



Roma – Sub Ethnic Groups

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Before Roma left India, it was impossible not to be part of the specific Indian socio-cultural system, i.e., the caste system. A → *jati* is a kinship group performing a specific profession. There is an inseparable connection between two basic characteristics (determinants) of caste, that is, between professional identity and kinship identity, which means that, as the number of male descendants, sons, multiply in subsequent generations, the number of practitioners of each caste profession also multiply. But because only a limited number of people offering products and services of their caste's profession can ply their trade in a certain area, the "superfluous" professionals have no choice but to move to another place where there is a demand for their services or to choose another profession.

A number of factors prevent changing professions. These are mainly the rigid traditions of "professional caste dharma" (directive to work only in a certain profession), and a lack of preparation (education) for practicing a profession different from the one for which a person was "educated" within the family. Nevertheless, in Roma society as well as in India, there is always a certain chance for "emigration" from a traditional group profession, mainly when social shifts are connected with territorial shifts (moving elsewhere). However, this "emigration" applies only to splinter groups, not to individuals. "Family splinter groups" continuously separating from the original "mother" caste form, resulted in, over the course of time, a new *jati* with a new name.

Thus, the *Dom*¹ in India are relatives of today's Islamic folk musicians, the *Mirasi*; the *Badi* or *Bihar* acrobats and musicians; the *Gade Lohar* itinerant blacksmiths; the *Balmik* basket makers; the *Bandjara* itinerant tradesmen; the *holy Djugi* beggars; the *Madari* presenters of trained bears and monkeys; the *Sapere / Sapvale* snake charmers and snakebite healers, etc. etc. etc.

The endless and countless number of designations which were and still are given to individual groups of Roma during the course of their extra-Indian history is a result of the Indian archetype of caste (kinship-professional) reproduction and, in addition, the movement of the Roma to different political and ethno-linguistic milieus of Asia, Europe, America and Australia.

There are numerous ways in which we can categorise the designations of Roma communities and groups. Two basic ways are autonymous and exonymous (appellativa). An autonymum is the name by which certain communities designate themselves; an exonymum (appellativum) is the name given by others. It is often difficult to determine whether a name is autonymous or exonymous because, as long as it is not an absolutely pejorative exonymum (derogative opprobrium), the term used by others may, in the course of time, become one used for more precise self-identification.

A basic, probably the most original and in its way all-inclusive autonymum is the ethnic name (ethnonymum) → Rom . The Roma brought the name from India in a phonetic modification of the ethnic/caste term *Dom*. Although today, Roma living in various lands around the world use different "autonyma" for their societies (*Sinti*, *Kale*, *Manouche*, etc.), all acknowledge a common origin and basic identity with Roma. This is mainly so with reference to the *Rom- Gadžo* (non-Rom) dichotomy.

¹ *Dom* are first mentioned in literature in the eighth century AD: In the Tantrist part of "Sadhanamala" we read about the *Dom* king Heruk. In the first collection of Bengali poetry, "Chordjo", *Dom* women are highly acclaimed. In the eleventh century, the Arab intellectual Al Biruni mentions *Dom* musicians. Not until the twelfth century, in Sanskrit literature written by representatives of the highest *varna* (caste), the "Aryan Brahmins" (priests, intellectuals, scholars), do writers further discuss pre-Aryan *Dom* with contempt. [→ Origins of Roma]



The autonym *Sinti* (pl.) (*Sinto*, m. sing.; *Sintica*, f. sing.) is used by members of an important Roma society, the greatest number of whom live in Germany. Hence, one of the exonymous terms for *Sinti* is "German Gypsies / Roma".

Although the *Sinti* do not speak of themselves as Roma, they say they speak *romanes*. Experts argue about the etymology of the word *Sinto*. Some trace it back to the geopolitical area *Sindh* (today in Pakistan). Opponents of this theory argue that the name *Sinto* does not behave grammatically like an original Indian word.

