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## TOWARDS THE GYPSIES' MENTALITY: A LESSON OF THE PERCEPTION OF *GADJÉ* (STRANGERS)

### Rezumat

#### Cu privire la unul din aspectele mentalității romilor: atitudinea față de „gadjé” (străini)

În acest articol, autorul încearcă să identifice unul din aspectele mentalității romilor: atitudinea față de străini sau „gadjé”, luând ca exemplu fapte concrete din viața etnografilor-romologi europeni din secolul al XIX-lea, care au încercat să intre în comunitatea romilor pentru a obține date folclorice veridice „din prima mână”, utilizând metoda de observare directă. Se știe că romii din întreaga lume au o anumită scară de valori, care este o parte integrantă a mentalității lor. Cauzele înstrăinării comunității romilor, care s-a transformat într-o parte integrantă din clanul romilor, ar trebui să le căutăm în istoria acestui popor, care de secole a suferit de persecuție, umilință, acuzații de toate păcatele de moarte, amenințarea anihilării totale. Oamenii de știință, până în ziua de azi, nu găsesc răspunsul la întrebarea, în ce fel țigani, originari din cele mai sărace triburi indiene de dansatori și meșteșugari, care și-au părăsit pământul, au supraviețuit ca popor, în timp ce civilizațiile Maya, Incașă și Aztecă au dispărut. Explicațiile, în opinia noastră, le putem găsi în mentalitatea romilor, care au păstrat un set de reguli și legi care determină și explică comportamentul lor, modul de viață, izolarea de la lumea exterioară, enigmatismul, rară supraviețuire în condiții extreme, abilitatea de științe oculte și cunoașterea magiei și hipnozei, bazele psihologiei practice și sugestiei, percepția extrasenzorială.

**Cuvinte-cheie:** romi, mentalitate, atitudinea față de străini, „gadjé”, conservarea identității etnice.

### Резюме

#### К вопросу о цыганском менталитете: отношение к «гаджэ» (чужим)

В настоящей статье автор предпринимает попытку обозначить одну из составляющих цыганского менталитета: отношение к чужим, или «гаджэ», взяв за основу факты из жизни европейских этнографов XIX в., попытавшихся войти в цыганское сообщество для получения достоверного фольклорного материала «из первых рук», используя метод непосредственного наблюдения. Известно, что цыгане всего мира придерживаются определенной шкалы ценностей, которая является составной частью их менталитета. Одной из неотъемлемых черт цыганского сообщества принято считать закрытость, истоки которой следует искать в истории этого народа, пережившего многовековые преследования, унижения, обвинения во всех смертных грехах, вплоть до угрозы полного уничтожения. Ученые до сих пор не находят ответа на вопрос, как

цыгане, вышедшие из среды беднейших индийских племен танцоров и ремесленников, покинувшие родные земли, смогли сохраниться как народ, в то время как высокоразвитые цивилизации майя, инков и ацтеков, обладавшие высокими знаниями, исчезли с лица земли. Разгадка, на наш взгляд, кроется в менталитете цыганского народа, сохранившего свод правил и законов, определяющих и объясняющих поведение соплеменников, их образ жизни, закрытость от окружающего мира, своеобразную загадочность, редкостную выживаемость в экстремальных условиях, способность к оккультным наукам, а также знание магии и гипноза, основ практической психологии, внушения и экстрасенсорики.

**Ключевые слова:** цыгане, менталитет, отношение к чужому, «гаджэ», сохранение этнической идентичности.

### Summary

#### Towards the Gypsies' mentality: a lesson of the perception of *gadjé* (strangers)

The author attempts to describe a component of the Gypsies' mentality: the attitude towards the non-Gypsies, “gadjé”. She builds on facts from the life of some XIX century European ethnographers, who joined the Roma communities in order to obtain authentic firsthand folklore material using the method of participant observation. It is well known that Gypsies around the world adhere to a certain scale of values, which is an integral part of their mentality. Closeness is one of the inalienable characteristic of the Roma community; its origin should be seen in the history of this people, which experienced persecution, humiliation, and accusations of all “mortal sins” for centuries, as well as even the risk of complete physical annihilation. Scientists still do not understand how the Roma, being the natives of the midst of the poorest Indian tribes of dancers and craftsmen, have survived as a nation after they left their native lands, while highly developed civilizations of Maya, Inca and Aztec disappeared from the face of Earth. The solution, in our opinion, should be seen in the mentality of the Roma people. The Roma mentality has preserved a set of rules and laws that determines the behaviour of people, their way of life. These rules cause their insulation from the outside world, their peculiar mysteriousness, and high survival rate in extreme conditions. They also contributed to developing the ability to “occult sciences”, the knowledge of magic and hypnosis, the knowledge of practical psychology, suggestion, and extrasensory perception.

