

The song folklore of the Roma in the Slovak and Czech Republics: Ethnosemantic and ethnohistorical approach

Zbyněk Andrš

Each electronic copy of the publication includes film Roma Songs and Two Rites of Passage, dir. Zbyněk Andrš, 68 min, 2014. The publication contains electronic edition Roma Folk Songs from the Collection of Zbyněk Andrš, CD 1–4, ed. Zbyněk Andrš, mastering: Studio Jamor – Ondřej Ježek, 2014.

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Mgr. Zbyněk Andrš, Ph.D.

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Note on the Transcription of Song Texts and Their Translation

The transcription of Roma texts is based on standardised spelling, adopted in 2008 by the Declaration of Roma of the Slovak Republic¹ for the so-called Slovak Romani language. For practical purposes, Vlshika Romani language (Lovara Romani) is transcribed in the same manner; the transcription only differs in the used grapheme *x* (*X*)² for digraph *ch*. This practice is applied in Lovara Romani and other Vlax dialects as it is in line with the real phonetic quality of the unvoiced uvular fricative *X* (*ch*). Phonetic transcription is used in the transcription of lexemes that contain the *sik* – morph in their stem. Together with their derivatives, this lexical morpheme is usually transcribed incorrectly with aspiration, for instance, *sikhavav* “I show”, sometimes even by native speakers.³

Unlike the aforementioned standardised spelling and the common practice, in Czech and Slovak Romani studies, allophones *ś* and *ź* are graphically distinguished from phonemes *š* and *ž* although they only occur in some dialectal varieties of Slovak and Vlshika Romani. I also use phonetic transcription of prefixes loaned from Slovak language on morphemic seams with verbs, adjectives, etc. For example, *otkanastar* “from when” instead of *odkanastar*, *otkerđom* “I redeemed”, instead of *odkerđom*, etc.

1 Deklaration of the Romanies of the Slovak Republic regarding the standardization of the Romany language in the Slovak Republic. Bratislava, 29 June 2008.

2 Rigorously speaking, “ch” in the IPA international standard (International Phonetic Alphabet) has been allocated the grapheme, *X*. For the sake of graphical clarity, I have decided to use lower case *x*.

3 The etymologising method of notation, not respecting the actual pronunciation, was incorporated into the spelling standard from the very beginning by Milena Hübschmannová.

The transcription of the song lyrics that I have recorded respects the phonetic dialect specifics, e.g. *sastsarela* (sasfarela). On the contrary, in line with the standardised spelling for Slovak Romani, I do not indicate the vowel length, although applied in some dialects where it can also have distinctive validity, as it is difficult to determine vowel quantity when it comes to songs. On the audial level, this value is made relative because sung words are subject to the metro-rhythmic segmentation of the melody and other factors. Songs are not always accurately representative of a certain dialect; speakers of various dialects change the text, transform it and bend the words, because they do not understand them. One exception in the denotation of the quantity in vowels is made in the case of lyrics adopted from literature and lyrics adopted from Vlashika Romani language. In these two cases the length of the vowels is marked.

In the English translation, interjections, mostly padding words such as *jaj*, *joj*, *hej*, *ej*, (like in the intermediate Czech translation) were replaced by the interjection equivalent in the target language only in cases when their interjection function prevails over of the filling function, in which case they are written in upright lettering. Along with other syllables and vowels such as *de*, *že*, *i*, *e*, *ə*, interjections *jaj*, *joj*, *hej*, *ej* are used only as rhythmic naturals and up-beats before the start of the next singing phase. In such cases, their emphatic function is mitigated or entirely suppressed. Naturals and grace notes are used by the singers also during the individual lines to complete the number of syllables in the line and to maintain the rhythm. In the transcription of the Roma lyrics, all of these interjections, naturals and up-beats are written in italics; the English translation suffices with interjections that are actually functional. *Del*, *Devla!* (God, my God!) is written in compliance with the Czech practice with a first capital letter, but *devlale!* (gods!), again according to the Czech spelling practice, starts with a lower-case letter.

Roma lyrics often abound in elliptic structures that have to be inferred. Romani language uses more extra-linguistic expression means than languages with a long literary tradition. Poses, gestures, mimics, glances, etc. sometimes reduce the verbal to a necessary minimum. A song is in fact a performance, a living dramatic formation, with its lexical component only representing one of its semantic lines. Therefore, it may be difficult to translate a text written in Romani to a majority language even for a native speaker, although comprehensible during the live rendition of the song. These

problems arising from the lapidary manner of expression have been compensated at crucial points of the translation by inserting information that had not been expressly stated. Added expressions or collocations are enclosed in brackets. Song lyrics, adapted from literature and the Internet, are corrected only in cases where the transcription features obvious mistakes. It is indicated in the footnotes whether changes in the texts were made or the original transcription is provided.

Unless stated otherwise, all translations of the lyrics and texts and the quoted sections to English draw on my Czech translations. Exceptions to this rule are listed in the footnotes.



Introduction

Live music, singing and dancing are disappearing from our lives. Not many families still get together to sing as most people have become mere passive consumers of music. Luckily, there are still cultures whose original folk music making has not yet been replaced by recorded music – cultures that have incorporated music language as their important communication means and music spontaneity as their collective mind-set. The Romani culture is among them.

The core of the present work is the analysis of Roma songs from the ethno-semantic and ethno-historical perspective. My work focuses on the verbal aspect of the songs. Included are examples of lyrics illustrating the ethnical culturally connoted meanings and specific connotations of poetic images. The second focal point of my publication, aside from the analysis of song lyrics from the perspective of ethno-cultural meanings, is the exploration of their potential historicity. In the five opening chapters, my secondary concern was on topics of music-folkloristic and ethnomusicological interest – native classification of Roma songs, functions that can be fulfilled, social conditions of their origin, oral tradition and their renditions.

For the purpose of my research, the term Roma song stands for anonymous works that were and have so far partially been orally passed on from generation to generation in a culturally authentic environment, works in which, using their own means and in their own language, Roma have expressed their desires, disappointments and hopes and which have only served for their own pleasure.

While the Czech countryside folk song has for several generations been stagnating, Roma ethnic song is still alive, as documented on the exam-

ples of song lyrics and also on the ways in which they are composed and passed on. Roma song folklore is constantly absorbing new influences. Songs which today's young generation considers as traditional mention, for example, a telegraph, a lipstick or an ambulance. Lyrics written in the 1990s speak about President Václav Havel, punks, and currently composed songs feature such phenomena as, for instance, the euro currency. Song authorship is not considered to be very relevant – popular songs become widespread and everyone can adapt them as they please. Roma songs are still characterised by having different variants – an important attribute of song folklores.

I avoid the term “folk song” when referring to Roma songs. My work is concerned with “ethnic songs”, or “Roma ethnic songs” since this term better corresponds with its character. The folk nature cannot be a distinguishing sign in the case of an ethnicity with no higher music culture parallel and which is not differentiated very much in socio-cultural terms. The Czech expert discourse traditionally used the term “folk music” and similarly also “folk song” to refer to the music folklore of European nations or the music of other than European ethnicities. These terms cannot be mechanically transposed to societies whose history and social structures are entirely different from the histories and social structures of modern European nations.