A sub-group of *Sinti* are the *Manouche*. They live mainly in France. The etymology of the name *Manouche* is Indian. The term *manouche* means a human being (in Sanskrit, in neo-Indian languages and in *Romani*). The outstanding musician and founder of Roma jazz, → Django Reinhardt came from the sub-ethnic *Manouche* group. Another famous *Manouche* is the film director Tony Gatlif.

The name *Cale* (pronounced something like "Calley") in itself designates the Roma of Spain. We cannot exclude the possibility that this term, which means "black" (in *Romani*), was originally an exonym and that the Roma translated it from the Spanish and later identified with it. We sometimes meet similar shifts. In a Jewish chronicle of the seventeenth century, Roma are referred to as *kushim* – "blacks". On the other hand, for Roma, like for their ancestors in India, a typical personal name was *Kalo Rom./Kalu Hind. Kaleja* – the nominativised vocative of the word *kalo* – became a common surname among the *Slovak Roma*. We cannot exclude the possibility that a common first name spread and became the designation for a whole sub-ethnic group.

The Spanish *Cale* use the term *Cale* for their language. The *Cale* language is para-*Romani*, i.e., a *Romani* ethnolect of Spanish – Spanish containing *Romani* words and a few specific *Romani* characteristics.

Kale is an autonymous term used by Roma in Finland. Perhaps it is a translation from the Finnish *Mustalainen* ("Blacks"). Here, too, a semantic extension of a personal name became the designation for a whole group.

Spanish and Finnish *Cale / Kale* probably have nothing in common; their identical autonym is a coincidence. Finnish *Kale* still speak *Romani* among themselves, even though their language is loaded with Finnish words.

The Roma of England use the autonym *Romanichels*, *Gypsies* – and recently the politically symbolic term *Roma* has taken hold. The etymology of the word *Romanichel* (sing.) is not entirely clear. The appellativum *Gypsy* (sing.) has become an autonym along with the replacement of the *Romani* language by the *Romani* ethnolect of English. As with *Cale*, the language of the English Roma is para-*Romani*. Its basis is English and it contains a certain number of *Romani* words.

While many *Romanichels* have made the exonym *Gypsy* their own, the dominant English society's socionym (term for a social group) *Travellers* (people living in mobile homes, in wagons, in trailers) has taken hold. The term *Travellers* applies not only to ethnic Roma, but also to other people who do not live in permanent housing, for example, to Irish *tinkers* (tinsmiths) whose linguistic and ethnic origins have nothing in common with Roma.



Rom (*Roma*, pl.), *Sinto* (*Sinti*, pl.), *Manouche* (*Manouche*, pl.), *Calo / Kalo* (*Cale / Kale*, pl.), *Romanichel* (*Romanichels*, pl.) *Gypsy* (*Gypsies*, pl.) are basic autonomous terms for people who left India about one thousand or fifteen hundred years ago. Groups call themselves by these names in many countries around the world.

In some cases it is apparent, or one can surmise, that an autonymum occurred originally as an exonymum. In ethno-professional subgroups of large Roma societies, similar phenomena occurred often. This will be discussed below.

The antithesis of autonoma is exonyma (appellativa). When, in various world languages, people refer to Roma in general that is, to Roma society without any sort of internal differentiation (professional, sub-ethnic or regional), designations are used that are taken from two main appellativa that had already emerged in Byzantium: "Athingani" and "(E)giptoi".

The term "Athingani" has been modified to the Czech "c/Cikán", the Slovak "c/Cigán", the German "Zigeuner", the Hungarian "cigany", the Russian "cygan", the Italian "Zingari", the French "Tsigane", etc. "(E)giptoi" is the origin of the English "Gypsy", the French "Gitan", the Spanish "Gitano", etc.

We use the alternative lower and upper cases for the first letters in the words "c/Cikán" – "cygan" for two reasons: In some languages (e.g. Russian) members of the ethnic groups use the lower case for the initial letters. Nevertheless, even in groups where the members use capital letters (e.g. in Czech), the term "cikán" is written with the first letter in lower case because "cikáni" were considered a social group and not at all an ethnic group.

