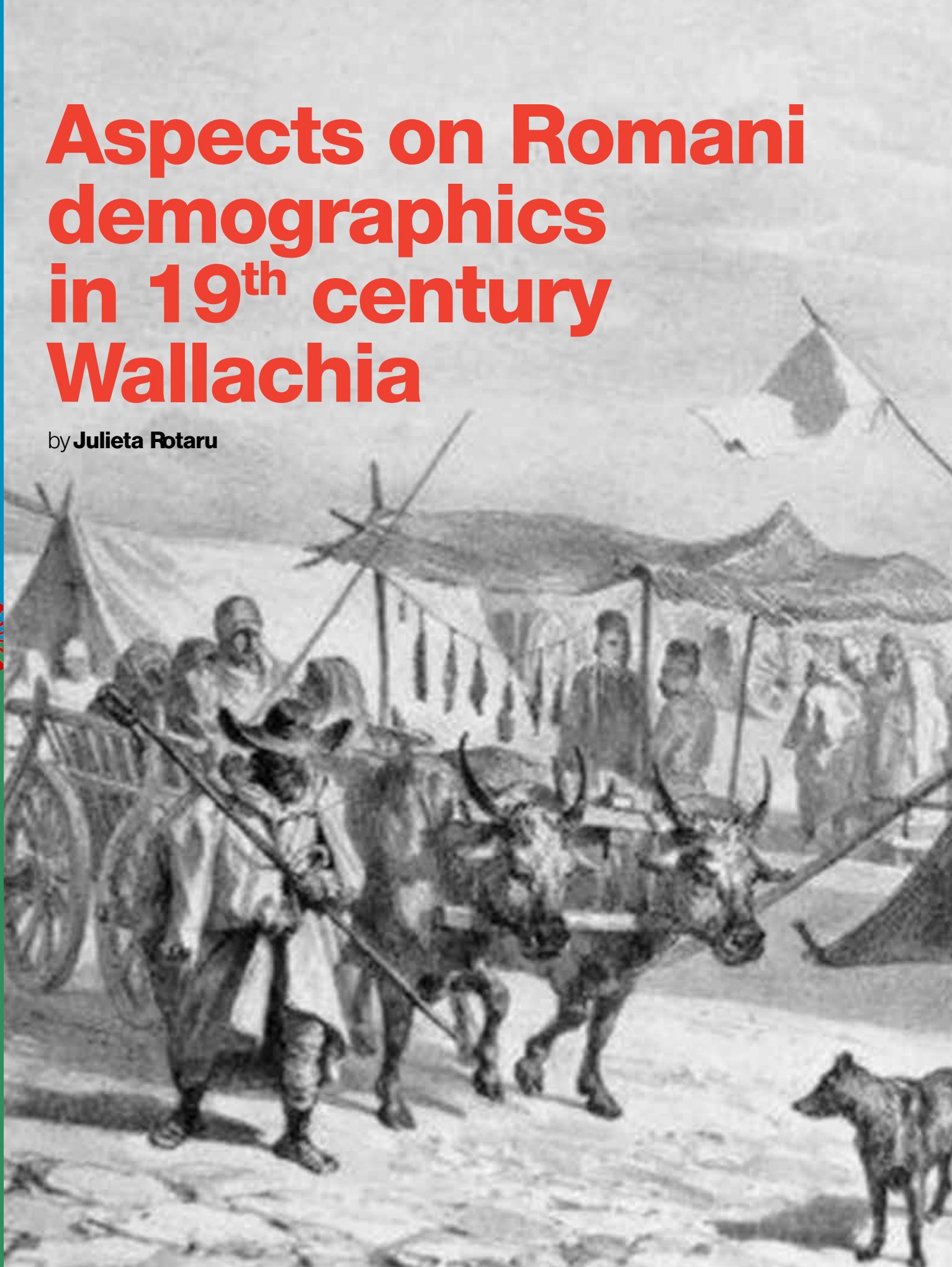
Aspects on Romani demographics in 19th century Wallachia

by **Julieta Rotaru**



Gypsy family wandering through Moldavia, engraving by Auguste Raffet (1837).

In Romani Studies, the second half of the 19th century witnessed a great migration of the Roms from the two Rumanian provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia as a result of the abolition of slavery (also called "Emancipation", which ushered in the massive liberation of the Romani slaves in 1856 at the initiative of the Prime Minister Mihail Kogălniceanu). However, this period is still poorly explored, particularly from a linguistic and ethnologic point of view.

Ethnographic studies on the Roms in the Rumanian provinces published in that period are lacking, whereas for the province of Transylvania there is the study of I.H. Schwicker (1883)[1] and the writings of H. Wlislocki,[2] and for Bucovina there are the studies of A. Ficker (1879),[3] L.A. Siminiginowicz (1884: 136–149),[4] and R.F. Kaindl (1898, 1899, 1904).[5]

Academic interest of Western scholars in the Rumanian Roms has always been high, both in the past and today, but, unfortunately, some obstacles of that time remain insurmountable even today, as will be further explained.[6]

Thus, despite the number of studies on the Roms from Southeastern Europe in general, and from Rumania in particular, that have been produced in recent decades, systematic research on their social history is lacking. However, in regard to the Roms from Rumania, sociological investigations that included certain Romani groups were carried by Ioan Chelcea (in 1934, and all the works on the *Rudari* 1943 and 1944),[7] and similar research has been done in the Republic of Moldova (Ion Duminică on different socio-professional and ethnic groups: *Lăeşi* – former nomads; *Cătunari* 'tent dwellers'; *Ciocanari* 'blacksmiths'; *Ciorí* 'horse thieves', but also 'horse traders'; *Ciurari* 'sieve makers'; Brăzdeni 'farmers'; *Ursari* 'bear tamers'; *Lingurari* 'spoon makers'; *Lăutari* 'musicians'; and *Curteni*, who were occasional workers at the boyars' courts),[8] and contextually in the Banat of Serbia, a historical region inhabited by Rumanians (see Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković on the Bayash in Serbia and in the Balkans in general).[9]

There are two missing pieces to investigate further: the historical demography of the Romani people and an atlas of the ethnic groups in Rumania. Five years have passed since the publication of the seminal study of Marushiakova and Popov[10] on the 'Gypsy' groups in Eastern Europe (larger in scope than the groundbreaking work of Gilliat-Smith[11] on Romani groups in Northeastern Bulgaria) showing that the issues of the ethnic groups, and precisely that of their appellations (ethnonyms and/or professionyms) and their unclear demarcations, are specific to a greater degree to Southeastern Europe and adjacent areas, and less to the Romani groups in Western Europe who have, largely speaking, Romani endonyms (*Manuš*, *Sinti*, *Kaale*, etc.), which delimitate them more accurately. Marushiakova and Popov[12] actually hinted at the core issue of Romanipen or Romani identity, *neamos* or *vica* 'nationality', thus scaffolding a giant construction and showing the research methodology, and one would only expect now to see emerging monographs and small studies on particular communities from the local to regional levels.

The first demographic and ethnologic investigation on the Rumanian Roms

There has been an apparent desynchronization of Rumanian scholarship with the rest of Europe in regard to the interest in Romani issues in the 19th century. Actually, there is a lot of unpublished and even so far unknown material, such as the first dictionary of Rumanian-Romani (approximately 1861) by the well-known intellectual Vasile Pogor,[13] several unpublished collections of Romani folklore (including the first Romani epic ballad of "Masho and Armanka"),[14] and the Romani-Rumanian dictionary by Barbu Constantinescu.[15]

Among the manuscripts of Barbu Constantinescu extant at the Romanian Academy Library, there is ms. no. 3923, which was known and partially used by the researchers in the field, including Popp-Şerboianu (1930)[16], George Potra (1939)[17], and Ion Chelcea (1944).[18] The manuscript contains many tables drawn by different hands with various types of ink and written on papers of different lengths, and this work represents the first project of a demographic and ethnologic investigation on the Rumanian Roms.

