

Our old world

My mother never walked in front of us, never in front of our feet. My mother and the girls had to walk behind us. When we were around sometimes we met some wayfarers and feeling pity we gave them something to eat, on a dish, this dish was thrown away afterwards or it was broken into pieces. We never ate from one dish when he was mahrim (unclean). Even if it were made of gold, the plate would have been thrown away. Or, as I said before, if he was not a relative but an unknown person, the plate was not broken or thrown away in front of him, but only when he was gone. What the Sinti consider *praslo* was very much present even for us.

The women would have rather died instead of going to a doctor and this doctor would have touched their knees or something else. Because, this woman would have been *mahrim* and nobody would have talked to her. There was one woman, I know it, she was my aunt, she was taken to hospital, she shouted down, she did not allow to be touched by anyone, she wanted to jump out of the window, she wanted to kill herself! Before it was not like this that the women went to the doctor when the children were born. I was born under a tree – like all of my brothers and sisters –, here in Guntramsdorf. Three women took part in the birth, they were around the pregnant woman, and no Rom, no man was allowed to go to that wagon, for two, for three days, and they could not pass the wagon on the side. The birth did not take place in the wagon or in the caravan, but beside the camper, the women did not enter the wagon for this, that would have been very bad. It was like this for the Rom, for two or three days, after three days the woman got up again and went to work. Only if it was a son who was born, her husband had to go there to see him. If it was a girl he did not go there immediately, if it was a boy he had to go there.

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