"Athingani" are mentioned along with "Paulicians" in various Byzantine documents. The Orthodox Byzantine church considered the "Paulicians" to be heretical because they recognised the dualistic Manichaeist faith, according to which the world was created on two principles (hence: dualism): good and evil. The entire subsequent existence of the world has thus been the struggle between good and evil. The *Paulicians*, like the "Athingani", belonged to the lowest orders of society. No mention has been found of the particular religion of the "Athingani", but it was written that they performed magic and that their style of living was different from that of "normal" Byzantines.

There are various opinions about the etymology of the word "Athingani". The prevailing explanation is that the term is taken from the root of the Greek word meaning "touch" and the negative prefix "a". Thus *athingan* must mean "someone whom we do not touch" – or the reverse: "someone who does not touch (others)". Traditional groups of Roma still keep to the rule of → ritual cleanliness, which forbids "touching" anything that is unclean and consorting with people who are unclean (marrying them, eating in their homes, eating from dishes they have touched [→ Mahrime]) – and all who do not belong to the identical group [→ Cudza Roma] are considered unclean. It is therefore possible to lean rather towards the second explanation of the word "Athingani": those who do not consort with others.

In later Byzantine documents – chiefly of the fifteenth century – the term "Gyptoi" (*Egyptians*) is used along with "Athingani" for the same group of people. It is certain that they are referring to Roma. Since both terms, "Egyptians" as well as "Athingani" applied to all Roma, it is not clear from the Byzantine documents which sub-ethnic or professional groups of Roma they were discussing. Nor is it clear from other *Gadžo* references to Cikáni / Gypsies which have been assembled from various chronicles, annals, laws, Travellers' information, non-Roma literature and printed material. *Gadžo*



historiographic documents do not create an entirely reliable basis for us to be able to imagine the history of the Roma who, after their first nearly four-hundred year Asian-European stay in Byzantium, gradually emigrated throughout the world. And we do not learn anything about the internal sub-ethnic divisions of Roma society.

Sometimes we can make an approximate guess about which professional group of Roma is being referred to if the historical document describes the group's life in greater detail. For example, we know that in Byzantium the "Athingani" produced sieves, that they were admired as acrobats, that they presented trained bears, that they were pilloried by the Orthodox church for dealing with fortune telling and occult sciences such as snake charming and healing with snake venom. Probably we will never learn how they differentiated themselves within the framework of "Athingani" society, which language or dialect the members of the individual groups spoke, and what attributes they added to the basic umbrella autonymum *Rom* to separate themselves professionally / sub-ethnically from other Roma – with whom, from the point of view of the basic *Rom* → Gadžo dichotomy, they felt united².

Over time, appellativa that arose in various languages from the two Byzantine exonyma for Roma acquired connotations of markedly antagonistic relations between Roma and non-Roma and of the ignorance of the dominant ethnic group about the origin of Roma and about Roma in general.

In the Travníček "Dictionary of the Czech Language" (Prague 1952) the entry "cikán" reads: "*member of an itinerant nation, symbol of lying, theft, wanderlust... figuratively: rogue, liar, swindler.*" In English, the term "Gypsy" is used for a nomad, a vagabond regardless of his ethnic origin. The verb "to gypsy" is a colloquial term meaning "to wander around". In America, "to gyp/gip" someone means "to cheat" someone. [→ Stereotypings and Folklorisations] Therefore, nowadays, Roma political representatives request that, even in non-Romani languages, the discredited appellativum be replaced with the autonymum Rom.

Roma society worldwide is divided into a large number of professional and/or sub-ethnic subgroups. They indicate their group with an attributive designation³ added to the autonymum *Roma*, e.g. *Roma-Kalderari* (→ Roma-cauldron makers), → Ungrika-Roma, *Bergitska Roma* (literally, "mountain Roma", a group settled in southern Poland on the Polish-Slovak border, originally identical to → Servika-Roma), etc. [→ Index of appellations]

Professional and sub-ethnic groups of Roma are numerous worldwide. It is impossible to say exactly how many there are because, as a result of political, social and economic changes, they move back and forth and change the borders of their identity and thus change their designations at the same time. Thus historic and contemporary, autonomous and exonymous designations are literally innumerable. We will try to show how the law of ethnonymy (designation of an ethnic group) functions in Roma society through some examples of recent history.