The ethno-semantic analysis, reflections on the historical authenticity but also in chapters on the ecology of the Roma ethnic songs drew on authentic song lyrics recorded during field collections in the years 1979–2000. In cases where there was no suitable example in my collection, I have included examples of lyrics adopted from literature. This comparative material allowed me to more efficiently illustrate their variability and genesis. At the same time, the songs have been selected to ensure that their lyrics cover all characteristic genres and thematic areas. I preferred motifs that are dominant in Roma song folklore – poverty, death, love and the like.

The subject of my work is also defined in territorial terms – Roma song folklore on the territory of the former Czechoslovakia. At the same time, I limit my focus to three groups of Roma. At the centre of my interest is the Slovak Roma subethnicity from which most songs have been recorded. Additionally, I have also drawn on the song folklore of the Vlashika

Rom and Hungarian Roma.¹

Regardless of its genre and style transformations in the past decades, Roma ethnic music is currently one of the few pillars of the Roma cultural and ethnic identity. All the more so that the Romani language became extinct as a consequence of forty years of communist-enforced language assimilation. Especially in the Czech Republic, the young generation of Roma does not have an active command of their mother tongue, with exceptions that prove the rule.² Today, also the Roma from eastern Slovak settlements and the Vlashika Roma who have been resisting the assimilation pressures the longest are at a risk of losing their language and cultural identity.

However, as a sung language, Romani could still be heard at family celebrations, festivals and on music recordings. Romani language combined with music is still a living communication code at the same time being a significant factor in the Roma ethnic identity. Songs in Romani are often also sung by those who can no longer speak the language.

1 The Slovak Roma are the most numerous group accounting for about 85% of the overall Roma population. They speak various dialects of North Central Romani. Hungarian Roma are the second largest group on the territory of the former Czechoslovakia, forming approx. 10% of the overall Roma population. The Romani-speaking part of this Roma sub-ethnicity speaks the dialects of South Central Romani. Vlashika Rom are the third largest group with their share of the overall Roma population amounting to approx. 5%. In some specialised sources, their language is referred to as Lovari and falls within the Vlax group of Romani dialects.

2 This assertion applies namely to the Slovak and Hungarian Roma who have been more exposed to language assimilation efforts due to their sedentary way of life.



The Roma Song Folklore as the Subject of Expert and Collectors' Research¹

Since the mid-20th century, Roma song folklore, as a unique cultural phenomenon fulfilling specific functions in Romani communities, has stood at the margins of collectors' and researchers' interest. Collectors of Bohemian, Moravian and Slovak folk songs did not pay any attention to Roma songs – with the exception of Josef Černík, 1880–1969. Lyrics and in rare cases also melodies collected in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century were recorded mostly randomly by unqualified amateurs². From the historical perspective, the lack of interest in authentic Roma songs on the part of researchers may be attributed to the social status of the Roma minority. In the European context, the Roma, or “Gypsies”, were perceived as the lowest social class having no authentic culture. Roma language was not considered a unique independent language but a form of slang. This perception of the Roma culture and language, widespread among common people as well as educated layers of the society, posed a severe hindrance to serious research in Central European ethnography and folkloristics. Only after the fall of the communist regime, did this dismissive approach to Roma minority on the part of social sciences become unsupportable. Although the conditions for collecting works of Romani folklore were not favourable, the idea that “Gypsies” could serve as promoters of cultural values that would, in fact, be worth recording tentatively emerged in the ear-

1 This chapter represents a substantially revised and extended version of sub-chapter 3.3 of my diploma thesis entitled “Písňový folklór východoslovenských Romů” (Song Folklore of the East Slovak Roma) successfully defended in 2002 at the Institute of Indology at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague.

2 Two catholic priests, a clerk, an Indologist, a physical anthropologist, and a teacher.

ly 20th century. Moravian collector of folk songs and music folklorist, the aforementioned Joža (Josef) Černík, says:

“These folk songs are an image of the ‘Gypsy’ soul. We present them to the public to at least partially fill the gap in the song culture in general, *since ‘Gypsy’ melodies apparently cannot be excluded from the category of melodies that serve a certain purpose.*” (Černík [1921]; italics in the orig. according to J.Č.)

In the context of the time, the hesitant approach to the purpose and function of the songbook “Cikánské písničky” (Gypsy Songs) is understandable. Ethnographers did not consider “Gypsies” to be a worthwhile topic. Černík was one of the few who managed to escape the constraints of this social-scientific ethnocentrism. His songbook contains twenty-five song texts with music notation. In 1910–1913 (Uhlíková 2011: 25) he recorded songs in South-East Moravia, twenty-four of which were performed by Pepka Murková from Bojkovice and one song was sung by an unknown Roma woman from the Uherské Hradiště region. The songs are sung in the South-Moravian variety of North Central Romani. In terms of the lyrics, most of the published songs have their variants in Slovakia. For example, the still popular csardas *Nane oda lavutaris* (There’s No Such Musician) is featured in Černík’s songbook in two text versions (Černík 1921: 11, 20–21).

Speaking of the Czech lands, the first record of Romani song lyrics can be found in a Roma grammar book written by Catholic priest and writer Antonín Jaroslav Puchmajer, 1769–1820. This song was called *O vešoro e pajtrenča* „O lesýčku s listjm“³ (Oh, wood with leaves), (Puchmayer 1821: 77–78). The song was later adopted by Rudolf Vratislav of Mitrovice (1868) and Josef Ješina (1882), (Andrš 2013b). Its language is the variety of North Central Romani.

Puchmajer’s efforts were continued by Count Vratislav of Mitrovice, 1811–1874. Aside from the aforementioned lyrics published by Puchmajer, this amateur researcher (and a high state official in the Habsburg monarchy) published four more authentic Roma songs (Vratislav von Mitrovic 1868). Collected by Vratislav’s most efficient informant, a Roma called Janošovský⁴, who was his Romani teacher (Andrš 2013b). However, nothing more is known about him. In terms of the used dialect, the four songs referred to by Janošovský were most probably written in the

3 Puchmajer’s original transcription method. Regarding the song see also Chapter 6.1.

4 The original version says: *Vom Zigeuner Janoschovsky dictirt.*

western Slovak variety of North Central Romani. The first of these called *Gelas e čai paňaske*⁵ (A Girl Went to Fetch Water) was recorded by Vratislav of Mitrovice (1868: 75) as a music notation and it is most probably the second song in North Central Romani of which both lyrics and melody have been preserved.

Like Vratislav of Mitrovice, Catholic priest Josef Ješina, 1824–1889, adopted Puchmajer’s version of *O vešoro e pajtrenca*. Aside from this text, his book “Romáňi Čib...” (Romani language...), (1882), includes four more⁶ original Roma songs written in North Central Romani, two of which have been transcribed as music notation.

Three song lyrics without melody notations were collected by Indologist Vincenc Lesný in Vosoudov⁷ in Moravia from the surviving members of the local Roma community most of which had been killed during World War II (Lesný: 1915: 216). They spoke the South Moravian variety of North Central Romani.

The first recording of Roma songs that could have originated in the territory of present-day Slovakia can be found in the so-called Codex Caioni, dated 1639 (Holý – Daniel – Štědroň 1991). Most probably, the first lyrics and music notations of Roma songs collected in Slovakia date back to the 1920s. In the same period, folklorist and photographer Jozef Kolarčík-Fintický, 1899–1961, started to map out Slovak and Romani folklore. He recorded about three hundred songs written in the East Slovak variety of North Central Romani that have been preserved in the form of a manuscript.