Constantinescu, upon the recommendation of the scholar B.P. Haşdeu, who at that time was General Director of the State Archives and a member of the Commission of the National Statistical Office[19], was employed by the Interior Ministry for the interpretation and compilation of statistics on the Roms in Wallachia. The investigation was conducted in 1878 by sending a survey to the deputy prefects of the Wallachian counties. The responses are preserved in ms. 3923 in tabular form. There is evidence that this manuscript is incomplete and that Constantinescu had more material in hand. The manuscript contains responses sent between March 2 and April 19, 1878, by local authorities from only five counties. The tables are structured as follows: name and surname of the Roms, their social status (sedentary or itinerants), the locality where they pay taxes, their occupation, and their ethnic group (Rumanian, *neam* 'nationality'). Although incomplete, these statistics are at least somewhat representative because they include data about the Roms from various counties of Wallachia, including one county that was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Mehedinți, from 1718 to 1738) and one county that was part of the Ottoman Empire (Brăila, until 1828).

"CONSTANTINESCU HAD CONSISTENTLY TRAVELLED IN THE TWO RUMANIAN PROVINCES OF WALLACHIA AND MOLDAVIA IN ORDER TO GATHER ROMANI FOLK MATERIAL."

In the summer of 1878, statistics on the Roms in another historical province of Rumania, Bukovina – a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire – were collected, which were updated in 1889.[20] For the Roms in Transylvania, a historical Rumanian province that was also a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire,

Rumanian historical provinces before the Russian-Rumanian-Turkish war (1877).

Barbu Constantinescu (1839–1891), the first Rumanian scholar of Romani Studies.

Ursari (bear tamers) in Transylvania. Engraving, 1869.

similar statistics were compiled 15 years later.[21] In yet another historical Rumanian province situated between Prut and Dniester, Bessarabia, especially after its annexation to the Russian Empire in 1812, the statistics rigorously record the number of each ethnic minority up to 1871.[22]

The initiative of this 1878 investigation on the Roms reflects the synchronization of Rumania with the two similar initiatives in Bukovina (1878) and Transylvania (1893). Because this kind of research was uncommon among the statistics compiled by the Interior Ministry, Constantinescu was recruited as a specialist in the field. Long before 1878, he had consistently travelled in the two Rumanian provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia in order to gather Romani folk material. In support of the hypothesis concerning his collaboration, there is one letter signed by the Minister of the Interior requesting the local authorities to "render assistance and legal support, when necessary, to Mr. Barbu Constantinescu, who travels the country in order to collect data on the history and origins of the Gypsies."[23] Further evidence supporting his official employment is the fact that, in 1882, the Interior Ministry launched a large-scale investigation at the village level to gather data for the *Great Geographical Dictionary* based on a questionnaire written by Constantinescu.[24]

One of the highlights of the 1878 statistics was that, similar to those undertaken in the same year in Bukovina and 15 years later in Transylvania, they were undertaken with the specific purpose of collecting demographic data on the Roms, unlike other statistics in the past when only certain ethnic and professional categories of the Roms were registered, if at all. Because Rumanian statistics were carried out for the purpose of establishing the tax levels, the Roms were either included with other Rumanian taxpayers or, when the statistics specifically mentioned the "nationality"[25] among its entries, certain categories of Roms that were unimportant for the issue of tax levels were left out.

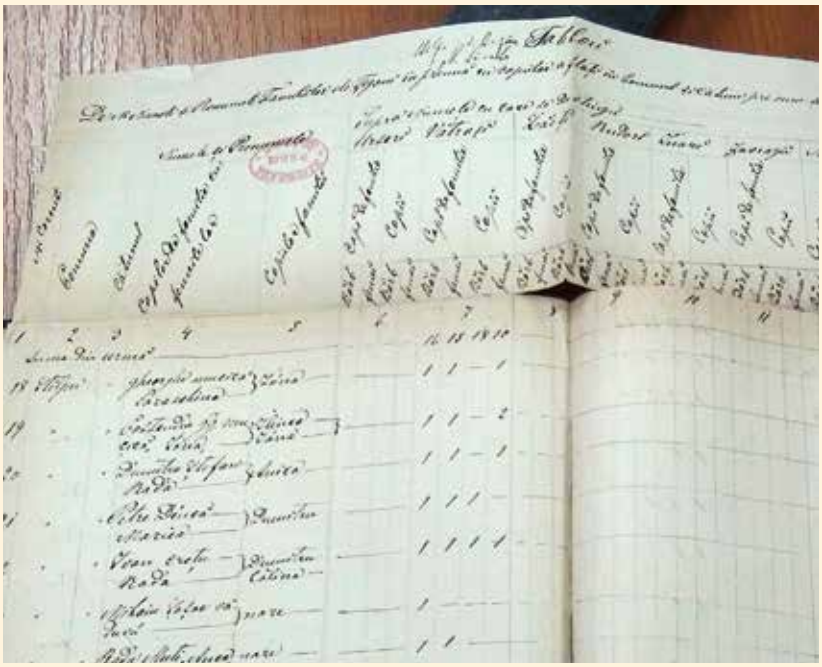
This resulted in a lack of knowledge about the various Rumanian Romani groups, especially after their "Emancipation". Thus, in a discussion between the father of Romani dialectology, Franz Miklosich, and B.P. Hașdeu, by 1878 the official information provided by M. Kogălniceanu in 1837 in particular about the three socio-juridical categories of Roms, which were further divided according to their professions (on which I am going to speak further), had become unsatisfactory for Western and Rumanian scholars alike.

History of the question of the Rumanian Romani groups

In the Rumanian context, the different ethno-socio-professional Romani categories were first described in the first Rumanian Constitution[26] in the chapter entitled "Improvement of the status of the Gypsies" drafted by a commission of Rumanian law experts under direct supervision of the Russian Governor Pavel D. Kiseleff. Article 94[27] describes each Romani group (Rumanian, *tagmă*< Greek τάγμα 'socio-professional category') as follows:

1. The *Lingurari* Gypsies (spoon makers). They live on woodwork, namely crafting tubs, spindles, spoons, etc., with some of them crafting fences and clubs. They live in sturdy huts and houses near the woods. [...]
2. The *Aurari* Gypsies (goldsmiths). Part of them lives on gold sales, representing the surplus collected by them from nature, apart from the three drachm that are due to the State. Others are spoon makers (*Lingurari*), and the other two parts live on brick making, ditch and pond digging, etc. Like the above-mentioned *Lingurari*, they have stable dwellings. [...]
3. The *Ursari* Gypsies (bear tamers). They live on displaying bears in cities and selling brooms and crafting wax and other small smithery works (such as scale weights, needles, saws, drills, etc.). They live in unstable tents. [...]
4. The *Zavragi* Gypsies. The *Zavragi* Gypsies, around 300 families, belong to the *Ursari* guild but have different customs. They work in construction. They are prone to theft and to unstable wandering with tents. They regularly practiced smithery, but due to working in constructions they lost that skill. [...]
5. The *Lăeți* Gypsies. They practice blacksmithing and cop-

Letter issued by Interior Minister, April 1878, asking the local authorities to support Barbu Constantinescu in the investigation.



Statistics-1878.

persmithing. [...] Some of them are steadfast people living in houses and huts at the outskirts of villages, their behavior being safe from unpleasant habits [...] But others, over 150 families, are unstable and wandering with tents, being prone to theft. [...]

6. The *Netoti*. They came from the "German Lands" [i.e. Austro-Hungarian Empire, n. J.R.] around 40 years ago, and include over 50 families. These, although belonging to the Ursari, due to their improper behaviors, bear the name of "netot" ['stupid', n. J.R.], not having any job, and engaging in many transgressions, both men and women alike. [...]

IN A PRESENTATION at the Gypsy Lore Society in Stockholm in September 2016,[28] I showed that "Netot" is a political construction conceived by the Russian administration and the local politicians in order to solve the "problem" of the errant groups, in the context of the plague outbreak in 1831–1832, by creating a political reason to dispatch them to the defeated Ottoman Empire.

Thus, apart from the last group, all others are mentioned in the first scholarly published work on the Romani people from Rumania written by M. Kogălniceanu (1837).[29] He drew upon this official information, adding fieldwork data for each historical, legal, and socio-professional category. First, he divided the groups according to their juridical status as Gypsies belonging to the State/the prince or as private Gypsies belonging either to the monasteries or to the boyars. The princely Gypsies were largely itinerants falling in one of the five professional categories described above (with slight variation in their appellations) and paid taxes to the State. The private Gypsies were further divided into *vătrași*, who were sedentary and totally assimilated to the extent that "there was no difference between them and the Wallachians and Moldavians"[30], and *lăieți* who were itinerants, practiced their traditional crafts, and paid taxes to their owners, i.e. the monasteries or boyars.