**Key words:** Roma people, mentality, relationship with strangers, “gadjé”, preservation of ethnic identity.

The age of high technologies and intensive information flows does not pay adequate attention to many vulnerable spheres of human spirituality. It makes the study of the mentality of a particular ethnic group more relevant than ever. The issue of mentality correlates with many problems explored by modern ethnologists, including history, traditions, and spiritual culture of ethnic groups.

The interest of the scientific community in the interdisciplinary approaches considerably grew in the second half of the XX century due to the increasing interest in man's inner world. Philosophers, sociologists, and ethno-psychologists started to research the mentality of ethnic groups.

The issue of this paper correlates with the topics of some publications of our colleagues, which appeared in the „Journal of Ethnology and Culturology” in 2006–2017. Among them, I would like to mention a study by Raisa Verdesch on inter-ethnic marriages [5, p. 141-145].

Verdesch's study is interesting for us from the point of view of Gypsies – *Gadjé* (and *Gadjé*-Gypsies – that is not always the same thing) marriages and mixed families. However, the author (based on the “rules” compiled by American psychologists teaching the maintenance of love and harmony in the family; that, by the way, concerns any family) does not take into account the manifestation of mentality and a number of unspoken rules that exist in ethnically mixed families.

Another Moldovan researcher, Nina Ivanova, made some important clarification on the issue of the role of “ethnic identity” phenomenon in modern ethnology. She also paid special attention to the question of some specific features of the process of forming the ethnic identity, as well as to the methods of its study. Expanding this notion, Ivanova points out to the close connection between the concept of ethnic identity and the problems of mentality and ethnically determining aspects of the inner world of the man who is carrying out the study; this evokes a certain interest among the ethno-psychologists that belong to the primordial approach.

Based on G. Soldatova's study, Ivanova determines the relationship between the phenomena and notions of ethnic identity and ethnic self-awareness; she suggests understanding the ethnic identity as a concentrated form and the main component of ethnic self-awareness, which includes stereotypes, prejudices, and values [11, p. 259-266].

Tatyana Zaykovskaya, a Moldovan researcher, who addresses the problems of mentality study also, notes in her article “Intercultural communication is the way to mutual understanding” that national self-

consciousness maintains the functioning of the nationally caused psychological traits. She argues that the components of ethnic self-awareness, including the awareness of ethnic identity and national self-identification, self-perception, ethnic stereotypes, and ethnic feelings plays a fundamental role in determining the main features of a culture [9, p. 154-158].

Nina Ivanova also came to some interesting results in her other study, “The Opposition «We and they» in the children's drawings (ethnological aspect)”. Referring to the studies of the famous Russian scientist B. F. Porshnev, she emphasizes an important observation of this researcher that helps us understand the origins of the Roma's attitudes toward strangers [10, p. 77].

The article “Ethno-psychological study of social representations of Moldovan youths about gypsies” by our colleague Natalia Kaunova, revealed the ethno-cultural specificity of social representations in the Roma group, which is manifested in the fact that this group has a lack of categories of “openness”, “retribution”, “equality”, which is explained by the greater preservation of traditions, segregation, rigid hierarchy of the group, and by the presence of representations about the immanent fairness in the Roma mentality [12, p. 36].

Kaunova's conclusions correlate to our study; her experience and the experience of some other of our colleagues, who study the problems of ethnic identity and ethnic consciousness that underlie the intercultural communication, are of great importance for us and especially for the study of ethnically mixed marriages.

Herewith, we would like to continue the talk about those referred to by many people as Gypsies. Behind their backs, of course; and this is despite the fact that they always insist on the Roma as the most correct and acceptable name.

It is well known that the cultural and historical definition of any people is connected, first of all, with its history. Gypsies belong to those peoples to which the definition “the exceptional” is true for various reasons. And not only because of the fact that the history of this people is not written yet and does not have any archaeological evidences. Some scattered evidences of their migration from India to various parts of the world abound in inaccuracies and conjectures.

According to the generally accepted definition, nation is a certain group of people who share common features; the main of these features are: language, religion, a certain territory of residence, culture, and history. So, from this point of view the Gypsies are not a classic example of a nation. First of all, the Roma do not have their own state, the country, the “Gypsy-

land”, where they could return during the cruel and severe times; and the history of the Roma knew a lot of tragic and severe episodes.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that Roma people do not have their own land and state still, no one could say that they are not a nation. A nation that had to wander the Earth for centuries. A nation that was hurt for many times and had to suffer from blistering cold and scorching heat. They had to adapt to the severe environment, to comprehend the life not at school, but in extreme natural conditions. Overcoming great distances, this people learned not only to understand and to accept the cultures on the way, but also to change these cultures, to introduce new forms and elements in them.