Pedagogue and physical anthropologist František Štampach, 1895–1969, published five songs from his own collection (1930: 344–349). Their lyrics, accompanied with simple notations, are partly distorted; moreover, their Czech translations do not always correspond with the original. The language of all five songs recorded by Štampach⁸ is the East Slovak variety of North Central Romani. One of these songs – *Chude, čaje e leketa* (Girl, grab an apron), is included in Chapter 7.⁹

5 After eliminating mistakes in the transcription – *Gelas e čhaj paňeske*.

6 The second of these songs opening with the line *Kchirveske na xáva* (Kirveske na džava) is presumably a “patchwork song” made of other songs.

7 Vosoudov, present Bohusoudov (Jihlava district).

8 Two more songs were reprinted by Ješina (1882).

9 A more detailed analysis of this song was published in the journal, *Romano Džaniben* (Andrš 2002c: 30–35).

A qualitative breakthrough in the collection of Roma songs occurred at the turn of the 1950s and 1960s, heralding a new era of song collecting with a newly invented recording technology coming into play. Almost simultaneously, two ardent collectors of Roma folklore appeared on the scene – Eva Davidová and Milena Hübschmannová whose enthusiasm and diligence gave rise to a song collection gathered over the course of several decades, comprising hundreds of hours of music recordings¹⁰.

Ethnographer and art historian Eva Davidová started to compile her collection of recordings in 1959 (Jurková 1997: 18). She published the collected pieces in conjunction with various music folklorists and ethnomusicologists. A clear milestone in her collecting activities was her collaboration with music folklorist Jaromír Gelnar. They teamed up to release an LP called “Romane gíla” (1974) with the subtitle “Antologie autentického cikánského písňového folklóru” (Anthology of Gypsy Music Folklore). The LP included an insert with a linguistic and music analysis of the songs as well as five illustrative music notations. Roughly one half of the recordings documented the song folklore of the Slovak Roma with the other half representing the Vlachika Rom. Davidová also published several song collections, mostly in collaboration with musicologist Jan Žižka, an author of the music analysis of songs and music transcriptions. Their most remarkable collective work is the monograph “Folk Music of the Sedentary Gypsies of Czechoslovakia” (1991). Some of E. Davidová’s works are rather limited in that they provide a repetitive selection of songs and accompanying comments (cf. Davidová – Žižka 1990, 1991, 1999).

Bohuslav Valaštan, 1918–1975 was the second folklorist after Josef Černík with a background in music. In the 1950s and early 1960s, he collected Roma songs in Slovakia. His work (1963)¹¹ contains 89 songs of which 22 were recorded in eastern Slovakia. Valaštan’s collection features music notations and a register, Romani language is often transcribed inaccurately and the translations only loosely correspond with the original versions.

The first recordings of Roma songs by Indology and Romani scholar Milena Hübschmannová, 1933–2005, also date back to the 1960s. Like initially E. Davidová, she used a reel tape recorder to record songs, and managed to

10 Regarding the audio libraries of these two collectors see Jurková (1997: 15–19).

11 Valaštan used the advice and assistance of MUDr. Ján Cibula, who later became the president of the International Roma Union.

compile what was probably the most comprehensive audio collection of oral Romani lore in the former Czechoslovakia. Her rich collections partially served as sources for her several songbooks published in the last twenty years. The first one, "Romane giľa – Cikánské písně" (Romane giľa – Gypsy Songs), was released in the 1970s and contains 56 songs with notation transcription by Milena Jelínková. The second, "Kaľi zpívá" (Kaľi Sings), includes 11 songs transcribed as music by Zbyněk Malý. The music notation of 41 songs in M. Hübschmannová's third publication called "Romane giľa – zpěvník romských písní" (Romane giľa – Romani Songbook) was made by Zuzana Jurková. However, unlike in the case of the two previous songbooks, not all of the songs can be classified as authentic folklore. The songbooks are intended for practical use; therefore, the regional dialectical differences of Slovak Romani have been eliminated as a result of standardisation. A record of personal data related to the informant including other circumstances of the song's recording are provided only partially in the case of the last publication.

A unique ethnomusicological work drawing on the author's collections from the territory of Slovakia, is the monograph, "Vlach Gypsy Folk Songs in Slovakia", by Katalin Kovalcsik (1985). Her work offers a selection of fifty songs by Vlashika Rom, analysing their music, lyrics and interpretation aspects.

Of Moravian provenance, there is an excellent thematic monograph "Žalující píseň" (The Accusatory Song) (by ethnomusicologist Dušan Holý and historian Ctibor Nečas (1993)) dedicated to strophic song cycles composed in concentration and work camps. The work is of interest not only to ethnomusicologists and historians, but also for philologists, and the songs under comparison were written in the varieties of North Central Romani.

"Rómske piesne z obce Žehňa" (Roma Songs from Žehňa) is the title of a treatise focusing on Roma songs in this eastern Slovak region written by ethnomusicologist Jana Belišová (1992) as the first in a series of her expert publications. This treatise provides an analysis of the music and textual components of a sample of 101 collected songs. Since the publication of her study, Belišová has conducted several field research studies in eastern and central Slovakia collecting and recording hundreds of songs. The material that captures mainly the eastern Slovak dialectical variety of North Central Romani served as a source for several collections of a monograph character. Belišová's most important expert publication is presumably her monograph

“Bašav, more, bašav: Zahraj, chlapče, zahraj” (2012), (Bašav, more, bašav: Play, dude, Play). J. Belišová initiated documentary film project “Cigarety a pesničky” (Songs and Cigarettes) capturing CD recording sessions. Professional Roma musician Ján Berky “Mrenica”, compiled transcriptions of his music arrangements of Roma songs compiled in his collection of songs and proverbs “Rómske piesne a múdre slová” (1993), (Roma Songs and Wise Words). The song collection was co-authored by his daughter, musician Anina Botošová. Out of the total of 50 texts, 35 are original songs; the remaining represent Mrenica’s original work. Aside from the aforementioned field collections of Roma songs not all of which were published or which were not published in their full extent, there are many authentic recordings of Roma song folklore, recorded in radio studios. The first such recording was made in Košice in 1932; the credit for recordings of Roma songs in Brno goes to Jaroslav Jurášek, Jan Rokyta in Ostrava, Andrej Giňa in Pilsen and many songs were also recorded in Prague. The studio provided a substantially different setting than the usual situations encountered during field recordings of Roma songs, lacking authenticity which is so important for ethnomusicologists. For more on the issue of archiving Roma music in radio, see V. Flegl (1997: 20–21).

No clear line of research can be identified in the Czech or Slovak context that would analyse Roma song folklore using theoretical concepts and modern ethnomusicologic methods. A pioneer in the gradual transformation of the traditional folkloristic approach to Roma music is our prominent ethnomusicologist Dušan Holý, and Katalin Kovalcsik from Hungary active in the international field. In the past twenty years, several articles dedicated to Roma music and song folklore have been written by ethnomusicologist Zuzana Jurková whose studies summarised the outcomes achieved in this research field, marking out the premises for future research.