These data compiled in Rumanian quarters by M. Kogălniceanu would remain the only source known by the middle of the next century when it was taken over by Western studies. Thus, in a study published in 1912–1913 in the prominent *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, Alex Russel[31] referred to those old statistics and categories of Roms.

Much later (as already said, this gap is unfortunately underlined by the actual unawareness of the history of Romani Studies in Rumania), E. Pittard (1920)[32] divided them according to the nationalities in the vicinity of where they lived as Rumanian, Turkish, and Bulgarian Gypsies.

In 1930, Popp-Șerboianu[33] was boasting that there was practically no Romani category in Rumania that had not been included in his list. He operated with his own classification, liable on the professions, thus:

> **I) The *Lăeți* form a number of guilds according to their crafts, as follows: 1. the Ursari 'bear tamers', but due to the ban on the dancing, these *Lăeți*, like others, began to fabricate combs, brushes, etc.; 2. the *Ciurari* are the ones who make combs, sieves, etc.; 3. the *Căldărari*, the ones who make cauldrons; 4. the *Fierari* 'blacksmiths'**

are settled in the city, but also in the village; 5. the *Costorari* 'coppersmiths', hailing from Turkey, produce brass kitchen utensils; 6. *Rudari* or *Blidari* 'pot makers' or *Lingurari* 'spoon makers' manufacture hayforks, wooden plates, wooden spoons, etc.; 7. the farriers; 8. the whitewasher women who live in cities and whitewash the houses with lime; 9. the locksmiths; 10. the *Lăutari* 'musicians'; 11. the flower sellers; 12. the witches (or rather fortune tellers?, n.J.R.); 13. the shoe polishers; and 14. the day laborers who work in constructions.

II) The *Vătrași* are engaged in agriculture, especially since 1923, when they were given land by the second agrarian reform. Their children go to school and even to the university. They do not know the language anymore.

III) The *Netoti* are the Roms who left for Hungary and Russia, wherefrom they return to Rumania each year in gangs and camp for 3 days or so.

"THE *NEAM* 'NATIONALITY' IS NO LONGER A LIVING FACT OF CONSCIENCE FOR A LARGE PART OF THE ROMANI POPULATION ."

In 1944, according to the research of the Romani communities in Țara Oltului, I. Chelcea[34] distinguished three categories of Roms:

1. "Rural Gypsies": blacksmiths, bricks makers, and musicians, who seldom speak Romani.

2. *Băiaș* Gypsies or *Rudari* who live on woodworking and speak only Rumanian.

3. *Corturari* 'tent dwellers' or nomadic Gypsies, who are subdivided into *Ciurari* 'sieve makers' and *Căldărari* 'cauldron makers'. "In other parts, they are called *Lăeți*. The *Ursari*, *Corturari*, *Netoti*, *Modorani* and *Zavragi* are also included in their category. In some regions, these represent small sub-groups, in others they are special appellations."[35] The *Corturari* "either are about to settle, have recently settled, or are wandering from place to place, [and] are distinct in respect of habits, language, and even clothing."[36]

Vasile Burtea, [37] in the article "The Romani groups and their ways of living" with a promising introduction and with the expectation of the authenticity of the insider perspective, rightly states the following two premises: Firstly, "The *neam* 'nationality' is no longer a living fact of conscience for a large part of the Romani population. They have a real difficulty in indicating, as accurately as possible, the group they belong to or to which their parents and ancestors belonged." And secondly, "The ethnic groups formed around the occupations, crafts, professions, practiced by members of the group."[38]

After these premises, the article presents a series of one-to-one equations of the castes from ancient India with the Romani groups, staking all information on a single book.

In the cited article, the divisions of the Romani groups are made according to 1) the professions as the *Cocalari* (< Romani, *kokkalò* 'bone'), those who produce objects from bones such as needles, hooks, combs, clips, buttons, small pots, swords, handles, scribes, etc., the *Rudari*, the goldsmiths, the spoon makers, the *Băiași*, the *Caravlahi*, etc., who forgot their language through isolation from the other Roms, and the "domestic Gypsies", namely writers, scholars, educators, cooks, acrobats, artists, musicians, etc., and 2) according to their mobility/stability as *vătrași* or nomads.[39]

"Under the pressure of industrialization, modernization and the change of structure of the social needs, many new "specializations" emerged, either within the professions, in general, within some regions, or generated by other considerations, resulting in the creation of new subgroups with new names and new purposes."[40]

This transformation in the sense of "specialization" within the traditional professions and the "geographic circumscription" is attributed by the author to the sedentarization imposed in the 1950s and to the aforesaid socio-economic changes. The author thinks these specializations are visible, for instance, in the subgroup of the 'horseshoe makers', who are simply blacksmiths of less importance, or to the 'comb makers' and the *Fulgari* (?), who are *Cocalari* who produce the specified objects; in the so-called 'silk Gypsies' who are, according to Burtea, the *vătrași* who used to sell carpets and silk (or at the level of public perception this appellation is nowadays used to denote assimilated Roms); in the *Tismănari* who are those living around Tismana Monastery (sic!, this appellation is coined with the *kaštalo*, i.e. natives who no longer speak Romani); and in the *Răcari* who are those from the locality of *Răcari* (actually there is more than one with this name!) and who are a developing ethnic group.

The author offers two very useful tables with self-appellations of the Roms from Rumania, including their numbers and their percentages within the studied ethnic group. The first table contains 28 categories: *Roms*, *Cocalari*, *Vătrași*, *Lăutari*, *Teișani*, florists, *Boldeni*, broom makers, sieve makers, *Spoitori*, silversmiths, *Rudari* (glossed as 'spoon makers'), *Ursari*, *Lăieși*, brick makers, *Gabori*, *Căldărari*/blacksmiths/horseshoe makers, Turks/Tatars, boot makers, nomads/*Corturari*, *Zlătari*, Silk Gypsies, comb makers, *Fulgari*, coppersmiths, *Tismănari*, *Răcari*, *Geambași* ('horse dealers'), Rumanized Roms, and Maghyarized Roms.

In the second table, the author reduces the number to 18 categories, out of which 15 are selected on occupational criteria and three on other criteria (self-dissimulation within the Turkish, Tatar, or Hungarian minority groups and geographical circum-

scription). However, we cannot overlook the fact that between the two tables the category of *Tismănari*, for example, was lost, although this might have been an important group, at least in the 19th century, because it is largely represented among the respondents of the investigations carried out by Barbu Constantinescu.

While collecting the folklore materials, Constantinescu mentioned the name of the ethnic group, the locality, and the full name of the respondent, and when available his/her age and occupation, as well as other contextual information (word families for their professional vocabulary, notes on *abjav romano* 'Romani marriage', etc.). This information enabled him to have a certain awareness of the Romani groups; therefore, when he was summoned by the Interior Ministry to conduct the demographic investigation (called hereafter *Statistics-1878*) he provided the local administration with templates using the appellations *Inari*, *Lăeți*, *Netoți*, *Rudari*, *Ursari*, *Vătrași*, *Zavragi*, and others.

The insufficient information we currently have about the Romani ethno-socio-professional groups in Rumania is one of the main challenges in Rumanian Romani Studies and is similar to the issue of Indian castes and sub casts. Thus, any information on Romani professions and ethnic appellations becomes very significant in this context.

"THE INSUFFICIENT INFORMATION WE CURRENTLY HAVE ABOUT THE ROMANI ETHNO-SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL GROUPS IN RUMANIA IS ONE OF THE MAIN CHALLENGES IN RUMANIAN ROMANI STUDIES."

In the next section, which constitutes the main contribution of the article, I have exemplified with seven case studies aspects of Romani demographics in 19th-century Wallachia based on two demographic sources (from 1838 and 1878, respectively) and other synchronic ethnographic works. These sources refer to the Romani people either with the collective "Gypsy" appellation or, as is more often the case, with the specific ethno-socio-professional denominations as presented in the discussion above.