² Primary Roma identity is expressed by the slogan "*sem Roma sam*" – "We are Roma after all". "*Sem Roma sam*" is a dialect version used in so-called Slovak *Romani* [→ Servika-Roma] and it has its linguistic variants in many other *Romani* dialects. The expression "*Sem Roma sam*" often functions like a magic formula that wards off possible arguments or fights; it creates an atmosphere of peace and tolerance during gatherings of members of various sub-ethnic groups, etc.

³ In some dialects the generalising designation *nacija* exists for a sub-ethnic (sub)group of Roma. It was encountered by, for example, the ethnologist A. Sutherland during her stay among *Lovara*, *Kalderaš* Roma in Richmond, USA.



The most numerous group of Roma in Slovakia, who have been settled there for three or four centuries, were formerly called *Servika Roma*, i.e., Roma who came from Serbia (viz *Servika Roma*). The author of this entry still frequently came across the designation *Servika Roma* at the beginning of the 1950's, but gradually she recorded a parallel equivalent, *Slovak / Slovačika Roma*, that was replacing *Servika Roma*. Roughly one third of the Roma in Slovakia emigrated after 1945 to Bohemia and Moravia. The first generation of migrants used the expression *khere pre Slovensko* (home in Slovakia) exclusively for the land they felt was their home. Here they had "clan splinter groups" of their close relations; many migrants assumed that they would return home to Slovakia one day.

With each subsequent generation, the ties among Roma residents of the Czech lands and Slovakia weakened. Today no *Rom* who was born in the Czech lands to parents or grandparents born there will say, *khere pre Slovensko*. Many children and grandchildren of *Slovak / Servika Roma* do not know where in Slovakia their ancestors came from; they have lost track of distant relatives who stayed in Slovakia, and often they themselves have never been in Slovakia. The designation *Slovak / Serviko Rom* is forced out by the term *Czech Roma*. One often hears today's young Roma in the Czech lands say *Me som Čechos* ("I am Czech").

The preference for the attribute *Czech Rom* also has a political basis: After the division of Czechoslovakia (January 1, 1993), there appeared a few conditions in the law for obtaining Czech citizenship that made it very difficult, mostly for Roma, to become Czech citizens. Often, not even those who were born in the Czech lands, and who had never spent time in Slovakia, could not obtain Czech citizenship if they were unable to bore through all the bureaucratic regulations or if they did not have the money to fulfill the conditions of the law on citizenship. The terms "Czech" and *Czech Rom* became more popular as an attributive autonym among the original *Slovak Roma*, mainly after the division of Czechoslovakia as a conscious or subconscious declaration of the wish to stay in the Czech Republic and the fear of being sent back to Slovakia, the former homeland of their ancestors.

→ *Czech Cikáni/Roma* is the traditional designation for Roma who had lived in the Czech lands for a long time. A great majority of them travelled because historic conditions in the Czech lands in contrast with the conditions in Slovakia, did not permit them to settle.

The traditional *Czech Roma* are not identical with (neo)*Czech Roma* – Roma from Slovakia. These two groups have different traditional professions, speak differently, even if their dialects are closely related and, influenced by the differing histories of the Czech lands and Slovakia, their destinies are different. For example, as has already been said, *Czech Roma* traveled for the most part, whereas Slovaks were settled. During World War II, almost all of the *Czech Roma* were murdered in German concentration camps, while *Slovak Roma*, as a group, survived the war. *Czech Roma* assimilated the Czech language much earlier; today, *Czech Romani* has nearly disappeared. *Slovak Roma* continued using their original ethnic tongue. The identity of *Czech Roma* who survived World War II is strengthened by a stricter adherence to the rules of → ritual cleanliness than that of (neo)*Czech Roma* from Slovakia.