Song as a Taxonomy Problem

Roma music folklore is very diverse in terms of its genres and styles. Centuries of existence as a diaspora gave rise to dozens of subethnic Roma groups speaking many different dialects. Corresponding to this is also the diversity of their musical expression and song repertoire. To a great extent, the genesis of Roma folklore was influenced by factors such as whether a particular group was travelling or had settled down, in what country or region they were staying, with whom they were in contact, and how long they were exposed to the local language and culture. Sedentary Roma communities in Slovakia and Hungary often made a living as professional musicians actively contributing to the music life of nearly all national and ethnic groups in the territory of former Hungary. The following description of the role of Roma groups in the Balkans by Czech folklorist, writer and painter Ludvík Kuba, 1863–1956, fully applies also to the aforementioned Roma communities:

“I’ve mentioned how blossoms are pollinated with pollen of another species and I have to add that there is one element that plays the role of a bumblebee – the Gypsies. While having all sorts of odd jobs, they are mainly musicians. No one can do without them, be it Christians, Muslims, Arnauts or Cincari. Gypsy bands are an essential presence at all festivals, pilgrimages, and weddings.” (Kuba: 1932: 183–184).

Roma from Slovakia and Hungary functioned as a link not only between different ethnicities but also social layers, townsmen, nobility and rulers¹.

1 Roma musicians performed, for example, for the Hungarian Queen Beatrice, Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus, Bohemian and Hungarian King Louis II Jagiellon, Hungarian Queen Isabella Jagiellon, Romanian Kings Charles I and Ferdinand of Romania, Austrian Empress Maria Theresa, Prussian King William I, Russian Tsar Alexander II, English King Edward VII, and others.

This naturally affected not only their musical expression but also the form and content of their songs.

The song production of the Slovak and Hungarian Roma is mostly of a lyric, seldom of a lyric-epic character. In the case of the Vlashika Rom, the proportion is exactly the opposite with predominant lyric-epic songs, however, none of these groups produced “epic songs fixed by tradition” as mentioned in relation with the Vlashika Rom by József Vekerdi² (see also Chapter 6).

Since the end of the 18th century, Roma musicians supported by the nobility greatly influenced the form of Hungarian national music, not only as performers but some of them also as composers (Kertész-Wilkinson: 2003: 33). In fact, Gypsy bands played the main role in the development of the “magyar nóta” (Hungarian song) music style which became a herald of Hungarian national culture in the late 19th century. Since its origin, the music genre that adopted some elements of Western European classical music has encompassed two music styles – hallgató, or slow songs for listening, and csardas, fast dance songs. And since the Roma were the best performers of these songs, at the times of Franz Liszt³, 1811–1886, there arose disputes about whether this music is of a Hungarian or Gypsy provenance (Sárosi 1977: 5).

The interaction between music played and composed by the sedentary Roma minority and the music life in the region naturally reflected itself in the fact that they drew inspiration from folk songs of other ethnicities, both in terms of their melodies and lyrics. For example, significant interaction existed between Jewish and Roma musicians. Some Klezmer songs have their melodic variants in Roma songs.⁴ Similarly also some Hungarian and Slovak csardases and hallgatós have Romani melodic and textual variants. For example, ancient hallgató *Oda kalo čirikloro*, or its motivic variants, in which a bird is supposed to deliver a note to a beloved one, etc., has its textual variant in the popular Hungarian song “Madárka, madárka”:

2 In Sárosi (1977: 31).

3 His publication “Des Bohémiens et leurs musique en Hongrois” (1859) stirred a controversy.

4 For example, the song “Wesele” from the repertoire of the band, Brathanki, is a melodic variant of the Roma csardases *Andro pañi lampašis* and *Duj, duj, duj, duj, dešuduž*. (See www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSm-5E4oUAHs). My acknowledgements for drawing my attention to this connection go to Michal Kukula.

1.

This song number always relates to the numbering of songs in the chapter Song lyrics included in the monograph.

Čirikloro, mirikloro,
lidža mange mro lilor!
hej Lidža, lidža, kaj me phenav,
mra romňake andre žeba.

Birdie, bead,
Take my note for me!
Take it, to where I'll tell you:
Into my wife's pocket.

2.

Madárka, madárka,
Csacsogó madárka,
Vidd el a levellem,
Vidd el a levellem,
Szép magyar hazám!ba!

Little bird, little bird,
twittering little bird.
Take my message,
take my message,
to Hungary, my beautiful homeland!

The situation was different in the case of the Vlashika Rom, a nomadic community, less open to external music influences, who only performed within their own community.⁵ Therefore, the Vlashika Rom and their Slovak and Hungarian counterparts have to be treated as two separate groups with different musical expressions. It is impossible to create an analytical construct by merging the categories of *čorikane gila* and *loke d'ija* under one song type thus creating a hybrid combination of “čorikane, loke gila”,⁶ or “loke phurikane gila”⁷, because such an approach deprives the original native categories of Vlashika Rom and Slovak Roma of their analytic value. It is also pointless to paraphrase the native term *čardaša* “csardas” used in Slovak Romani using the collocation *khelibnaskere gila*⁸ – “dance songs”. Slovak Roma song folklore encompasses several basic music styles that represent a syncretism of the Romani tradition and external music influences. The traditional styles include hallgató, csardas and partly also a transitional layer called – in the absence of a more appropriate term – “Rom-

5 For more details see Chapter 5.

6 Cf. Davidová – Jurková (1999: 61).

7 Cf. Davidová (2000: 106).

8 Most probably a calque of the Vlashika native term *khelimaske d'ija*. Cf. Jelínková – Hübschmannová [197?: 3]; Davidová – Gellnar (1989: 40), Davidová (1989: 414 and 1992: 18), Davidová – Žižka (1991: 32).

pop”. This term was coined by Milena Hübschmannová in the 1980s. It was used to refer to Roma songs drawing on various popular music inspiration sources. At the time of its origin, this artificial term functioned as a synonym to the native Romani *neve gila* “new songs” because it covered all music styles produced after hallgató and csardas. The present situation is somewhat different, the Roma are exposed to so many different music influences that these can no longer be absorbed and transformed in line with the Romani tradition.

The Slovak Roma traditionally distinguish between two basic song components – *phurikane gila* “ancient songs” (including hallgató and csardas) and *neve gila* “new songs”. However, the native terms *phurikane gila* and *neve gila* are not the only terms in use; adjective synonyms *čirlatune* “ancient” or *purane* indicate “old” songs, adjective synonyms *nevedune* or *moderna* stand for “new” songs. The line between *phurikane* and *neve gila* is relative and shifts from generation to generation. As early as in 1941, the Csenki brothers stated that “young Gypsies do not take over songs of the old generation, finding them rather ridiculous”, (in Sárosi 1977: 32).⁹ Roughly until the 1960s, only hallgatós and csardases were categorised as *phurikane gila*; the line between *phurikane* and *neve gila* has gradually become so blurred that these two are to a great extent considered subjective categories. For example, the current young generation of Roma from Machalovce¹⁰ (under about 30 years of age) perceive Roma “hits”¹¹ from the 1960s and 1970s as old – *phurikane gila*.