Aspects of Romani demographics in 19th century Wallachia

In this section I will illustrate with a few case studies the complexity of Romani society from 1838 to 1878, that is, for a period of one generation spanning 20 years before and 20 years after the "Emancipation" in 1856. The investigation draws upon my upcoming volume *Contribuții la istoria romilor din Țara Românească în secolul al XIX-lea* [Contributions to the history of the Wallachian Roms of the 19th century], Bucharest: Publishing House of the Romanian Academy (to be published).

In the upcoming volume, I have edited ms. 3923 as a part of the reconstitution of Barbu Constantinescu's projected work, "Gypsies in Romania". As already said, the manuscript is not complete, containing data from only five counties, whereas we learn from mss. 3924 and 3925 that Constantinescu travelled in 17 Wallachian counties in his search for Romani lore. Hence, I have reconstructed the map of Constantinescu's itinerary in the years 1877–87, and I have also documented localities that are not in the extant *Statistics-1878* but were mentioned in the other two manuscripts. I have corroborated this information with data from the unpublished statistics of 1838 (called hereafter *Census-1838*),[41] which is the second modern census of the entire population, in Cyrillic, preserved at the Romanian State Archive, wherein many times I have found the ancestors of the Roms recorded in the *Statistics-1878*. The first modern census of the population was made 7 years earlier, by the Russian administration, but unfortunately was lost during the Second World War. However, the centralized data of the first census has been worked on by modern historians and published, and I have relied on that information as well (hereafter called *Census-1831*). For historical information on the localities as well as for the onomastics, I have used all of the volumes available from the ongoing project of the Romanian Academy, *Documenta Historiae Romaniae*[42], serie B, for Wallachia (henceforth *DRH B*). I have also added data regarding realia on the Roms and the ethnic attitudes of the Rumanians towards the Roms from the two acknowledged *Questionnaires*[43] undertaken by B.P. Hașdeu in 1878 and 1882, respectively, which are also unpublished (i.e. *Juridical Questionnaire*, cca. 1,200 pages, called hereafter *JQ*, and Linguistic Questionnaire, 20,000 pages, called hereafter *LQ*), as well as data about the respective localities in which Roms were living from the *Great Geographical Dictionary*[44] (called hereafter *GGD*), which was completed and sent to print in 1895 (a dictionary that was designed as a project worked on by Constantinescu), and from the *Russian Military Map*[45] (first edition in 1835, but reflecting the demographic data for 1821–1828,[46] and the second revised edition in 1853, called hereafter *RMM*).

All of these various sources aim to recompose the image of the Roms living in the 19th century in Rumania, and they contribute significantly to the historical demography as well as the history of the ethnic groups and sub groups.

Case study 1: Beleți village, Muscel county, Podgoria district.

The Rudari community continued to live in the mixed village after the "Emancipation".

Beleți is referred to in a document issued in 1623 by the ruler Mihnea Vodă, in which "the vineyard from Țigănești"[47] is also mentioned, pointing to a settlement inhabited by the Roms.

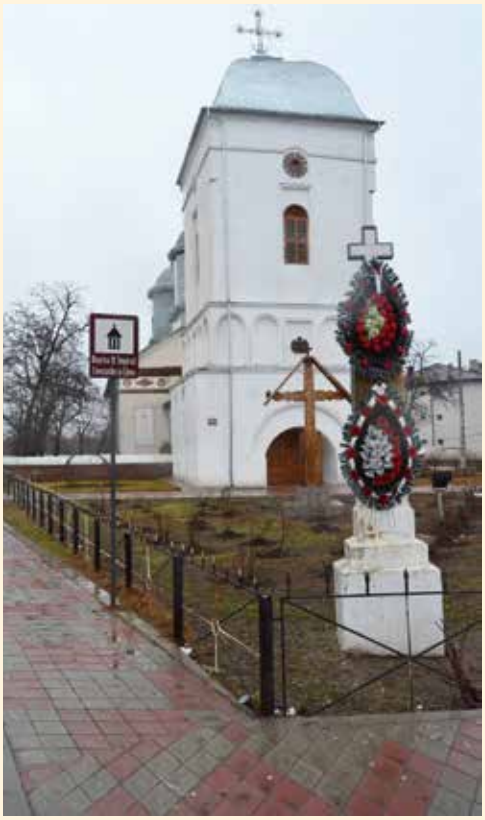
In 1838, out of 61 families in the village, eight were Roms. All of them were princely slaves, had the occupation of *rudar*, did not cultivate the land, and had on average two oxen and one cow. The families continued to live there, as confirmed by the *Statistics-1878*, which mentions that all were born in the village.

Per the house numbers, we infer that they lived on the village outskirts, in extended families, but in separate houses. As an illustration, the brothers Ion and Marin, both married and both having three children, lived near their old parents, Mihai and Dumitra Agapie, and the brothers Tudor and Stan, together with their families, lived near their parents Dumitru and Ilinca Agapie. The senior Agapie family, with their 50-year-old father, Dumitru, and mother of unspecified age, Ilinca, had three more children, the youngest being a 6-year-old, and the oldest a 12-year-old boy. It appears that there were no marriages between minors, with Dumitru and Ilinca Agapie, for instance, marrying off their two elder boys at 27, while the minor lived with them. The age of the youngest Romani mother in Beleți at the birth of the first child was 17, and the youngest father was 21. The age difference between spouses was on average 5 years. The most accepted age of marriage for boys was 27 years (four cases, *versus* 21, 23, and 25 years in individual cases) but for girls was more varied, from 17 to 18, 21 (two cases), 22, and 25 years. Over one generation, in 1878, the marriage age for the majority population had become 18 years for boys, and 14, 15, and 16 for girls (v. *JQ* § 148). The Romani families had up to five children. One family had one child, two families had two children, three families had three children, two families had four children, and three families had five children. The total number of children in Beleți village recorded in 1838 was 37.

In 1878, the mayor recorded separately the *vătrași* 'domestic Gypsies' and the "*Rudari* Gypsies". Only the head of the family is referred to nominally, along with his/her marital status and the number of children. There were 12 families of *vătrași*, all born in Beleți. Only the family of the widower Sandu Baraca, with two girls, was granted land by the 1864 agrarian reform. There were 23 men and 20 women, and all adults were married with one exception. The families had up to five children – four families had one child, two families had two children, two families had three children, and one family had five children. They practiced different crafts, and four were musicians (*lăutari*), four were blacksmiths, one was a bricklayer, one was a servant, the widow Safta Uța, having three boys and two girls, was a day laborer, and the widow Safta Ursăreasa, having two boys and one girl, was a beggar. At the general level of the *JQ*, the village beggars were individuals with physical disabilities that prevented them from working and gaining an income, and they were looked after by the community. Only one answer in the *LQ* differs in this respect, the one from Muscel District, and possibly from near Beleți village. Thus, we quote a situation that could have been the case in Beleți in 1878:

> **"There are Rumanian beggars who are infirmed or deaf-mute, while the others are Gypsies, Germans and Hungarians, who are shunned because people see that they are able to work." (*JQ*, Muscel County, Podgoria district)**

Regarding their onomastics, all of the surnames have old attestations, i.e. they are recorded in our reference collection of documents, *DRH B*, since the 14th century. The family names are frequent names used by Rumanians as well, but their usage by the Roms is not attested until the 16th century. There are also family names restricted to Roms, including three ethnic names, – Țiganu, Ursaru, and Ursăreasa – and one occupational name, Daragiu (archaism) 'drum player'.



Church in Suțești, Brăila, where a Rom is recorded as church singer in 1878. This picture was taken by Corina Ceamă (one of the respondent in the interview page 101–112). Suțești is her natal village and I happened to discover her forefathers in the 1878 unknown Statistics. PHOTO: CORINA CEAMĂ

It is very interesting that all these *vătrași* are easily identified by name in the *Census-1838* even though it omitted to mention they were Roms. The house numbers show that they were living in adjoining houses with Rumanians. This is a case of hidden minority (in the terminology of Christian Promitzer[48]) that occurred at the moment of the *Census-1838* in a community of assimilated Roms, but which recollected their ethnic identity after one generation, at the time of a specific demographic investigation, the *Statistics-1878*.