And so there currently exist in the Czech Republic two groups of *Czech Roma*. How the terminological situation will develop is not clear. Some original *Czech Roma* solve it by retroactively beginning to call themselves *Cikáni* (Since their mother tongue was Czech, the problem does not arise as to what they would call themselves in *Romani*) and thereby they identify themselves differently from the Roma of Slovakia.



As a further example, we present the shift of the term *Rumungri* (pl.) (*Rumungro*, sing; *Rumungrica*, f. sing.) This was the term by which *Walachian Roma* (*Lovara*, *Kalderaš* etc.) designated "Hungarian" Roma, hence the etymology of the word: *Rom Ungro* = Hungarian Rom. When travelling → *Vlachi*, or *Walachian Roma*, arrived in Hungary from Walachia after the abolition of Roma slavery (1864) they found that, there, the overwhelming majority of Roma were settled. Many earned their living as professional musicians; some as blacksmiths. They differed from the *Vlachi* not only in their way of life and their professions, but also in their dialects. *Vlachi* considered them *aver Roma* (other Roma) and called them "Rumungri" (Hungarian Roma) after the land in which they had met them. Later the *Vlachi Roma* broadened the term "Rumungri" to cover other settled Roma they met in Slovakia, i.e., to *Servika Roma*. The only characteristic these had in common with "Hungarian (*Ungrika*) Roma" was their settled way of life and partly the traditional professions of smithery and music. The languages which *Hungarian* and *Slovak Roma* spoke differed quite significantly.

Because there is a considerable group (caste) distance between travelling *Vlachi* and settled Roma – *Ungrika* as well as *Servika* – the term "Rumungri" earned a pejorative undertone. Many *Slovak* (*Servika*) and *Hungarian* (*Ungrika*) Roma considered the term Rumungri more or less as an insult. In retaliation, the term *Vlachi*, which *Servika* and *Ungrika Roma* call the *Walachian Roma*, sounds disreputable⁴.

In the two aforementioned examples, we have tried to point out shifts in ethnonymous processes. These two examples understandably do not include the whole confusing scale of possible changes, but it is possible to extract from them at least a few basic general factors that work during the changes of attributive autonoma/exonoma. These are historic changes mainly accompanied by territorial shifts (migrations), meetings with other groups of Roma sub-ethnic groups whose members "brand" the others (*aver Roma* – *cudza Roma*) with a certain appellativum to differentiate them from themselves. In time, an exonymous attribute may be appropriated "as one's own". In many groups we will probably not find out which are original appellativa and which are autonymous.

We are using the term "attributive". Even if the meaning comes from the word itself, it is right here that we want to emphasise again one important fact that has already been implicitly mentioned above: All Roma, in the framework of the basic dichotomy towards non-Roma (*Gadže*), call themselves Roma (even those who, in contrast to other Roma, distance themselves with the autonoma *Sinti*, *Cale*, *Manouche*, etc.) And all the Roma I have met consider "their own" group to be *čače Roma* (real Roma [→ Amare Roma]). Only when it is necessary for them to identify themselves as distinct from other, "different" Roma groups do they use an attributive designation that is known and used in the area where they come into contact with those "others". Those areas can in some few cases be "worldwide"; in others, very limited. And then – if a certain group moves away from "its" (temporary) area to another one, it can completely change its attributive designation.

There are all sorts of attributive designations. The most common types are professionyma (names derived from each particular traditional profession) and regionyma (names derived from the region where a certain sub-ethnic group of Roma came from or where they move around/where they are settled).

Examples of professionyma may be numerous designations for bear trainers. They provide further proof that terminology of Roma groups is complicated.

⁴ Recently we have noted an interesting phenomenon: During meetings of Roma political representatives on the international stage, the pejorative feeling of the term "Rumungri" is fading and some mainly young Slovak and Hungarian Roma accept it as an attributive autonymum.