Hallgató as a genre had spread over the entire area of former Hungary. In Hungarian, “hallgató” refers to a sad folk song. Roma adopted the term in various forms that may differ from region to region; for example, Slovak Roma use the terms *halgatovos*, *halgatóvo*, *halgatonos*, among others. In terms of their music characteristics, this genre may be described as protracted songs of the eastern type with noticeable agogic moments.

The native term *phurikane gila* expresses the temporal aspect of hallgató, synonymic expressions *čorikane/žalosna gila* and *žalošne/brigake d'illa* express contextually and to a different extent three more aspects – the

9 See also Chapter 4.

10 Inhabitants of the Roma settlement in Machalovce (Jánovce, Slovak Republic, Spiš region).

11 For example, the song, *O poštaris avel*, became popular thanks to Dušan Hanák’s film “Pink Dreams” (1976) where it was sung by Věra Bílá from Rokycany.

thematic, emotional and functional ones. The term *čorikane gila* includes the thematic, emotional and functional, as well as temporal aspects. The expression *čorikane gila* “songs about hard life” naturally implies *phurikane gila* because the topic “čoripen” indicates that we are referring to the past. Extreme poverty was basically eradicated in the communist era when laws preventing unemployment were enacted. The second native term pertaining to the category of songs *čorikane gila* is *žalosna gila* “pitiful laments” (regionally also called *žalošne/brígake díla*). The temporal aspect of these songs is significantly weakened because some newly produced Roma songs can also be considered pitiful, such as the so-called romantic or slow dance songs. Therefore, if we want to replace *halgató* with a native term other than *čorikane gila*, we have to use a paraphrase, such as *phurikane žalošne gila*¹². Hence, the basic native term *čorikane gila* is one of the synonyms of the other aforementioned terms. In a culturally authentic environment, *čorikane gila* have a very dramatic rendition and are sometimes also interrupted by crying.. They represent a method of coping with frustration stemming from a desperate life situation, thus serving a psychotherapeutic function¹³. In an interview with Milena Hübschmannová, singer Věra Bílá describes *čorikane gila* as follows: “These songs are beautiful and they let you pour your heart out” (Hübschmannová 1985: 3).

In a native concept, the semantic field of *gila* also encompasses the singers of the songs. In this context, singer and musician Ján Slepčík says: *Čorikane gila hin kola gilora, so sthode o čore nípi pal odá, sar pháres dživen...*, which translates as: “*Čorikane gila* are songs composed by poor people about their miserable life...”¹⁴ In some areas of Slovakia, such as Gemer, *čorikane gila* was rather referred to using a paraphrase, with the message remaining the same – emphasising the identification of the singer with the song. This unity of experience then represents the emotional aspect of the song, while its effect frames its functional, psychotherapeutic role.

“When going out to dance, old people used to tell the musicians or the first violin: *Bašav mange halgátovo! (...)* *Vaj phenenaš: Bašav mange varešo andal míro coripen! (...)* – ‘Play *halgató* for me! (...) Or: ‘Play something about

12 Oral utterance by Ján Slepčík, in Andrš (2002b: 53).

13 See Chapter 3.

14 Andrš (2002b: 53).

my misery!’ And when he played hallgató (...) they sang along to relieve their sorrow...”¹⁵

Along with hallgatós, csardases form the oldest layer of the Romani song folklore. Their origin derives from verbunkos, a dance that dates back to the 18th century and was associated with military recruitment; the Roma often performed this music style. The native Slovak Romani terminology distinguishes between two types of csardas – *romano čardašis*, “Roma csardas”¹⁶ and *vlahiko/vlachiko čardašis*, “Vlashika csardas”, i.e. “csapas” (Andrš 2002b: 55). Csapas, unlike csardas, has an estam rhythm.

The native taxonomy of Roma songs contains transitional categories that can be applied both to the old and the new song folklore layer. For example, the term *mulatovne gila*¹⁷ “celebration songs”¹⁸ includes csardases, hallgatós and songs of the *neve gila* category if fulfilling the social and relaxation function (see “mulatšágo” in Chapter 3).

The individual styles – some of them very different – that fall within the category of *neve gila* “new songs” are used by Roma musicians either as hybrid loans such as *valčikos*, *tangos*, *foksos*, etc., or commonly used internationalisms as funky, hip hop and the like. First *neve gila* songs date back to the 1930s and 1940s having been inspired mainly by tango and foxtrot. Professional Roma musicians overheard music hits on the radio and in the cinema and adapted them for their performances in cafés and wine bars. Popular melodies were thus spreading among the Roma people and Roma lyrics were composed to many of the melodies. Since the 1960s, pop music played on the radio, TV and on vinyl albums has been another inspiration source for Slovak and Hungarian Roma songwriters.

After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and following the subsequent Internet boom, Roma ethnic song production saw a rapid development. Especially in terms of their lyrics, new music styles such as funky, reggae, Roma hip hop, beatbox and others are so unrelated to the traditional song production that it is impossible to include them in any of the native categories. One exception is *disko*, meaning “Roma disco” and *sladakos*, and also *ploužakos* “Roma romantic/slow dance songs”, styles whose poetics and music expres-

15 Slovakia, 1995. A memorate of Roma teacher Lalik from Roštár in Gemer (author’s archive).

16 The attribute “Roma” or “Romani” means – pertaining to Slovak Roma.

17 Oral utterance by Ján Slepčík, in Andrš (2002b: 53).

18 A song sung at a table during celebrations and drinking feasts.

sion partially follow on the traditional layer of songs, csardas and hallgató. Thanks to Romani slow dance songs, we can tell that ethnic Roma music and songs are still a living and constantly developing genre.

Such transformations that Roma music in general went through – not only in the case of Slovak and Hungarian Roma – are much influenced by electronic keyboards that replaced practically all traditional acoustic instruments. This influence is apparent in the extension of the stylistic range of the musicians, at the same time adversely reflecting itself in the interpretation of the traditional repertoire, especially hallgatós and csardases.

Romani songs produced in Slovakia and Hungary can be categorised thematically as was often done earlier in folkloristics. Categories of the type – *gila pal o kamiben* “love songs”, *gila pal e daj* “songs about a mother”, *gila pal o pijiben* “drinking songs”, etc., are not clearly defined; the individual motifs in various stanzas are often unrelated. In emic terms, thematically defined categories play almost no role. One exception is perhaps the thematic category of the so-called *hareštantska (berteňika/bertenošika) gila* “prison songs”. This type of songs that tend to have a lyric-epic dimension might be considered an individual sub-category of *čorikane gila*.

The song folklore of the Vlashika Rom does not know the dichotomy between old and new songs, as is the case of Slovak Roma. Any newly composed songs are a stylistic continuation of the traditional songs. In the native categorisation, Vlashika songs fall within two basic groups, *louke dila* “slow songs” and *khelimaske dila* “dance songs” basically corresponding to the categorisation of traditional old songs of Slovak Roma. Native terms *mulatouša dila* “celebration songs” or *mesálake dila* “table songs” play a functional role. They are designed for “mulatšágy” – social gatherings (see also Chapter 3).



Song as the Subject of Functional Analysis

The role of traditional music, singing and dance in Romani culture was explained in the Introduction. I have mentioned the fact that authentic musical expression represents a key constitutive element of Roma identity and that the song folklore – its essential component – fulfils certain important functions. These functions will now be discussed in further detail.