In the village, 17 families of *Rudari* coexisted, similarly born in Beleți, only one being *rudar* by profession, three others being day laborers, and the remaining 13 being wheelwrights. The 17 families (a total of 34 men and 32 women) had 17 boys and 15

Romani gold panners (Rudari, also called Aurari, Zlatari, or Boyash) at work, gold panning, 1850.

Lăutari band of Ochialbi, watercolor paiting by Carol Popp de Szathmáry (1860).

girls. None had land except for Stan Geamănu, who was married and had one child.

As for the names, the old ones (Bălan, Cala, Dobre, Vasile, and Beldiman, which until the 18th century are not recorded for the Roms) coexist with the newer names. There is one ethnic name, Rudaru, borne by a day laborer; one name derived from the civil status, Geamănu 'twin'; several nicknames, including Căcăilă 'poop', Prună 'plum', etc.; and one Romani name, Barale, cf. *barvalo* 'rich'. (As a matter of fact, there are very few Romani names in the referred documents, such as Bacrică (< *bakri* 'sheep'), Başno (< *bašno* 'cock'), Buzner (< *buzni* 'goat'), Ciriclui (sic! Ciricliu, < *čiricli* 'sparrow'), Parnica (< *parno* 'white'), Rupa (< *rup* 'silver'), Şoşoi/Şoşolea (< *šošoi* 'rabbit'), etc.) All of the surnames have old attestations.

To draw some conclusions from this case study, in 1838, the entire Romani community was allegedly made of *Rudari* who were practicing their crafts. As it is generally accepted, the *Rudari* were the ancient gold panners (called also *Aurari*, *Zlatari*, or *Boyash*) who changed their profession to woodworking and were living near the forests that provided them with the raw material for producing tubs, spoons, spindles, etc. The *Rudari* of Beleți did not cultivate land and did not rear animals, except for some cattle that supplied their dairy products and the mandatory two oxen necessary to pull the cart for selling their products. They all had two oxen, except for Stan, the son of Dumitru Agapie, who probably used the ox cart together with his father.

In 1878, 29 Romani families lived here, 12 *vătrași* and 17 *Rudari*. None were landowners, and the former practiced various crafts and the latter, with four notable exceptions, were wheelwrights. This information is supported by the *GGD*, which precisely mentions that the crafts practiced in the village were "agriculture, wheelwright, wood turner, and making of carts, which are sold in Vlașca county. There are woods of beech, oak, hornbeam, etc., around". Only one *Rudar* was a *rudar* by profession (sic!). It stands to reason that the 17 *Rudar* families listed in 1878 were made of those 37 children listed in 1838 only with their names (Ion, Marin, Sandu, Stan, Tudor, Ioana, etc.). For instance, the brothers Ion and Marin Căcăilă are the same listed in 1838 as Ion and Marin, the sons of Mihai and Dumitra Agapie, and they continued to live in adjoining houses. The old patronym Agapie was replaced by the scornful name Căcăilă. As seen above, the *vătrași* had frequent Rumanian family names used for Roms since the 16th century, whereas the *Rudari* had family names used for Roms since the 18th century, which is very telling about their various levels of acculturation. The *Rudari* had scornful names, speaking about their societal position, and Romani names, speaking about their linguistic heritage. It is very possible that they were bilingual, as the majority of the Roms were by 1888 according to the information in the *LQ*. "Rudaru" is used as a family name only to avoid confusion with another ethnic subgroup, for an individual who did not practice the traditional craft and was merely a day laborer. This is a common situation of resistance to assimilation to another ethnic or professional subgroup. For instance, the *Statistics-1878* records show that in Țigănești village, Podgoria district, Muscel county, in a community of eight *vătrași* families, all were musicians (*lăutari* and kobza players), and some of them practiced other lucrative jobs, such as smithery and making bricks, except for one, who was merely a locksmith and had the family name "Lăutaru".

"THE *RUDARI* HAD SCORNFUL NAMES, SPEAKING ABOUT THEIR SOCIETAL POSITION, AND ROMANI NAMES, SPEAKING ABOUT THEIR LINGUISTIC HERITAGE."

In general, the *Rudari* of Beleți, a village near the woods of

beech, oak, and hornbeam, continued the old crafts after the "Emancipation".

One of the expected conclusions is that *vătraș* was a denomination applied to all Roms who were not nomads, semi-nomads, or itinerants, regardless of their own ethnic endonyms. The settled Roms, as well as those coming from mixed marriages with the majority population and henceforth assimilated, lived in the center of the village and were called *vatră* (it is such *vătrași* who over time formed the exclusively Romani villages called *Țigănia*, but this is a subject for future examinations). This is confirmed in the investigation by Ion Duminică[49] on one group that he calls *Curteni*, which speaks about their assimilation into the majority population. They call themselves with a descriptive appellation, *țigani moldoveni* 'Moldavian Gypsies', and in addition they had accepted two other exonyms very telling about their acculturation – *Vlahâi*, which was given by others Roms (especially by the *Lăieși* and *Ursari*) because they were assimilated and had lost their language and traditions, and *corcituri* 'metises' or *țigani pârâți* 'fake Gypsies' given by the majority population. Ion Duminică specifies that there were moments in their recent history when the members of the community recollected their Romani belonging, as in the case of the *vătrași* in 1878.

Case study 2: Tițești village, Dezrobiți 'Emancipated ones' hamlet, Muscel county, Podgoria district.

Neighboring Romani communities consolidating a settlement on a former estate after the "Emancipation".

In the old village of Tițești (attested with this name since 1623, continuing a more ancient settlement), 28 Romani families are recorded in 1878. They were all living in Dezrobiți hamlet, previously called *Valea Mănăstirii* 'Monastery Valley', from the eponymous river and the monastery Valea (built in 1534). Tițești village is recorded since 1831 to have had three hamlets – Tițești, owned by the Valea Monastery with 95 families, out of which 17 men were laborers on the monastery's estate; Hârtiești, owned by Vieroș Monastery, with 76 families, out of which 24 men were laborers on the monastery's estate; and Valea Mănăstirii, later Dezrobiți, with 94 families, out of which 13 men were laborers on the estate of Valea Monastery. In the *Census-1831*, there is no owner recorded for Valea Mănăstirii hamlet. This situation is explained by the fact that the settlement is a very old one and belonged to the ruler, similar to all the land in the Rumanian provinces. In this hamlet, there exists the Valea Monastery, founded by Ion Radu Voivode Paisie in 1534, and painted by Mircea Voivode Ciobanul in 1548 (*GGD*, III). A document from 1629[50] mentions one Romani woman called Fruma together with her daughters, who were taken by the priest Nicodemus from the chancellor Stanciu of Câlcești and donated to the monastery. Thus, there was a Romani community living since the 17th century in the 'Monastery Valley' village. After the abolition of slavery in 1856, the Roms continued to live there, and the hamlet changed its name to *Dezrobiți* (the Emanicipated ones) and most probably received other emancipated Roms from Tițești, as per the information in the *GGD*.

In 1878, there were 28 families, 51 men and 53 women, mostly *vătrași* 'domestic Gypsies' and three *lăieși* 'nomads', the former being the old inhabitants on the estate. However, they were all landowners per the law of 1864. Most of the 'domestic Gypsies' were farmers, and five were blacksmiths. In 1878, the schoolteacher Nicolăescu learned from them the names of the smithery tools: "the anvil, the big hammer (*baros*, derived from Romani *baro* (adj.) 'big'), the hammers, the tongs, the scissors and the pair of bellows". Two of the three so-called *lăieși* families were neighbors and, besides tilling their land, played the violin. One family was composed only of a husband and wife who were both playing the violin, and the other family was made of the parents and five children, of whom two discontinued the tradition and were merely farmers. The third *lăieși* family was assimilated as 'domestic Gypsies' and was living in their quarters, practicing agriculture. Ten families had one child, six families (two of the *lăieși*) had two children, three families had three children, one family had five children, and two families had six children. There were also six families without children (including one *lăieș* family).

Hence, there were no differences between the *lăieși* and *vătrași* families in terms of size. Per the house numbers, the two groups lived together. Fourteen years after having been granted land, having started to till their own property, and having been assimilated into the *vătrași* community, the *lăieși* were still identified with this ethnonym.

Case study 3: Leurdeni village, Muscel county, Podgoria district

The rapid mobility of the Roms between 1838 and 1878 in an ancient Romani settlement.