Byzantine documents already spoke about "Athingani" presenting trained bears. The possibility cannot be excluded that Roma brought this profession from India (In Northern India, clans of bear trainers are called *Madari*, and they belong in the large luster of *Dom jatis*.).

In historical lands of the former Czechoslovakia, none of the Roma groups trained bears. However, itinerant bear leaders from abroad would come from time to time, present their art, and leave. Slovak Roma used a name for them that was taken from the Slovak word meaning bear leader, *medvedara*. But in some localities they were called by a very old name taken from the word *ričh* (Rom. / Hind. – "bear"): *Ričkara*. We have the information from Gejza Demeter of Zbudské nad Cirochou (district of Snina) that his relatives spoke *Romani* with *Ričkara*, but they did not always understand each other well because the *Ričkara*, had their own language. Then which group of bear trainers did they belong to? We do not know.

In Romania, where clans of bear leaders were widespread, their members were called *Ursari* (*urs* – Romanian *urs* – "bear"). They spoke the *Ursari* dialect, into which the New Testament is currently being translated.

In the Balkans, for example, in Bulgaria, bear trainers are called *Mechkara* (from the Slavonic *mechka* – "bear"). Balkan *Mechkara* do not have much in common with Romanian *Ursari*.

We met *Medvedara* in Greece (1986). They considered themselves Roma, but linguistically they were assimilated; their mother tongue had become Greek. They were well off and "travelled" in luxurious motor trailers.

In a suburb of Istanbul there live, settled, but in tents, a numerous group of very poor bear leaders who call themselves *Roma Ayjides* – from the Turkish *ay* (bear). Their language has nothing in common with the Romanian *Ursari language*, nor do the Istanbul *Ayjides* even know that Romanian *Ursari* exist.

Thus, *Medvedara*, *Ričkara*, *Ursari*, *Mechkara*, *Ayjides* are synonymous professionyma, or homoprofessional names designating groups of Roma who earned their livelihoods in various lands as bear trainers, but their possible ethnic relationship is unclear and unresearched. [→ Carneys and Street Artists] All synonymic professionyma for "bear leaders" indicate that they are homoprofessional groups, but, from the ethnic and linguistic point of view, they have nothing in common nowadays.

The term *Roma Kalderara* is one of the most widely, literally "universally" known professionyma (literally, → Roma cauldron makers). The *Romani* word, originally taken from Romanian (*caldare* – "cauldron") came into various non-*Romani* languages with appropriate phonetic modifications. For example: *Kalderaš* in Czech. The *Kalderaš* whose traditional profession was cauldron making, live all over the world. They speak *Kalderaš Romani* with many regional variations. Many outstanding Roma personalities come from the *Kalderaš* clan: the writer → Matéo Maximoff (1917-1999) who lived in France; the sisters, writer Katarina and silversmith → Rosa Taikon, of Sweden; the poet, politician and artist Dragan Jevremović, originally of Yugoslavia and currently an Austrian citizen [→ Professions: Historical Development / → *Kalderaš* in Austria]; the Demeter family: writers, folklorists and scientists of Russia; the writer and collector of Roma folklore in Argentina, Lolja Bernal; the Canadian writer and politician, Ronald Lee; the poet Luminita Cioba of Romania, and others.



A further group, whose profession name is very widespread thanks to its various clans' living nearly everywhere in the world are the *Lovari*. *Lovari* were originally → horse traders, hence their name taken from the Hungarian word *ló* (horse).

Kalderaš and *Lovari* are considered the most outstanding representatives of the so-called *Walachian Roma* or → *Vlachi* .

Vlachi is the designation of the regionymous type of etymological connection to the name of one of two historic Romanian principalities, Walachia. In Walachia and Moldavia, *Vlachi* or *Walachian Roma* lived in slavery together with other groups of Roma for roughly four centuries. Slavery was definitively abolished in 1864 in the newly constituted state of Romania formed by joining Walachia, Moldavia and Transylvania. After the abolition of slavery, there followed one of the great waves of emigration: various groups of Roma emigrated mainly to Hungary and Russia, from where wars (1905, 1914-18) drove them farther: to Sweden, Spain, France, North and South America.