The functional perspective will help clarify the role played by songs in the lives of those who keep the oral song tradition alive from generation to generation. It also represents one of the possible criteria according to which the song folklore can be categorised. In methodological terms, this is difficult since the functions that can be fulfilled by ethnic Roma songs in culturally authentic situations¹ are diverse and dynamically interactive. A successful functional analysis cannot be conducted without clearly defined theoretical premises.

Generally speaking, each ethnic (folk) song represents a syncretic music and literary form accompanied by an instrumental component and dance. This gives rise to a functional complex which hence prevents a separate analysis of the literary and musical component of the song. Placing emphasis on the structural relations of social facts, folk songs were analysed from the functional perspective by one of the prominent members of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Petr G. Bogatyrev. According to Bogatyrev, songs carry a number of other than aesthetic functions that may serve a much more significant role as part of song folklore than as part of artificial production (Bogatyrev 1936: 115).

¹ I drew inspiration from the descriptive term coined by Zdeněk Salzmänn: “culturally authentic situations” (Salzmänn 1996: 162).

Song and dance had presumably initially a magical function stemming from the belief in magical powers and the human desire to overcome our own limits. The belief in the magical power of words is a characteristic feature of the older layer of Roma song folklore. It is present in many different forms. In some songs its takes on the form of an oath, most often using the incantation: *Te merav!* “May I die!” but also other formulas as illustrated by the second stanza of the song, *Vója maladies ma*.

3.

2.	2.
<i>jaj ej de</i> Te me te žanglemas,	Had I known (it),
<i>i de</i> khote sig gelemas, te mejrav!	I would speed there. I’ll be damned!
<i>i de</i> Khote sig gelemas,	I would speed there.
<i>de o</i> Del te marel ma! <i>jaj</i>	May God punish me!

In fact, the lyrical subject in this stanza calls for the confirmation of her words two times. A superior power should punish her if she is not speaking the truth. In other songs, the magic power of the words takes its effect through curses. In the following song (a 1980s hit) a boy is demanding that a girl gives him her picture under the threat of casting a curse on her.

4.

[:Evo, bičhav mange fotka!:]	[:Eva, send me your picture!:]
U sar mange na bičhaves,	And if you don’t send (it),
chudeha tu rakovina.	you’ll get cancer.
Evo, bičhav mange fotka!	Eva, send me your picture!

Words that are presumed to have a magic effect are most usually addressed to God, or to unspecified deities. Traditional songs of Slovak Roma often include a formula coming in the form of a pitiful sigh *Jaj, devlale, so me kerdòm...* “Oh, gods, what have I done...”. Implorations addressed directly to God are also abundant.

5.

1.
Esja man piraňi,
šukar čhaj romaňi.
Oja šudri baľvaj
ligenda la mandar.

2.
Phu(r)de, Devla, baľvaj,
an mange la pale.
An mange la pale,
thov *ej* la pašal ma!

1.
I had a sweetheart,
a beautiful Roma girl.
The cold wind
took her away from me.

2.
Blow, God, (make) the wind (blow),
Give her back to me!
Give her back to me
And put her next to me!

Bogatyrev believed that songs featuring incantations and pleas were originally motivated. This means that the one who asked or pleaded supernatural beings for something was "...aware of performing an incantation by singing the song, of doing exactly what the song's lyrics are conveying..." (Bogatyrev 1971: 118). As illustrated on examples of incantations and curses, the lyrical subject does not have to be invoking God, but can also address her or his wishes to dark powers.

6.

Benga, benga, len mra romňa!
ə Piraňora šukarora.
ə Piraňora *a* šukarora,
ə kija mande falešnona.

Devils, devils, take my wife!
(My) beautiful sweetheart.
(My) beautiful sweetheart,
(but) false to me.

The magic function of songs is usually closely associated with their ritual function absent in Roma songs because there are no rituals² with which the songs would be connected. Unlike farmers, whom the Roma provided with additional economical services, they were not bound to their land and the regular rhythm of cultivation or a cycle of holidays and rituals associated with the sedentary life style (Andrš 2002b: 58). The fact that in the case of Roma there are no ritual songs which would be functionally connected with

2 Note that Slovak, Hungarian and Vlashika Rom are referred to here; in other Roma groups, the situation may be different.

celebrations, customs and holidays has been noted already by Bálint Sárosi³ (1971 [German transl. 1977: 33]) and Jana Belišová (1992: 150), among others. Although Roma songs are not functionally related with lifecycle rituals, such as christenings, weddings, funerals and with calendar holidays, they may be thematically related. For example, the motif of Christmas appears in the following piece – *čorikaňi gili* – “a song about hard life”. Nevertheless, it lacks any attribute of Christmas as a Christian holiday. The song is a lamentation over the singer’s misery due to which he cannot offer a Christmas dinner to his parents, and what is even worse, he cannot even feed his children and satiate their hunger.

1.
i Karačoňa avel
 u man love nane.
jaj E daj le dadeha
 kija mande javel.
 So len dava te chal,
 te man love nane?
 2.
de Bikenav gerekos,
 maro lenge janav.
 ə So chana mre čhave,
 te len ňiko na del?
 3.
joj Karačoňa javel
 u man love nane.
jaj de Bikenav gerekos,
 maro lenge janav.
ejej Bikenav gerekos,
 mire čhavoreng.
 Oda *de* maroro,
 me chan mire čhave!

7.

1.
 Christmas is coming
 And I have no money.
 Mother and father
 Are coming to me.
 What will I give them to eat
 When I have no money?
 2.
 I will sell my coat
 And bring them bread.
 What will my children eat
 If nobody gives them anything?
 3.
 Christmas is coming
 And I have no money.
 I will sell my coat
 And bring them bread.
 I will sell my coat
 Because of my children.
 A little bread
 For my children to eat.

3 In his monograph “Zigeuner-musik” (1977), Bálint Sárosi focuses on the territory of the former Hungary, paying most attention to Roma groups that have also become the centre of my interest.

Contrary to the assumption that Roma songs do not serve any ritual function, it may be assumed that Roma have some certain family cycle songs, including lullabies and funeral songs, or that the so-called protracted songs may be categorised "...according to the singing opportunities and topics related to these occasions" (Davidová – Gelnar 1989: 40). With regard to the functional definition of the songs, these assumptions found in Eva Davidová's⁴ work are unsubstantiated. Songs traditionally playing the role of lullabies are absent in the song folklore of Slovak, Hungarian and Vlashika Rom⁵. As far as Roma "funeral songs"⁶ are concerned, they only take on the form of protracted sad songs, the motifs of which are associated with death and dying (see Chapter 6.5). All "songs about death and dying" can be sung on various occasions, they are not functionally limited to funeral songs, or other rituals (cf. Davidová – Jurková 1999: 60).

On his last journey, the deceased is accompanied by musicians who play his favourite music. These can also include joyful csardases. Songs sung to the deceased, as is the case with Vlashika Rom during *verrastáši*⁷, can be attributed a ritual function. However, this function does not consist in a fixed song sequence producing a stable pattern of the ritual. At the same time, it is irrelevant when the song is sung and what it is about. The singing has a different meaning, it is a sacrifice, an accompaniment to a soul that crossed the threshold of death. Vlashika Rom sing his or her favourite songs to the deceased.