In a document from 1632,[51] Leurdeni village is mentioned as having a few Romani settlements. Between 1821 and 1828, Leurdeni had 189 families consisting of approximately 945 individuals (*RMM*). In 1831 the village along with the eponymous estate was owned by the governor Iordache Golescu, the two Leurdeanu brothers, and six other boyars of inferior rank, all related to the Leurdeanu family. The village is recorded to have been inhabited by 222 families, out of which 55 individuals were day laborers on the estate (*Census-1831*).

In 1838, out of 187 families, only seven families were Roms, living in a compact group at the outskirts of the village. Apart from the aged couple Oprea and Floarea – 58 and 45 years old, respectively – all of them belonged to the boyar Toma Leurdeanu. They had no property or goods, except for one couple who had been married for 15 years, Luca and Ilinca, who had one cow. None of these families would remain in the village after the "Emancipation". In fact, only two Romani families with children are recorded, the other houses being represented by two widowers of 40 and 50 years, respectively; two aged widows, the 50-year-old Ioana, who was blind, and the 55-year-old Mira, who was deaf and mute; and two 25-year-old bachelors, Stan and Gligore,

who lived in the same houses with their spinster sisters, Bălașa, aged 45, and Ana, aged 30. The age of the youngest mother at the birth of the first child, Nița, was 17, and the youngest father, Tănase, was 25. Nița and Tănase had seven children during their 18 years of marriage, the youngest being one year old at the time of recording. The age difference between spouses was 5 years for both of the families with children and 13 years for the aged couple Oprea and Floarea. All seven families, slaves of boyar Leurdeanu, discontinued living on the estate soon after 1838.

In 1878, 40 Romani families were recorded as living in the village, out of which six were *vătrași* working the land or having jobs such as blacksmiths and musicians and had been living in the village for 1, 2, 5, 6, and 30 years. The other 34 families were *Rudari* and had been temporary residents for the previous 6 months, except for Dincă Osman, who had been living there for 7 years with his mother, Sanda. The occupation of the 34 families is not specified, but it can be inferred that they were *rudari*, regardless what that might mean at the level of the 1878 documents.

It is very interesting to look at the resettlement of the Roms in Leurdeni since 1848. The oldest in the village was Ioniță Țurlea, who was 42 years old (if we assume 21 years as the minimum age for a man at the birth of the first child) and who came to Leurdeni when he was 12, then he married, had a child, and by 1878 was a farmer. After 13 years, in 1861, the *Rudar* Dincă Osman arrived in the village with his mother. The next year the blacksmith Ion Zabalagiu, aged 38, and his 17-year-old son Gligore Zabalagiu moved in. It is hard to assume that Gligore was married at that age, but after 6 years, in 1878, we find him married to Rada. Ion Zabalagiu was the oldest of all the *vătrași* (he was 44 years old in 1878). After another year, in 1863, Ilie Mihai arrived in Leurdeni, at the age of 29, together with his wife, his 8-year-old daughter, and his 20-year-old unmarried brother, Anghel Ilie, and both men were farmers. Three years later, in 1866, Onță Preda, when he was 40 years old, settled in Leurdeni with his wife and four children and began to practice agriculture. The next year, in 1867, Soare Marin moved in, at the age of 36, with his 17-year-old sister, his wife, and a 15-year-old boy, and he worked as a blacksmith and musician. In the same year, his wife gave birth to another baby. Except for Anghel Ilie, all other *vătrași* moved to the village with their families at quite a ripe age – 29 (Ilie Mihai), 36 (Soare Marin), 38 (Ion Zabalagiu), and 40 years old (Onță Preda). After 11 years, in 1878, a group of 33 *Rudari* families is recorded as having camped in Leurdeni for 6 months. Except for four families, all others had children, and the family heads were on average 27 years old.

Thus, there was a small Romani community living in Leurdeni in the 17th century. In 1838, seven families are recorded who probably continued to live there as the slaves of the boyar Leurdeanu. After 40 years, in 1878, six families of *vătrași* are recorded, but they were not the descendants of the same Leurdeanu slaves, who either fled the estate or were moved by the owner to another estate or sold out. The village received the first Romani family in 1848, probably brought by Leurdeanu. After 13 years, one *Rudar* came with his mother, followed by five other emancipated *vătrași* families who started to move in individually in consecutive years, from 1861 till 1867. The village received the biggest migration after a decade, in 1878, with the encamping of 34 semi-nomad *Rudari* families consisting of 128 individuals.

Case study 4: Topoloveni village, Muscel county, Podgoria district.

The conservative Romani community discontinued living there within one generation. Marriage of minors was attested.

In a document issued on October 1, 1559,[52] the Roms are mentioned along with the subservient Rumanian peasants in the context of the vineyards from Topoloveni.

In 1838, out of 105 families, seven were Roms who lived at the outskirts of the village in extended families but in different houses, as indicated by the consecutive house numbers. They were all boyar slaves and had no property or goods, except for Nițu Lăutaru's family and the families of the blacksmiths Ion and Dina Țigan and Ion and Maria Țigan who had one ox each. Only one had no specific profession, being a day laborer, and four were blacksmiths, one was a musician, and another was a coachman. The age of the youngest Romani mother in Topoloveni at the birth of the first child was 13, and the youngest father was 18, whereas that of the eldest mother was 39 and the oldest father was 55. The age differences between spouses were 5 years (two cases), 10 years (four cases), and 20 years (one case). Thus, in this community, women married early and in most cases with men older than them by 10 years, and couples had children up to an older age: 40 and 30 years, respectively, for Barbu and Ioana Țigan, 55 and 35 years, respectively, for Ion Țigan Gușea and Maria, and 48 and 39 years, respectively, for Nițu and Anca Lăutar. Because of these early marriages, individual families had only up to three children living with them, and there were three families with one child, two families with two children, and one family with three children.

"THE AGE OF THE YOUNGEST ROMANI MOTHER IN TOPOLOVENI AT THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST CHILD WAS 13, AND THE YOUNGEST FATHER WAS 18."

After one generation, in 1878, only two Romani families are recorded to still be living in Topoloveni – N. Marin, an emancipated *vătraș* with his wife Ileana, a Rumanian, "[both being] blacksmiths [and] day laborers and [he being] a tax payer in this village", and the emancipated *vătraș* Dicu Cuca with his wife Dumitra, "both good day laborers, [and in addition he being] *daragiu* 'drum player' and living here provisionally, being a former villager of Brătești Village, Furdueşti, Gălăşeşti district, Argeş county". Thus, Dicu and Dumitra Cuca were not settled there;

they lived from their workday income, and in addition to that, Dicu Cuca was occasionally called to beat the drum for the dancing bear of *Ursari*, hence he and his wife had a semi-nomadic life. So, only N. Marin could have originated from Topoloveni. He was the head of the family, and that is why he is the only one mentioned as a taxpayer.

Thus, nothing remained here from the old conservative Romani community of boyar slaves after one generation, except for one *vătraș* who had married a Rumanian. At the level of this region, the answers to the *JQ* mention that "there are marriages between Gypsies and Rumanians, but these are shunned upon." (*JQ*, § 179, Muscel County, Podgoria District)

Case study 5: Sutești village, Brăila county.

A newly established village with former slaves, and the case of a Tatar family assimilated into the Romani community.

In 1878, there were 138 Romani families (134 men and 142 women) in the village, five widows (one having one child, three having three children, and one having four children), and one widower having one child. Forty-nine families had one child, 26 families had two children, 16 families had three children, eight families had four children, and three families had five children. All were living in Sutești, except for the blacksmith Ion Oaie 'John Sheep', who lived together with his wife Sanda and her two daughters at the sheepfold called Friguroasele 'Cold ones'. There were 11 other blacksmiths in the village, alongside other craftsmen, including 13 musicians, one mason, one sieve maker, two cobblers, and two shoemakers.