The designation *Vlachi* is used for various sub-groups of Walachian Roma, especially by specialists. The Slovene linguist Franc Miklošič, whom we can thank for the first professional categorisation of *Romani* dialects, dichotomised them as *Walachian* and *non-Walachian*.

The term *Vlachi* (also called *Olach Roma* or *Olaš* in the Czech lands) functions predominantly as a hyperonym (umbrella term) covering several groups of (*Walachian*) Roma, whose dialects have similar basic common characteristics in contrast to *non-Walachian* dialects. The hyperonym *Vlachi* includes *Lovari*, *Kalderaš*, *Gurbeti*, *Jambazi* and other *Walachian* groups the world over that are not at all alike and which, in fact, keep caste distances between them.

The classification is even more complicated with the designation *Vlachi* / *Walachians*. In lands where many Walachian groups live, their members separate themselves from the others by specific designations identifying their group. In Romania, Russia, Austria, Sweden, the Balkans, the USA and other lands where, for example, both *Kalderaš* and *Lovari* live, the umbrella term *Vlachi* is used only by linguists.

In the Czech and Slovak Republics, however, the community of *Walachian Roma* is represented only by *Lovari*. The most numerous group, the *Kalderaš*, do not live there at all. And so the umbrella regionym *Vlachi* / *Walachian Roma* / *Olaš* has lost its hyperonymous function and has become an appellativum identifying only traditionally travelling horse traders, everywhere else in the world called by the professionym *Lovari*. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia the term *Lovari* is not used at all. It is not even known by the *Vlachi* themselves, whereas elsewhere in the world they share their dialect, their traditional profession and even some family names (*Stojka*, *Lakatos*, *Bihari*, etc.).

Incidentally, the *Walachians* in the Czech and Slovak Republics put up with the appellativum *Vlachi*, a designation given to them by the "Rumungri" as a necessary evil. However, they call themselves only Roma, *čáče Roma* (true Roma), sometimes *mesal'ake Roma* – literally "table Roma", because a table, a set table around which the community of relatives gather, has a sacred function and is a symbol of group identity. In Walachian folklore, we meet the expression *sunto mesal'i* (sacred table).

Professionyma and regionyma are thus the main types of designations for various professional and sub-ethnic groups of Roma. Another, less numerous type, are "religionyma" – terms separating a group according to its religion; "geonyma" – names reflecting the character of the area where a group lives (mountains and valleys); "anthroponyma" (according to anthropological characteristics); "societyyma"



(according to the way of life: settled, travelling); figurative "nationyma" (according to the members of the dominant ethnicity).

We could consider as an anthroponym, on one hand, a designation like *Manouche* (human being) – a group of Roma living primarily in France – but also *Cale / Kale* (black) – that is, characteristics with certain anthropological traits.

Designations differentiating between travelling and settled Roma could be characterised as *socionyma*. The autonym *Kherutne Roma* (literally, home Roma), which in some localities in Slovakia designates traditionally settled (i.e. living at home) *Slovak Roma*, would be an example of a socionym. Socially synonymous is the term *Vatrasha* – referring to settled Roma in Romania. Ethno-linguistically, however, the *Vatrasha* have nothing in common with Slovak *Kherutne Roma*. Today, the expression *Verdanengere/Phirdune Roma* (literally cart/travelling Roma), is already a quite archaic sociononymous appellativum used by *Slovak Roma* to characterise (1) sometimes all travelling Roma or (2) sometimes only *Walachian Roma* (living on the lands of the former Czechoslovakia).

The most widespread religionym is the term *Xoraxane Roma/Xoraxaia*, designating Roma of the Muslim faith. (Otherwise, the term *Xoraxaia* pl. is used for Turks, "non-Roma Muslims".) *Xoraxane Roma* designate all other non-Muslim Roma as *Dasa / Das / Dasikane*⁵ *Roma*. Among the Roma *Das / Dasa* are also non-Roma Christians.