The old lithographs always depict the nomadic Gypsies with a huge bale or a sack behind their back, which, as we can suppose, kept everything that was necessary for a Gypsies' family on the road. This image of Gypsies that came from Middle Ages could be symbolically identified with the cultural and historical heritage of this people, which is concentrated mainly in a kind of bag that is always with them. As well as their intangible, spiritual heritage, the heritage of oral creativity, of customs and traditions, the traditional law in their historical and cultural memory is always with them, of course.

Gypsies are scattered all over the world. We meet them in Europe, in the Middle East or Central Asia, in the North Africa or the American continent. Today no one would say what a religion these tribes professed when they lived in the north of India. What forced them to leave their homeland?

There are hypotheses, assumptions, and guesses only.

Nowadays the Roma profess different religions; there are Catholic Roma, the Orthodox Roma, the Muslim Roma, etc. Nevertheless, some researchers explain the Roma's strangeness as a reminiscence of their previous predilection to paganism and even to shamanism.

The famous Russian researcher V. I. Sanarov<sup>1</sup> in his article “Elements of ancient beliefs in the religion of the Gypsies” examines the elements of ancient religious beliefs, especially of shamanism, among the Gypsies. He shows some common features in the religious ideas of various groups of Gypsies (Gypsies of Austria, Hungary, Norway, Sweden) linked by origin with Finno-Ugrian and some Uralic (Ugric) peoples of Siberia. According to Sanarov, these similar religious beliefs could have been formed as a result of early contacts between the Gypsies and the Finno-Ugrians. These beliefs might also have been spread among the Gypsies through the Iranians, when the

Gypsies migrated from India to Iran and Middle Asia, for instance [14, p. 32-45].

Scientists still do not understand how the Roma, being the natives of the midst of the poorest Indian tribes of dancers and craftsmen, have survived as a nation after they left their native lands, while highly developed civilizations of Maya, Inca and Aztec disappeared from the face of Earth.

The solution, in our opinion, should be found in the mentality of the Roma people. The Roma mentality has preserved a set of rules and laws that determine the behaviour of people, their way of life. These rules cause their insulation from the outside world, their peculiar mysteriousness, and high survival rate in extreme conditions. As well as, they also contributed to developing the ability to “occult sciences”, the knowledge of magic and hypnosis, the knowledge of practical psychology, suggestion, and extrasensory perception.

It is known that the Gypsies of the whole world adhere to a certain scale of values, which is an integral part of their mentality. Among these values, the family and its well-being, the *Romany* language, the religion (accompanied sometimes by a complex of elements of paganism) come first. And, of course, it is freedom that is like air for a true Gypsy; none of the Gypsies can survive without freedom.

The Roma call it *Romanipe*, denoting by this a *sui generis* philosophy of life, a set of rules of behaviour, a kind of the “Gypsies spirit”. It is *Romanipe* that unites the Roma of the whole world; it is a quintessence of the Gypsies' spirit, of the Gypsies' essence, of the Gypsies' law, of the awareness of belonging to the Gypsies' society, of a set of the Gypsies' character traits, etc. None of ethnic Gypsies can be recognized as a true Gypsy without the adherence to *Romanipe*. In addition, there are some exceptions when a non-Roma by origin owning *Romanipe* since childhood is recognized as a true Gypsy also. Usually, it is a foster child of non-Roma origin who grew up among the Roma.

Considering the Roma of the medieval Moldavia, the Moldovan historian Ivan Antsupov in the article “The Roma migration to the cities in the XIX century” gives a definition of the mentality of the Moldovan Gypsies: “If we look back at the history of the Gypsies in the Moldavian Principality, the Gypsies evidently contributed a lot to the public benefit, to the development of the material and spiritual culture of medieval Moldova. However, their life in an atmosphere of deep deprivation and humiliation remained painful and even hopeless for centuries (it was named as “the time of troubles”). Of course, it was impossible that such a historical past had not left a mark on their mentality, a mark, which they carried out through centuries and



preserve until nowadays. Their mentality is a stable set of representations and customary actions, a set of certain sources of outlook, a set of a spirit of eternal quest, of commutative and universal responsibility, a set of their attachments and conservative traditions; Gypsies never lost the hope to gain freedom" [8, p. 13].