From these blacksmiths, the schoolteacher C.D. Păsculescu recorded the following terms of smithery: "hammer, anvil, drill, chuck" (*JQ*, §109, Brăila, Pl. Vădeni, Sutești). At the church dedicated to the "Saints Emperors Constantin and Elena", built by the estate's owner, Constantin Suțu, who is buried there, there served two priests, a deacon, and two singers. One of the singers was Rom, Ion M. Băluțu, the son of Matache and Dragnea Băluțu, married to Cristina and having two girls, Tinca and Alecsandra. As a minister of the church, Băluțu was exempt from taxes. There were also seven kobza players in the village. The teacher Păsculescu noted that the violin and kobza were the only known instruments in the village (*JQ*, § 132, Brăila, Pl. Vădeni, Sutești), which confirms the data in the table that records 13 musicians along with the kobza players. One of the kobza players is registered by the mayor as a "*vătraș* kobza player".

In fact, the statistics record differently the "day laborers" (61 families) and the "*vătraș* day laborers" (36 families) and the "kobza players" (6 families) and the "*vătraș* kobza player" (1 family). As already seen, *vătraș* here means a sedentary and assimilated Rom (contrasted to *lăieș*, considered nomadic or rather itinerant).

To Sutești, a village newly established in 1865 on the estate of the chancellor Suțu around the time of the "Emancipation", probably came the day laborers who were *vătrași* on Suțu's other estates, along with other Roms who practiced their old crafts, namely all the blacksmiths, all the musicians, almost

Romani Blacksmith in Wallachia, engraving by Dieudonné Auguste Lancelot (1860).

all the kobza players, and all of the above-listed craftsmen, as well as other day laborers. This situation can be assumed by analyzing the case of the Ceamă family, with such a rare name that one can infer that all Ceamăs in Sutești were cognates. The word *ceam*, pl. *ceámuri*, is of Tatar origin and means 'big boat' or 'barge'. In 1878, the day laborer Drăguțu M. Ceamă, a former *vătraș* on Suțu's estate, lived in the village and was married to Rada and had three children, Ancuța, Dumitru, and Costache. To the same family and, implicitly, ethnic group, belonged other Ceamăs who were not *vătraș*, including three day laborers – Puciosu B. Ceamă, a widow with three children, Tudorache, Rada, and Toader; Stoica N. Ceamă, married to Stana and having four children, Neagu, Costache, Stanca, and Mariuța; and Radu N. Ceamă, married to Paraschiva and having one child, Dumitru – the *ciurar* 'sieve maker' Ion Ceamă, married to Maria and having two boys, Gheorghe and Dumitru; and the musician Badui Ceamă, married to Tița and having one child, Gheorghe. As said, only one Ceamă was *vătraș*, namely Drăguțu M. Ceamă, a Tatar living on Suțu's estate, whereas the other Ceamăs were also Tatars probably of the same estate, but semi-nomads. They all came together after "Emancipation" and became assimilated in the Romani community established in the newly formed village, and some of their descendants continue to live there today (see the interview with Corina Ceamă in this volume).

All of these Romani people were by 1878 sedentary, but the village was occasionally visited by the traveling Roms, as one learns from a record in the *JQ* gathered from Sutești:

> **"The *Paparuda* is a custom practiced by the nomadic Gypsies during times of drought. They dress up a virgin with daneweeds stitched on a cloth and worn around the waist. She thus dressed up goes from house to house dancing in the yard and singing a song whose lyrics she actually doesn't know, and women and children pour water on her."** [53]

Paparuda, photo by Carol Popp de Szathmáry (1869).

The lyrics of the *Paparuda* song are in Rumanian, and many times the *JQ* records that the young women dancing and singing failed to produce a comprehensible song, whereas an old woman accompanying and singing for them would truly perform the song. This is very telling about the role of the Roms as interpreters and transmitters of Rumanian folklore, which has been discussed in Rumanian folkloristics and should perhaps be revisited in the light of the unexploited data from the two *Questionnaires*.

Case study 6: Stâlpu village, Buzău county, Sărata district.

A quarter of the Romani community continued living in the village after one generation.

In 1838, out of 184 families, 14 were Roms, all boyar slaves with no fortunes, except for the large family of a blacksmith who had a horse. They lived at the outskirts of the village in neighboring houses. Five were blacksmiths, one was a butcher, and one was a tailor. A family head who stuttered is recorded as "serving in the yard" with his family. A 40-year-old head of the family and his 20-year-old wife "served in the yard" and had the status of *rob* 'slave'. Also to this class, 'slave maidservants', belong the widow Neacșa of Badea and her daughter, Dragomira. Four of the families had one child, two families had two children, and two families had four children. There were five families without children, including the young couple Ioniță and Rada, of 20 and 18 years, respectively, and three couples of 40 and 20, 31 and 20, and 30 and 20 years, respectively. The older couples Lupu Ion and Maria and Gheorghe and Maria probably had children among the listed ones, but unfortunately only the first name is mentioned in the table, leaving no space for identification. Age differences between spouses were as follows: 2 years (one case), 3 years (one case), 6 years (three cases), 9 years (three cases), 10 years (two cases), 13 years (one case), and 17 years (one case). In one case, the wife was the elder, and 33-year-old Maria was five years older than her husband, Iancea. The age of the youngest Romani mother in Stâlpu at the birth of the first child was 17, and the youngest father was 29, whereas that of the eldest mother was 45 (Badea's Neacșa) and that of the eldest father was 54 (Manea Fomacu). Age at marriage for women was 17, 18, 23 (in two cases), 24, and 26 years and for men was 20, 29 (two cases), 30 (two cases), and 43 years.

In 1878, there were 46 families of *vătrași*, 81 men and 68 women, practicing the following professions: three blacksmiths, five kobza players, three violin players, and one panpipe player. The rest were day laborers. The crafts that were practiced in the village were "plowing, weaving, wool spinning, tending the vineyard" (*JQ*, §107, Buzău county, Sărata district, Stâlpu village). Sixteen families had one child, 11 families had two children, three families had three children, and five families had four children. The mayor noted 10 families with no children. As shown above, such cases must be carefully analyzed before drawing any conclusion. Usually, the marriage was done *liberorum querendorum causa*, and with few exceptions all such cases in fact record families of elderly persons whose children are listed in the same table.

Two families recorded in 1838 were still living in the village in 1878. One was the family of Manea Fomacu, a 58-year-old butcher, with no land and no animals in his yard, who was married to the 41-year-old Rada and had four children, namely the 15-year-old Gheorghe, 12-year-old Matei, 6-year-old Ion, and 4-year-old Șărban. After 40 years we find two of the boys still living in the village, Io(a)n Fomacu, married, having four boys, and Șărban Fomacu, married, having three boys, and one, possibly the son of I(o)an Fomacu, namely Ioan Ene Fomacu, married, having one child. The *vătraș* widow Marta Șărbănoae recorded in 1878 is Marta, the 20-year younger wife of Șerban Țiganul, who was 40 in 1838 and was registered as a boyar's servant.

Thus, a quarter of the ancient community of sedentary Romani slaves continued to live in the village, and some were even found on the nominal lists after 40 years.

Case study 7: Grecești village, Mehedinți county, Dumbrava district.

The Roms were serving in the army.

In 1878, there were five *vătrași* families living in the village, including one blacksmith, one day laborer, and three tinsmiths who also worked as day laborers. The blacksmith Dumitrache

Marcu, married, had a child who was taken into the army in the War of Independence (1877). The presence of the Roms in the country's military service is confirmed by a song collected by Barbu Constantinescu in 1878 from Tismana village in the neighboring county, from Ioan Radu Buznearu, in which the *aravleriţa* (a rare Romani word for 'soldier') nostalgically evokes missed or revisited native places. Similar is the soldier's lyrical song collected from Ştefan, a blacksmith and goldsmith from Călăraşi city, Ilfov county. [54]

Conclusions

These case studies are part of a pilot project that capitalizes on the results of an unpublished Romani demographic investigation, *Statistics-1878*, which is only partially preserved. I have completed the information from this fragmentary work with data from synchronic sources, such as the *Questionnaires* and the *GGD*, and I have contextualized the information in its diachronic perspective by analyzing the same Romani communities with the help of *Census-1831* and *Census-1838*.[55]

Statistics-1878 was a project of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to record the Romani population and was undertaken with the help of the first Rumanian scholar of the Romani language, B. Constantinescu. This project was undertaken in 1878, the year of the international recognition of Rumanian independence after the Russian-Rumanian-Turkish war of 1877 and the beginning of the inclusion of Rumania in the circle of international relations.[56]This new international political context was the backdrop of two scientific projects, *Statistics-1878* and the two *Questionnaires*, which would become milestones in the construction of the national identity and, implicitly, of the ethnic co-inhabiting minorities.