In Turkey and Greece, Muslim Roma are separated under the umbrella title *Xoraxaia* into *kalayji* (tinsmiths), *ayjides* (bear trainers), *bohchegyz* (door-to-door textile merchants), etc. etc. etc. Similarly, under the umbrella title *Das / Dasa*, a number of professional and sub-ethnic subgroups are affiliated that often are completely unrelated. Hence, both religionyma, *Xoraxaia* and *Dasa / Das / Dasikane Roma*, function in certain localities as hyperonyma.

A typical geonym is the term⁶ *Bergitska Roma* (German: "Berg" – mountain, hence "Mountain Roma"). It applies to a group of Roma settled in the mountains on the Polish side of the Polish-Slovak border. *Bergitska Roma* are actually a "splinter group" of Roma designated in Slovakia as *Servika* (→*Servika Roma*) or *Slovak*. Members of both groups not only speak in a nearly identical dialect, but also have many of the same family names such as *Mirga*, *Mižikar*, *Gábor*, etc. Old Roma on both sides of the border still remember the same songs.

Both groups have the same eating habits for which they are ostracised by ritually clean Roma. They consume horsemeat, hence they earn opprobria – derogatory designations: on the Slovak side, *Dupki*; on the Polish side, *Labanci*. While *Dupki* is the equivalent of the common term *degeša* and is used for ritually unclean people in general, the word *Labanci* refers only to Polish *Bergitska Roma*.

The aforementioned examples of attributive designations (exonymous and autonymous) for various professional and sub-ethnic groups constituting Roma society as a whole are far from exhaustive. We have tried to show how an attributive designation arises, how it changes and shifts in time and

⁵ The term *Das* has a very ancient and interesting etymology. In the oldest Indian sacred Vedic texts, *Das* was one of the many terms the Aryan Indo-European conquerors who had arrived in India in the middle of the second millennium B.C. used for the original population. In a Sanskrit dictionary (1987), under the entry *Dása* there are the following definitions: enemy, non-Aryan; barbarian, demon, slave. In neo-Indian languages the word *Dás* has acquired more positive connotations: slave/servant of God: *Káldás* – servant of the goddess *Káli*; *Rámdás* – servant of the god *Ráma*, etc.

⁶ In Slovakia it is a regional variation common around Poprad, Kežmarok, Stará Ľubovňa, Spišská Ves, i.e. in north-eastern areas of Slovakia, on the mountainous Polish-Slovak border.



place – i.e., under the influence of socio-professional changes in the course of history and under the influence of the migrations of Roma to various ethnic surroundings. Further, we have pointed out fundamental types of designations based on emphasis of a group's characteristic: profession (professionyma of the *Lovari*, *Kalderaš* or *Ursari* types), ethno-regional origin (regionyma of the *Vlachi* or "Rumungri" types), religions (religionyma of the *Xoraxane Roma* or *Dasikane Roma* types), character of the land where the group lives (geonyma of the *Bergitska Roma* type), derogatory designations (opprobria of the *Labanci* type).

It is complicated to orient oneself in regard to the designations of Roma groups. One group (i.e. people speaking the same dialect and/or performing the same traditional professions) can be designated by various appellations according to "whom", "where", and "why". "Whom" refers to the other kinds of groups of Roma with whom they come into contact, plus, perhaps, non-Roma experts. "Where" refers to the kind of ethno-regional surroundings. "Why" has to do with the emphasis of a profession as a reflection of caste relationships and customs, etc.

On the other hand, you can find one appellation designating various groups that have nothing in common (e.g., Spanish and Finnish *Kale*, *Slovak* and *Ukrainian Servi*, etc.).

Researching the relationships of various Roma "nations" and groups is an important undertaking, at least in order to achieve a complete and detailed history of the Roma. Roma studies can take an active part in the task as a complex branch of humanities that includes history, linguistics, ethnology and folklore. Participation of Romani Romists in this research is especially important because they have irreplaceable cultural experiences of Roma, and actually intimate cultural details may be an essential key to opening unknown areas of knowledge.