Despite the fact that the Roma acquired literacy not so long ago, they attach great importance to the knowledge of the "Gypsies" language. It is the knowledge of the language that plays not the primary but a significant role in the possession of *Romanipe*. Moreover, if non-Roma peoples know the Roma language they are more respected by the Roma. Many stories are known about non-Roma accepted by Gypsies' camps, because they knew the language.

Nevertheless, we will try to consider here only a component of the Gypsies' mentality, namely the relation to strangers, to non-Gypsy – "Gorgios" (гаджэ, *gadje*).

Let us remember that this attitude had its origin thousands of years ago, and it was primarily related to the security of the camp, of family. When it was formed, it had been strengthening and changing over the centuries as a result of incessant migration through countries and peoples, as a result of persecutions that accompanied the Romá at all times.

During the period of the XV–XVIII centuries, these persecutions in Europe led by the authorities and every man were so consistent and cruel that the Roma tried to isolate themselves from the outside world by splitting the reality into two parts - their own world and the world of strangers – *gadje*. In some European countries, the Roma still continue to be persecuted and cast out behind the city line. All this could not but have an impact on the mentality of those who by their closeness and the capacity for isolation surpass any other people.

To a greater extent, this moment became decisive in the formation of the closed character of the Romá. For the same reason, Ivan Antsupov emphasized also: "Earlier the communal isolation was one of the means of their survival" [8, p. 15].

The division into two parts – the Roma and non-Roma is still of great importance in the Roma community. As we have mentioned above, foster children, or, sometimes, those who know the Roma language or partners in mixed Roma-non-Roma marriages, could be recognized by the Roma as insiders, if the stranger took part in all hardships and deprivations of his new "brothers", of course.

The intellectual elite in Europe in the early XIX century was so interested in the life of Gypsies who lived in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, England, France, Spain, and Italy, that they (researchers, roman-

tic writers, and painters-orientalists) joined Gypsies' camps (tabors) and travelled with them for the purpose of knowing this mysterious people more closely. They wanted to present to the European bourgeois society, eager for adventure and exotics, some stories about the mysterious descendants of the pharaohs.

George Henry Borrow<sup>2</sup> was among these "strangers" who was the first in Europe to join the Gypsies' camps. It was the fate of this English writer, traveller and connoisseur of Gypsies' culture, that he was forced from early childhood to move from place to place after the next appointment of his father in the military service. Striving to learn languages, Borrow also learned the Gypsies' language. After his father's death, when he was forced to wander, allowed him to join one of the Gypsies' camps, which there were quite a lot in England during those times.

M. P. Alekseev, the author of the preface to Borrow's famous book "Lavengro"<sup>3</sup>, notes: "In those times East England was a favourite place for the camps of English Gypsies. About twenty thousand Gypsies lived on the British Isles at that time. They appeared here at the beginning of the sixteenth century and wandered being divided into tribes or large families, each of which recognized its own king. They lived in tents and moved from place to place in wretched wagons covered with tarpaulins. Men were horse dealers or wandering artisans – boilermakers, blacksmiths, whitesmiths; women were engaged in theft and fortune telling" [7, p. 10].

However, this attempt to acquire the secrets and knowledge of Gypsies almost cost him life itself. Relying on the facts quoted by Borrow in "Lavengro", M. Alekseev writes: "During these years, many of those events occurred, which were described in the second part of "Lavengro": friendship and travelling with Gypsies, learning their language. His poisoning by an old Gypsy woman who decided that this foreigner knows too many secrets about the Gypsy life and speaks too well their language, was a real event; Borrow felt the effects of this poisoning for the rest of his life. The cases of inexplicable boredom periodically returned to him later; the doctors were powerless. The biographers of Borrow tell us the real name of this Gypsy woman and the names of those two Welsh preachers whom he owes his recovery also" [7, p. 15-16].

Let's note in this context that George Borrow, being a self-taught and erudite man who approached the Roma as close as it was possible, learned their traditions, customs and, as a result, their language, anyway he remained a stranger to them, a "gadje".

The story of a main character of "Lavengro" ends in his midlife because Borrow's wife under the pressure of the publisher forced her husband to put an end

in the middle of the unfinished chapter. She brought the unfinished manuscript to London because all the deadlines for the printing were omitted. Six years later, in 1857, Borrow released the continuation of "Laven-gro", another book about Gypsies – "The Romany Rye". By the way, here it should be noted that in those times the slang of England's Gypsies "rye" means a person who does not belong to their tribe, but who knows their language and stays friendly to them.

As a result, Borrow gave an inspiring example to some other writers and researchers who were fascinated by the Gypsies, by their history and culture. A German scholar Hans Ferdinand Helmolt published in the famous "Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society" an obituary dedicated to the first anniversary of the death of Heinrich von Wlislöcki (1856–1907), where he named von Wlislöcki as a "Friend of Gypsies" [3, p. 194-195].