The answers to the *Questionnaires* fill the void in ethnologic and ethnographic works on the Roms from the two provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia in the 19th century. The conclusion of the investigations highlights the model of pluralist coexistence of the Roms with the majority population, but with more favorable indicators as compared with nowadays,[57] although at the semantic level the discourse is full of stereotypes due to the lack of awareness of the Romani realities, which is mostly due to the precarious education of the Rumanian population, with more than 90% illiteracy.

The historic coexistence of the Roms with the majority population had as a premise as well as a result the former's identification, to a greater or lesser degree, with the latter from acculturation/integration/biculturalism to assimilation, or from separation/dissociation to marginalization (see Jean Phinney[58] for these terms in his seminal review of the studies on cultural identities of minority groups over a period of 30 years). Thus, the names that the Roms had in different historical periods (recorded in *DRH*, *Census-1838*, *Statistics-1878*, etc.) speak about their coexistence with the Rumanian population, about their provenance and the places from which they came to Rumania, about their occupations, etc.

The sources presented in this article represent unedited documentary material that is mostly unknown to researchers. It offers the possibility to investigate and analyze the size and the configuration of the Romani family structure and household in the 19th century, the marriageable age, the age differences between spouses, the mother's age at the birth of the first live-born child, the geographic location of the Roms within the villages and cities, the size of the Romani population, the geographic distribution of the Roms in the two provinces, information on their occupations, and the names of their ethnic-socio-professional groups. It can be further analyzed whether there are major differences between the different professional groups of day laborers, farmers, musicians, blacksmiths, *Rudari*, *Ursari*, *Laieti*, etc. It might also be studied if the abolition of slavery, or "Emancipation", in 1856 affected the socio-demographic profile of the Roms.

A preliminary demographic analysis and an investigation into the organization of the Romani family from 1838 to 1878, as illustrated in case studies 1 to 6, shows the existence of the extended type of family, living in separated, yet adjoining houses. Inside, the family was mono-nuclear, made up of the father, mother, and an average of two or three children. A similar demographic analysis of the family structure inside the Romani settlements in the 17th century[59] comes to similar conclusions, notwithstanding the nature of the documentation materials under consideration in that work, including documents of the chancellery and acts of property that only accidentally mention the Romani individuals (for a critique of the sources, see also Florina-Manuela Constantin).[60] It is of some relevance to note that both of these authors record the existence of Romani families without children, an enterprise of no little hazard, rationalizing from the premise *ducere oxorem liberorum querendorum causa*, and informed by such situations as occurring in our case study 2, for instance, where the mature childless couples might in fact be the parents and grandparents of the other listed couples.

"AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 19TH CENTURY THE ROMS LIVED IN EXTREME POVERTY, AND THEY WERE ASSIMILATED WITHIN THE CATEGORY OF SUBSERVIENT PEASANTS."

The marriageable age for the Romani people as per the statistics is the same as that of the Rumanian population, as confirmed by the *Questionnaires*, and for women this was 17 to 22 years and for men this was from 21 to 22 years. Cases of marriage between minors were rare, a situation confirmed by the *Questionnaires*. The statistical record shows cases of mixed marriages, mostly between a Rom and a Rumanian woman, and this was confirmed by the *Questionnaires*.

Regarding social status, at the beginning of the 19th century the Roms lived in extreme poverty, and they were assimilated

within the category of subservient peasants. They could receive land, as much as they could till together with their family, which was approximately half a hectare up to two hectares. Those who practiced their crafts, especially the blacksmiths and the musicians, are very seldom recorded in the subservient peasants' category. From the total number of 14 rubrics on the goods and property available in the *Census-1838*, the majority is empty. Most of the Roms had nothing except for a cow or more commonly a goat, also called "the cow of the poor", and extremely rarely had an orchard. By 1878, with very few exceptions, the Roms who settled in the surveyed villages were landowners, notwithstanding their professions (day laborers, blacksmiths, musicians, shoemakers, sieve makers, etc.), and they paid taxes in the localities. Begging was not practiced exclusively by the Roms, but mostly by individuals with physical disabilities who were therefore assisted by the community, as per the answers to the *Questionnaires*. Nonetheless, in 1905 a state investigation on the health and social status of the rural population[61] found that most of the beggars were Roms, revealing the pauperization of this community after one generation.

These are the common demographic aspects underlining all of the case studies presented in this article. However, the seven case studies reflect in a more palpable way a multitude of other aspects:

CASE STUDY 1)

This was a case of hidden minority of a Romani group living in a mixed community along with another Romani group, the *Rudari*, and the majority population in 1838 and who recollected their ethnic identity after one generation, in 1878.

CASE STUDY 2)

This was a case of a 17th century Romani community living on a monastery estate and continuing to live there after "Emancipation", changing the name of the locality to *Dezrobiți* (the Emanicipated ones) and receiving other emancipated Roms from neighboring villages and forming an exclusively Romani settlement. By 1878 there were two Romani groups there, 'domestic Gypsies' and *lăieși* (in accepted terminology, as shown in section 4, they are regarded as itinerants), both of which were settled landowners and were living together and without differences in terms of family size, etc., but preserving their exonyms referring to their previous social status as slaves serving in the boyar's court and as itinerant slaves, respectively. Such case studies might lead to a reconsideration of the general understanding of the names *vătrași* and *lăieși*.

CASE STUDY 3)

This was a case study showing the rapid mobility of the Romani population in a mixed village inhabited by the Roms since the 17th century. By 1838, however, the village had 180 Rumanian and only 7 Romani families. The latter soon discontinued living there long before "Emancipation", but other Roms moved in individually in 1848, 1861, 1863, etc., and in 1878 in an organized group with the encamping of 128 semi-nomadic *Rudari*. Such case studies might further indicate migration, as I underlined in case study 3. The migrants did not move in alone, but together with their families and at a quite ripe age (29, 36, and 40 years). The families moved in individually, about one family every 2 years, and not in groups, although a large group of itinerant *Rudari* moved in in 1878 and lived in improvised dwellings, as per the records. Further research might look into whether this *Rudari* community subsequently settled in Leurdeni, a locality that still exists today.

CASE STUDY 4)

In this case study, I have shown a peculiar community wherein minor girls married men older than them by around 10 years and had children at an older age. At the level of my research, such situations are not very common. This community discontinued living there, and after one generation only one Rom remained there and was married to a Rumanian.

CASE STUDY 5)

Like in case study 2, in this case I have analyzed the formation of an exclusively Romani settlement on a boyar's estate made up of emancipated Roms from the neighboring villages. A large Tatar family was assimilated into the Romani community and practiced the traditional Romani professions (sieve makers and musicians). All of the Roms in the village were settled and practiced various professions and were visited by traveling Roms at times of popular festivities. They were Christians and attended the large church in the village that was established by the boyar who is buried there with his family. One of the two church singers was a Rom. I only rarely came across a Rom who was a church minister, thus I have chosen this case study to show the complexity of the intercommunity relations in the time frame studied here.

"BEGGING WAS NOT PRACTICED EXCLUSIVELY BY THE ROMS, BUT MOSTLY BY INDIVIDUALS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES WHO WERE THEREFORE ASSISTED BY THE COMMUNITY."

CASE STUDY 6)

Here I have shown the possibility of identifying the Romani families in the nominal lists from 1838 and their descendants in the nominal lists from 1878. Such a case study might usher in genealogical and genogram studies of Romani communities, which is a subject unaddressed so far in Romani Studies.

CASE STUDY 7)

I chose this case study to show that the Roms served in the country's army, which is very telling about the coexistence of the Roms with the majority population and their rapport with state institutions.

IN THIS ARTICLE, I have presented a variety of cases of Romani communities in the 19th century, with the *caveat* that the chosen examples are not exhaustive and/or paradigmatic examples. The article draws upon a pilot study, which will be further developed

in the project "Mapping the Roma communities in 19th century Wallachia", conducted by the Centre of Baltic and Eastern European Studies, Södertörn University, and funded by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies (2018–2021).

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