia during the interwar period. We will highlight the opportunities for sharing internal Romani initiatives at the time, as well as their limitations imposed by the national policy of the era, which did not recognise the Roma as a nationality. Transcarpathia, including its local Romani settlements and their inhabitants, attracted the attention of the Czechoslovakian media in the 1920s and 1930s. These documents, as historical sources, along with other archival materials, have gradually been processed by historiography over the past decades, resulting in insights into local realities. Our ongoing historical research is made possible by newly discovered archival sources that we encounter during our investigations. These sources gradually provide insights into the contexts affecting the status of the Roma in the newly established republic. As we will demonstrate in our presentation, it was not only more strictly enforced compulsory school attendance that, starting in 1918, helped shape the social reality of the Roma in the new state. In Uzhhorod specifically, we see that in addition to the institutionally education of children, this official pedagogical experiment with a separate class („school“) also permitted the organic development of Romani socio-cultural expressions. In the 1930s, among Czechoslovak media reports on several Romani theatre troupes, the greatest attention was drawn to the Romani amateur theatre group in Strážnice, South Moravia, and specifically the Romani theatre troupe in Uzhhorod. The history of these theatrical performances remains among the important sources of knowledge about Romani social engagement today. Historical sources also refer to the linguistic affinity between the dialects of Romani language in the Czech lands and in Transcarpathia, particularly as it was utilized at the “Gypsy School” in Uzhhorod in teaching by certain teachers – who, from the very beginning of the school’s existence, applied their knowledge of Romani in schooling their pupils. Also, the linguist S. E. Mann, a member of

the GLS, described explicitly the power of Romani across Czechoslovakia in his 1941 article for the Journal of the GLS. Another parallel with our topic is the effort to establish oneself through contributions to the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic – a “čhibalo” in the Uzhhorod community was reportedly a former member of the First Czechoslovak Army (later known as the “Legion”). This paper therefore aims to focus on the Romani community in Uzhhorod, in light of newly identified archival sources and within the context of the latest historiography regarding the status (including active citizenship) of Romani people in former Czechoslovakia.

Andro decembros 2026 ela oleske 100 berš, so o romane čhave chudle te phirel andre lengeri romaňi škola andro Užhorodos. E prezentacija na ča sikhavela, so amen pal adi škola imar džanas, aľe najbuter anela nevo dikhben pre oda, save šaj arakhas paraleli andre emancipačna tendenciji maškar o diferentna romane komuniti andre Čechoslovakija maškar o duj maribena. Sikhavaha, save zorale impulsi šaj dikhle andre diferentna romane komuniti, hjaba kaj e romaňi etnicita akor oficialnones našti uľas. Telokarpasko Rusija the o nipi, so odoj dživenas, maškar lende the o Roma, sle but interesantna perdal o žurnalisti, mediji the o filmara andre bište the trandate berša andre oka šelberš. Sa ole archivnone materijalendar imar but berš rodel e romisticko historiografija o džaňipen pal o Roma, so odoj dživenas. Vaš oda imar but džanas pal užhorodsko kolonija, aľe tiš šaj dikhas o mehanizmi, save thovkerenas le Romen pre lengero themutne thana andre nevi republika. Amari historicko buti avel andal o neve arakhle archivna, amtoskere the aver dokumenti, so len dikhas, te keras amaro rodkeripen pal e historija le Romengeri. Sar sikhavaha andre prezentacija, na has oda ča e školno sikhaviben, savi pes dochudľas andro berš 1918 nevones the maškar o nipi, so lengere čhave dži oda berš mek našti phirenas andre škola, aľe odi realita andre nevi Československo republika has perdal o Roma špecijalno the andre aver aspekti. Andro Užhorodos dikhas, hoj e romaňi škola sar o oficijalno pedagogicko eksperimentos anelas le Romenge na ča o školno sikhaviben perdal o čhave, aľe tiš has sar e platforma, kaj o Roma šaj arakhle o than perdal lengere socijalnokulturna performanciji. Andre adi škola pen hazdenas romane talentovana čhave, bo šaj sikhavenas, sar bašaven, giľaven abo šaj kerenas the o teatros. Andro mediji andal 30. berša šaj dikhas o lekha pal o romane teatralna grupi – the pal o romano teatros Stražničatar the pal o romano teatroskeri grupa, savi kerelas e performanciji andro Užhorodos. Na bisteras aňi pro fenomenos, hoj o romane dijalekti, savenca vakerenas romane grupi, perenas andre jekh famelija centralna dijalekti. Paľikerde oleske the varesave gadže – sikľarde, so avle te sikhavel romane čhaven andro Užhorodos u džanenas romanes. Savi zor has andre romaňi čhib sikhavelas andre peskero lekh perdal o Journal GLS andro berš 1941 tiš o lingvistas S. E. Mann. Aver paralela šaj dikhas andre oda, sar o Roma rodenas peskero drom pal o peršo lumakero mariben, andre savo sle andre armija – the andro Užhorodos dživelas sar o vajda abo čhibalo maškar o Roma jekh Rom, savo has andre peršo čechoslovensko armija (so pes lake paľis phenelas „o Legiji“). So kamas te sikhavel andre amari prezentacija,

oda hin na ča e romaňi komunita andro Užhorodos andre buter aspekti. Kamas amen te
anel the neve archivna dokumenti, the neve dikhivena andro historijorgaficka buťa, so
sikhaven, savo than has le Romen andre peršo Československo republika.

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