It seems appropriate in the context to remind to the readers that Wim Willems<sup>4</sup>, who dedicated a separate paragraph to Wlislöcki in his new book, had included the information about him in the chapter named "Followers of George Borrow" [6, p. 12].

Wlislöcki, being not a native Gypsy (he came from an ancient aristocratic Polish family), was keen on Gypsy culture. Studying Sanskrit at the University, he began to learn the Gypsies' dialect, as well as their songs. This research made a great contribution to the studying of Transylvanian Gypsies' language and folklore.

Hans Helmolt notes: "Knowing the Gypsy language theoretically, Wlislöcki joined these nomads, welcome nowhere, nowhere allowed to stay long, hated by everybody, and therefore shy, and lived with them for months together. In those years sacrificed on the altar of Science, in the true sense of the word, he overcame the traditional mistrust, and learned, more thoroughly than any philologist before him, the secrets of Gypsy customs and manners which, as a rule, are anxiously and obstinately concealed from foreigners. This method of carrying out practical ethnology has been, and is indeed still occasionally used in Africa or Australia, but Wlislöcki's experiment will no doubt remain unique for many a day in connection with that tribe whose very vagrancy renders their study peculiarly difficult" [3, p. 194-195].

Indeed, according to the memoirs of his contemporaries, Heinrich von Wlislöcki joined the camp of nomadic Gypsies, lived among them, shared wind and rain, heat and cold, hunger and thirst with them, and even imprisonment for a short time. He did all these for the purpose to write more tales and legends, songs, spells and other mysterious rites. He was even married to gypsy women.

Did he become one of the gang among the Gypsies? It seems unlikely.

Were the contemporaries impressed by these actions of Wlislöcki? Scarcely, I think.

It is known that Wlislöcki died of a mental illness, as a result of which he began to forget a lot of what he had done. After Wlislöcki's death some scholars called into question the authenticity of the data on Gypsy folklore published by Wlislöcki. The reason is that they did not find in his archive neither field diaries, nor working papers. For some Russian Romologists Heinrich von Wlislöcki remained a mystifier; they did not know him really as well as the Transylvanian Gypsies' folklore collected by Wlislöcki.

Heinrich von Wlislöcki, being not an ethnic Gypsy, studied the Roma with might and main during his life. However, he remained a *gadjé* for them even after his death. Being born long before the appearance of fascism in Europe, he saw a prejudiced attitude towards the Roma and expressed it in the following phrase, which is quoted today more often than the author himself: "Where they appear, at the meeting with their arrival, a warning rushes: The gypsies are coming! Gypsies! – a strange people with no past and future".

In this context, it seems appropriate to cite another example, which demonstrates the importance of such a component of the mentality of the Roma people as the attitude towards strangers, as well as the models of "absorption" of strangers.

"Druzhba narodov" in 1999 (nr. 2) in the rubric "The Nation and the World" published the memoirs "How I Became a Gypsy" of a 75-year-old physician, Nikolai Kun, a Hungarian by birth. In the foreword, he tells that he was born in Italy, and lived in different countries, including the Soviet Union [13, p. 170-189].

N. Kun was called a Gypsy from childhood because of his dark skin. When he studied at school, he experienced a prejudiced attitude to himself only because he looked like a representative of the Roma nationality. Later he graduated from a medical institute, and after the Second World War began, he became a soldier. In 1942 he received the appointment to the Stavropol region as the chief doctor in the district hospital.

Describing his journey to Stavropol, N. Kun mentioned that from time to time on his way he met some Gypsies' camps. Gypsies were in fear of German troops, wandering with their children and old people in carts. The carts were loaded with their belongings, the skinny horses were barely moving around. All good horses were taken from them or replaced by skinny and sick ones.

After the Gypsies took up residence in the abandoned and dilapidated houses, they immediately returned to their everyday occupations. Gypsy women visited houses of local people offering to exchange for products some colourful scarves, or simply telling fortunes. Once when Dr. Kun was returning home he saw the following scene: "...three Gypsy women almost in unison speak to my sister; she attempts to yell over their voices: 'No, I do not need it', but in vain, and goes back to the open door of the apartment.

As I saw, the Gypsies offered to my sister to buy (or even better to exchange for food) a large colourful shoulder-shawl, and then they offered to tell fortunes ('gild me the pen'). When the sister refused, they asked for a little food at least, preferably bacon or eggs, because their 'children are hungry'.

I just approached them. 'What happened?' – I asked, referring to my sister. But she did not have time to say a word, as one of the Gypsy women said: 'They say that you are the chief doctor here. Buy this shoulder-shawl for your wife, and we will tell her fortune and yours. It is not expensive, and you will find out everything about your past and future' [13, p. 174].