O múlo adejs andi Hallotkamraj adďik, mejg naj lesko Praxomo taj lesko Čaládo sorro dějs paša lestej taj la dila kerenski Voula.

"Our deceased stay in mortuaries until their funeral during which their families sing songs to them to cheer them up."⁸ (Stojka 2003: 125).

The basic function of Roma songs, both in Vlashika Rom and Slovak and

4 The cited statement appears already on a liner note added to LP Romane Gila (Davidová – Gelnar 1974) and presumably for the last time in the publication Černobílý život (Davidová 2000: 106).

5 Perhaps the only exception is the song *Haju, haju, Kežinka* recorded from by E. Davidová (Davidová – Gelnar 1974) in the Vlashika Rom community. This song may have inspired her to categorise "lullaby" as an independent song type.

6 E. Davidová calls these songs *mulikane gila* "funeral songs" (Davidová – Žižka 1991: 32). See also the term *mulikani djili* in the work of Kovalcsik (1985: 35) who also cites her informant.

7 A wake by the dead. A ritual as part of which all who knew the deceased gather in his or her house or apartment, bidding their farewells. *Verrastáši* usually takes place during two nights preceding the funeral (Stojka 2003: 121).

8 Translated from Slovak original.

Hungarian Roma, is the mood-making function⁹. This is also reflected in the courtesy phrases uttered before the singing part during *mulatšago* “celebration” (for more details see Chapter 5). Vlashika Rom have the saying *Kerav tumari vouja!* “I will get you into the mood!”. Those who want to sing ask those present for their permission and added to that they can say this phrase. The saying is also known by Slovak Roma. One of the glass portraits made by Roma artist Rudolf Dzurka depicts a violin player performing for a group of Roma. The artist called it *Kerav tumenge dzeka* “I will get you into the mood”.

The following *louki d'ili* from eastern Slovakia describe the feelings of a Roma girl who hears voices singing from afar. She decides to go and find them and joins a group of Roma sitting and singing Vlashika songs.

3.

1.
i de Vója maladies ma,
i de vója maladies ma, te mejrav!
i de Vója maladies ma
de maškar le Romende. jaj

2.
jaj ej de Te me te žanglemas,
i de khote sig gelemas, te mejrav!
i de Khote sig gelemas,
de o Del te márel ma! jaj

3.
i de Vója maladies ma,
i de vója maladies ma, te mejrav!
i de Vója maladies ma,
i de maškar le Romende. jaj

4.
i de Kana khote pejlem,
i de kana khote gejlem, Romende,
i de bešlem tele, mama,
de vorbenca phendem. jaj de

1.
 I got into a good mood,
 I have zest for life. I'll be damned!
 I got into a good mood,
 among these Roma.

2.
 Had I known (it),
 I would speed there. I'll be damned!
 I would speed there.
 May God punish me!

3.
 I got into a good mood,
 I have zest for life. I'll be damned!
 I got into a good mood,
 among these Roma.

4.
 When I got there,
 When I got there, to the Roma,
 I sat down, mother,
 and I sang.

⁹ M. Stewart illustrated this function on the example of Vlashika Rom celebrations as follows: “By consuming alcoholic drinks, men reached a state called *voja*, desirable during *mulatšago*” (Stewart 2005: 169).

The literal translation of the song's last line goes: "I said (so) in words". In the case of Vlashika Rom, *vorba* means "a word", as well as "speech", or "utterance". This may have, as Michael Stewart explains, various forms. The Roma are not as strict in differentiating between spoken and sung words and hence *vorba* can be a story, a joke, a riddle, but also a song – the most common meaning of the word (Stewart 2005: 169).

Collective singing, feasting and wine drinking during *mulatšágo* has a euphoric and relaxing effect. Such "joyful meetings"¹⁰ are reserved for men and as such they are important for the prestige of every Roma man in the group. In his work focusing on Vlashika Rom in one Hungarian town, M. Stewart states that Roma used *mulatšágo* "...to attempt to create a world in which they would respect each other and where they could abandon their rivalry and squabbling..." (Stewart 2005: 163)¹¹. However, such celebrations combine both these aspects – expressing respect *pátiv*, as well as rivalry, as is for that matter evidenced by Stewart's description of one specific singing session (Stewart 2005: 165–166). On the occasions of *mulatšágo*, singing plays a representation function and an impressive performance also adds to the prestige of the singer.

The highly formal behaviour during *mulatšágo* that is supposed to mitigate mutual competition between Roma men, speech interwoven with courtesy phrases and an emphasis placed on the observation of *pátiv* – all of this endows the celebrations with a ritual character. M. Stewart (2005: 183) describes *mulatšágo* along similar lines (regarding *mulatšágo* see Chapter 5). A psychotherapeutic function is closely tied with the mood-making function. The healing power of singing and music used to be such a commonplace part of their life that they no longer think about it. They realised it only exceptionally, as illustrated, for example, by the concluding line of the song, *Devla, erđavo svito restam* "Bože, Bože, dožili jsme se zlého světa"¹² (Dear God We've Lived to Witness a Cruel World). The song was composed by outstanding Roma first violinist Mária Ráczová, a descendant of Hungarian Roma. She sang the song in 1886 to the Royal Prince Joseph when her family band performed for him in Starý Smokovec in the High Tatras (Drenko 1997: 54).

10 This characteristic has been adopted from Milan Sztojka (Sztojka 2016: personal communication).

11 Cited from the Czech edition (2005).

12 Translated from the original Slovak translation (Drenko 1997: 54).

8.

Devla, Devla, erđavo svito rest'am!
Upruno Raj, amen bare čore s'am.
Na kampil ňikaske ungriki d'ili,
a ko kamla, oda i mukla smirom.
Upruno Raj, kaj džanes, ko me s'om,
Phuro Šagi Jančiskero čhaj me s'om.
Adá d'ili ando briga me kerđom,
kaj o briga te pobisterav.¹³

God, God, we are living in a bad world
dear lord, we are so poor
nobody needs Hungarian tunes any more
those who loved it, gave it up.
Dear lord, you should know who I am
I'm the daughter of old Janci from Siah
I composed this tune in sadness
to forget my sorrow.

The last couplet describes the psychological sufferings that usually gave rise to sad protracted songs. The singing played a therapeutic role. I believe that the main reason why these songs were written and sung was that they made it possible to fully live and experience one's pain and pour one's heart out.

“The female, or in some cases male singers¹⁴ sing out their sorrow and the sung experience is often so strong that the song ends in tears, or stops altogether. This happened, for example, on the festival stage in Východná in 1986. In the programme “Ľudia z rodu Rómov” (People of the Roma Ethnicity), two singers from the Svinia settlement broke into tears and did not finish the song.” (Andrš 2001: Czech Radio).

Lamenting songs did not serve only as a form of psychotherapy, but they also allowed poor Roma living in settlements in Slovakia to forget their physical hardships. They were singing to literally stave off their hunger, as remembered by Hana Kotlárová, born Laciová, from Torysa during the making of “Romové a hudba” (The Roma and Music, Marek 1998: Czech Television).

¹³ The song is rendered in the so-called -áhi dialect spoken by Hungarian Roma.

¹⁴ In *čorikane gila*, author's comment.