Kun solved the situation in his own way. He told the Gypsies: "First, it's not my wife, but my sister. Next, we are Gypsies really, and my sister tells fortunes better than you do. We do not need a kerchief, but you will get food for your children". In the meantime, I entered the house. In the room stood a bucket full of eggs, on top of which lay two large pieces of bacon – a fee received from a sick woman from a neighbouring house.

Taking the bucket by the handle, I carried it out and said: "This is a gift to your children. The bucket needs to be returned to the owner, so make it empty". Gypsy women, continuing to thank me, as well as my mother, who gave birth to such a good and beautiful son, spread out their colourful scarf on the ground, carefully laid out eggs and bacon on it, carefully tied the ends. Then one of them said: "So, you're not a Gypsy, I think?!" – "Well, you want to tell us the fortune, but you cannot recognize your brother even" – I joked. "Anyway, you look like a Gypsy. But you are not a Gypsy really, I think" [13, p. 174].

The Gypsies did not believe the doctor that he was a Gypsy. They decided to deceive him with the help of a beautiful Gypsy girl from a nearby camp; she asked the doctor to return to her a stallion of gray colour with spots, who allegedly belonged to her family. A little later Kun deceived the Gypsies also, and even twice. However, it looks like a paradox that as a result of these events Kun's friendship with the Roma and their respect for him became even stronger.

Nikolai Kun admits that, as a doctor, he helped the camp. He treated Gypsies, who, incidentally, had excellent health. He wrote: "The Gypsies were very grateful to me for the mediation that saved them from hunger. But to my surprise and, frankly, disappointment, I was still a 'stranger' who, as a 'white man', can't be completely trusted. During the conversation with me, they often switched to their native language and only having discussed the problem with each other, informed me of the 'final decision' in Russian. Despite all the efforts, I was not able to overcome the centuries-old alienation of the Roma from the surrounding society, the mistrust caused by resentment and humiliation" [13, p. 179].

Once Kun had to face the distrust from Gypsy children, they were participants in a music folklore ensemble. The head of the ensemble admitted: "Already in the early childhood these children realize their humiliated and unequal position in society. Twice a year, during school holidays, they leave for their families and see how different are the conditions their relatives live from those the Hungarians do. Besides, their parents encourage them to be suspicious of the Hungarians, as well as of the people of 'white race' in general" [13, p. 179-180].

"If you were an excellent violinist who could play some unknown old songs without sheet music you quickly win their respect and even love. Anyway, to be recognized by them as a man of the gang you must be a native Gypsy" – added the head of the ensemble.

However, over time, N. Kun recalls, he managed to overcome the alienation of the Roma who surrounded him. Unexpectedly for himself, quite by accident he became a Gypsy in the eyes of his new friends. To do that, he had to outwit them twice in the process of horses' exchange. It was unbelievable for his Gypsy customers; they were sure that only a Gypsy is able to deceive another Gypsy, and strangers, the "gadje" never could succeed in this.

Visiting the wedding of nomadic Gypsies who were forced to stop their wandering for the period of battles, Nikolai Kun asked the leader of the camp: "Why don't you stop your wandering at all, like now? You could settle in cities and villages; people would get used to you, Gypsies could marry Russian girls, like Russian guys do the same with Gypsy girls, and so the hostility would cease to be" [13, p. 188].

As N. Kun tells, the old man, who had spoken calmly and measurably to this point, suddenly became indignant: "No, no, it is impossible! It happens that a Gypsy marries a Russian girl; though rarely, and not because Russian girls do not like our Gypsy guys, but because a girl who leaves her family for a Gypsies' camp becomes a pariah. The family will curse her, and



all your friends will abdicate from her. There were the reverse cases when a young Gypsy left for a Russian family, but his life after that usually turned out so hard that he had to return to the camp soon, and most often without a young wife" [13, p. 188].

Nikolai Kun very accurately caught and passed in his short story the mentality of the Gypsies, their representations about themselves and others. He competently concludes that knowledge of the Gypsies' language, music and especially of horses would be strong arguments in favour of those who want "to become a Gypsy".

Clifford Lee, who accompanied Bart McDowell and photographer Bruce Dale on a trip to India, in the foreword to the book "Gypsies: Wanderers of the World" wrote that he never thought about the possibility to visit his ancestors in India. The idea appeared when Bart McDowell, an employee of the National Geographic Society of the United States, appeared in his house and told about his future book. This meeting marked the beginning of a fantastic journey through Western and Eastern Europe and through the Middle East to the watershed of the Indus, of whom he writes in the preface:

"Along the way I met my people, the Gypsies <...> in poverty and in prosperity, and found what I'd long suspected: that the world over, we are fundamentally the same. Wherever we met, we had in common our Romany – our ancient language. Sometimes it would be only an odd word, sometimes many words. But to me the most important discovery was the affinity I felt with the other *Rom* (so there is in the original – S. P.). I was often surprised to see Gypsies who looked amazingly like relatives and friends of mine back home in England. Sometimes a gesture caught my eyes; sometimes it was a physical resemblance, the angle of a jaw line, a face thrown into relief beside a lonely campfire. But most of all, it was the black Gypsy eyes that reminded me of so many Gypsy people I knew" [4, p. 5].

One of the points highlighted by Clifford in the foreword, reveals their attitude towards the so-called *gadje*: "All of us, I found, had much the same problem with those *gorgios*– non-Gypsies – who want to force their ways upon us without realizing that we want no such thing, and with self-styled 'experts' who so often portray us either as happy children of nature living on hedgehogs roasted in clay, or as thieves menacing society. I think my friend Bart McDowell has used the best technique: He has let us speak for ourselves" [4, p. 5].

"It is hard to alter a people who are content with their lot, and wish only to be what they are and always have been – Gypsies" – writes Clifford Lee in the conclusion to his preface [4, c. 5].

The alienation to the non-Roma, "*gadje*", as we have already noted, did not arise out of nowhere. "Strangers" brought many troubles to the Roma. The Roma resisted the attempts of assimilation and the imposed scenario of violent integration into society. They saw it as a threat to their survival. Let us recall the historical facts that testify how the Roma became victims of anti-Romani laws in Medieval Europe.

The persecution of the Roma was cruel and consistent. The Gypsies were doomed to death and physical destruction without any investigation. Only in the period of XV–XVIII centuries, about 148 anti-Romani laws were adopted in Europe.

The persecution of the Roma caused great isolation of the Roma people from the local population. Gypsies began to wander more and limited their contacts with non-Gypsies, "*gadje*" to a minimum.

François de Vaux de Foletier<sup>5</sup> gave us some interesting evidences about the relationships between the Roma people and the "*gadje*". Devoting to the issue a whole chapter, entitled "Gypsies and non-Gypsies", he begins it with the following remark: "The Gypsy world is usually considered a strictly closed world" [1, p. 219].

Let us consider this more precisely.

Since the Roma people came to Europe, the laws that set limits to the movement of Roma within European countries and violated their rights had emerged. In 1783, Charles III, the King of Spain, stated that those who call themselves Gypsies are not people of such kind, neither by origin, nor by their nature. He prohibited to pronounce not only the word "Gitano", but also the euphemism "the new resident of Castilian" – writes the famous Romologist Angus Fraser. Issuing a series of decrees entitled "Pragmatic Sanction", the king was motivated by the desire "to find the most effective means to turn the horde of these people into citizens useful to society" [2, p. 182-183].

Angus Fraser, in the same context, says further that Charles's "Pragmatic Sanction" influenced the king's policy for a long time. He writes that when George Borrow appeared in Spain in Badajoz in 1836, he first heard a proverb on "*caló*" ("*caló*" is a "spoiled" language, a hybrid of the Gypsy vocabulary and Castilian phonetics, morphology, and syntax): "*el Crallis ha nicobado la liri de los Calés*" (the king deprived the Gypsies of their laws). The proverb applied to Charles III and mourned the destruction of the old way of life of the Roma [2, p. 184-185].

François de Vaux de Foletier notes that in France the Roma were perceived as foreigners. In 1562, Queen Elizabeth of England ordered to expel the Gypsies outside her state. On the other hand, King Pedro II of Portugal (in 1686) treated the Gypsies who

were born in his country in a more tolerant manner. Foletier emphasizes that in such countries where the Gypsies were treated better, they behaved as a population endowed with special privileges. They stressed their detachment from the surrounding local population as well as the strict adherence to their traditions and customs [1, p. 219-230].

However, not the best and the most honest representatives of the surrounding society often entered into special and mutually beneficial relationships with the Roma. Mainly, they were adventurers, criminal elements, deserters of regular troops, who sometimes formed real gangs.

There were told some legends about one of such gangs, which arose in Germany. A whole gypsy camp, including old women and children, became members of this gang, which was headed by a certain Hannikel<sup>6</sup>. The gang had had some accomplices among local residents, probably among of adventurers and criminalized elements [1, p. 220].

As Foletier wrote in his book, the cases when Roma people came to the aid of non-Roma, were well known in Europe despite the already prevalent idea that the Gypsies always try to deceive and rob the "gadjé". This often happened by chance.

We can remember the case of Borrow (he described it in his autobiographical book "Lavengro"). Wandering around England, alone, hoping to earn a piece of bread, on a cart with tools, he went from village to village, in search of work, until he met the Gypsy camp which he joined.

Teenagers, young people from respectable wealthy families, thirsting for adventure and freedom, rebelling against the restrictions and prohibitions of their wealthy parents; beggars who were begging, all of them by the will of fate, had found themselves on the street unattended or without roof over their heads. Pregnant young girls, trying to hide their sin from relatives, neighbours and curious – all fled to the camp. Gypsies offered shelter and hot food for all of them, as well as some words of consolation.

Hiding the disobedient youths and girls of well-off families, the Gypsies hoped to get benefits. Beggars and vagabonds, and just stray people, soon they became the members of Gypsy camps. Pregnant girls, who gave birth in the Gypsy camp, then returned home and left the newborn to those who helped them to get rid of the "shame". Both sides were pleased, especially the Roma, who raised and educated the child as their own.

The author emphasizes that women accepted in the camp had to change their faces so that they did not differ from the Gypsies. Men who became members of a camp had to change their name to a Gypsy

name. Marriages of Gypsies with "gadjé" are a separate topic for discussion, to which we will return in the course of our researches.

In the context of this topic, we could cite even more examples proving and demonstrating the attitude of the Roma towards strangers, "gadjé", the issue that is still insufficiently explored. However, as we have already noted, the theme of the Gypsies mentality is too extensive and cannot be limited by this article. Thus, we can draw only some preliminary conclusions. First, we should emphasize the fact that this is not a one-sided process, but an important part of the bilateral process, in which trust should come from both sides.

The Gypsies' community is a very complex organism, which has its own genetic and cultural code, like a well-closed room. The Gypsies' mentality is a kind of door that isolates this community from stranger's eyes and claims. To find the key to this door is not a simple task. The last century has shown that the Roma are ready to make concessions, to give up some traditional habits, and to move to a settled way of life. They are ready to modernize their way of life. However, they stand their grounds and do not want to change anything as regards to their identity and to the traditional ideas about freedom, family, and values.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Our Journal of Ethnology and Culturology wrote in nr. XX, 2015 about the tragic fate of this scientist.

<sup>2</sup> George Henry Borrow (1803–1881) – was an English writer of novels and of travel books based on his own experiences in Europe. During his travels, he developed a close affinity with the Romani people of Europe, who figure prominently in his work. His best-known books are *The Bible in Spain*, the autobiographical *Lavengro*, and *The Romany Rye*, about his time with the English Romanichal (Gypsies). In: *The Life of George Borrow* by Herbert Jenkins. Part 1 out of 9. <http://www.fullbooks.com/The-Life-of-George-Borrow1.html> (visited 05.01.2018).

<sup>3</sup> Lávengro is a nickname formed from two Gypsy words and denoting the "master of words" that Borrow received from his friend Gypsy.

<sup>4</sup> Willem Hendrik (Wim) Willems (Zwolle, 1951) – is a Dutch historian and writer. He is mainly concerned with life in cities and the history of The Hague. Prof. dr. Wim Willems has written a number of books on immigrants and ethnic minorities and has edited several volumes (in Dutch) on Dutch from the former East-Indies and colonial history. He has also written widely on the history of traveling groups, especially Gypsies and caravan-dwellers. For more details about him, see at: <https://www.universiteit-leiden.nl/medewerkers/wim-willems#tab-1> (visited 14.01.2018).

<sup>5</sup> François de Vaux de Foletier (1893 – 1988) – French archivist and historian of the XX century, specialist in the history of the Roma people in Europe. In 1955, he was one



of the founders of the magazine "Études tsiganes". Author of the book "Mil años de historia de los Gitanos" (in Spanish), translation by Domingo Prun. Barcelona: Plaza & Janes, S.A., 1974.

<sup>6</sup>Hannikel – real name Jakob Reinhard, the nickname "Hannikel" is given for his strong physical constitution. He was a bandit whose adventures ended in a gallows on July 17, 1787. He was born in Darmstadt (Germany) in 1742. Mother – gypsy, father – military drummer. It is possible that his father was also a gypsy, since many Roma in different parts of Europe did military service. Today, this is one of the carnival German characters. For more details about him, see: Jakob Reinhard "Hannikel", un gitano malo, malo, malo, malísimo. In: <https://gitanizate.wordpress.com/2017/10/03/jakob-reinhard-hannikel-un-gitano-malo-malo-malo-malissimo/> (visited 14. 01.2018).

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