In Romani culture, the central role was played by the extended family, because it also satisfied the needs whose fulfilment in complex societies was to a certain extent taken over by the modern state (for further details see Chapter 6.4). The Roma used to be and still are relying more on each other than, for example, is the case of the Czechs. Collective singing as part of the extended family accompanied by the consumption of alcoholic beverages greatly reinforced the social cohesion thus fulfilling, among others, an important social-integration function.

9.

2.
Pijav mange, pijav
mire šougorenca,
[:mire šougorenca,
sar vlastne phralenca:]

2.
I'm drinking, I'm drinking
with my brothers-in-law,
[:with my brothers-in-law,
like with my own brothers:]

The social integration function is closely associated with the ethnic-identity function. Its source is the knowledge of the Roma sense of belonging, even despite the potential partial differences in the language and culture of the individual Roma groups. The sense of ethnic belonging with its basic pillar being the use of the common social language – Roma, is also illustrated by the following csardas performed by Slovak Roma.

10.

ej Gondoláne, Gondoláne,¹⁵
bašav mange oja gili!
Bašav la romanes,
kaj o gadže te na džanen!

Gondolan, Gondolan!
Play that song for me!
Play it in Romani,
So that 'gadzhe' wouldn't understand.

As indicated by the song's concluding lines, the intimacy of the mother tongue in minority ethnic groups, such as the Roma, provides a crucial emotional aspect of their ethnic identity. However, the reference to a shared identity can have different motivations. It does not only have to be a call for unity or defining one's identity in opposition to non-Roma. The refrain of the following song by Slovak Roma features a constant line, appealing to

15 Antonín Gondolán, an excellent Roma musician who also established himself in Czech pop music. In the 1960s, he was a member of the Karel Gott's band, visiting EXPO'67 in Montreal.

the shared identity for entirely practical reasons; a boy wants to persuade the family of a girl whom he courts not to oppose their relationship because “they are a Roma family”.

11.

[:Phagle mange mri musori
bijal miri piraňi:].
[:Sar la mange te phaglehas,
ča la mange te dinehas.
sam Roma, sam, čore sam:].

[:They broke my arm
because of my sweetheart:].
[:Let them break it
if only they would let her be my wife.
We are Roma (after all), we are poor:].

In its extended form, *sem/hem Roma sam* “why are we Roma”, the saying is used by Slovak Roma as an argument serving the goals of the speaker or opening doors to mutual agreement. The knowledge of the shared bond can also be reflected by the calling *Romale!* “Roma!” or *Romale, čhavale!*¹⁶ that as a travelling line appears in many different subethnic Roma groups.

Functions fulfilled by songs are not unchangeable – they change together with the changing social conditions. Regarding this issue, P. Bogatyrev says that the functions produce hierarchic structures that are changeable: “... once dominant functions are changing into incidental elements and they can even vanish, sometimes secondary functions come to the fore, or new functions appear” (Bogatyrev 1971: 125).

Today, Roma csardas is not primarily a dance song, its rhythmical and dance function has been taken over by Roma disco. In the far gone times when csardas used to be a favourite folk dance all across Hungary, it was connoted only in social¹⁷, not ethnic terms. Later, in the last decades of the 19th century and in the early 20th century when cimbalom bands became popular, csardases were considered Gypsy dance music. Although the young generation of Slovak and Hungarian Roma today already listens to and performs a wider range of music styles than their fathers and grandfathers, csardas in the minds of the Roma still remains one of the signs of

¹⁶ It can be translated differently, based on the context. Asymptomatically as “people, folks” or as “Roma, kids”, or “Roma, old and young”.

¹⁷ According to Irén Kertész-Wilkinson, from the original verbunkos style emerged *palotás* (deriving from *palota* – palace) and *čardáš* (deriving from *csarda* – a pub) embodying the important social differences and values, ...” (Kertész-Wilkinson 2003: 33).

Roma folklore and currently serves the ethnic-identification function. This function comes to the fore more markedly in the case of *csapas*, a specific dance of Vlashika Rom.

Songs as well as entire song types that are no longer functionally justified are slowly disappearing. This can be well illustrated on the *hallgató* style in Slovak and Hungarian Roma that is ceasing to fulfil its psychotherapeutic and socially integrating function. The young generation no longer finds these protracted sad songs interesting because they have not experienced the hunger and suffering their predecessors went through. Therefore, they can no longer empathise with and fully feel through the *čorikane gila* genre including songs such as:

1.
ej de Mre churde čhavore,
ej de paš o paňi bešen.
ej de Paš o paňi bešen,
ej de churďi poši jon chan,
de churďi poši jon chan.

2.
ej de Mre churde čhavore,
ej de gav gavestar phiren.
ej de Gav gavestar phiren,
ej de maro peske mangel,
de maro peske mangel.

12.

1.
My little children
are sitting by the water.
Sitting by the water,
eating fine sand,
eating fine sand.

2.
My little children
are walking from village to village.
Walking from village to village,
begging for some bread,
begging for some bread.



Song as a Social Artefact

The previous analysis has been underpinned by the folkloristic concept that stems from the European tradition focusing on the melodies¹ and the origin of the songs, and their interrelations. A concept that approaches lyrics and melody as a source, the content, function and structural properties of which serve primarily the goal of genre analysis. This chapter will be dedicated to the ecology of the Roma song, i.e. conditions accompanying its origin and oral tradition. This ethnomusicological approach that has developed in the last fifty years has shifted the research focus from the material gathered during field research to the perception of music as a social event and a live performance, and later also to other research topics².

Traditional Roma song folklore was associated with simple, vertically not much differentiated social groups, so-called face-to-face groups, whose characteristic is a continuous and immediate connection among its members. Such groups enabling the creation and dissemination of ethnic (folk) songs include primarily the extended family and local communities of a rural and urban character³ that are usually comprised of several extended families. Songs by Slovak and Hungarian Roma have to this day been passed

1 The music characteristics of the Roma music folklore is not technically the focus of my work.

2 According to Zuzana Jurková, our ethnomusicology can focus on “music concepts” and “music behaviour” as relevant topics in terms of Roma music (Jurková 2000: 43–44).

3 One example of municipal local community in Bohemia that has long treasured the Roma music culture in eastern Slovakia are Roma from Rokycany, Pilsen region. Many of them were acclaimed musicians, with a reputation in Bohemia and Moravia, one of which – the singer (less known also as a multi-instrumentalist) Věra Bílá became an internationally recognised star of world music at the turn of the millennium. With her band Kale from Rokycany she shone at prestigious international world music festivals and toured most European countries, and beyond, including Russia, Israel, USA, Canada and Japan.

on along a vertical line in multi-generational families. Their horizontal dissemination can mainly be attributed to the Internet, while in the past, they used to be spread thanks to regular visits to relatives, meetings at annual fairs, pilgrimage celebrations and the like. An analogical situation occurred in the case of the Vlashika Rom, with the only difference that during their travelling era they were less bound to the sedentary population and hence they more easily escaped social control and were less exposed to the pressure of assimilation. This fact also manifests itself in the Vlashika Rom song folklore, which has retained a more archaic character.

There are only limited sources on the issues related to the creation and dissemination of Roma song folklore. The only study produced by a Czech author covering these aspects is a monograph called “Žalující píseň” (The Accusatory Song). It centres on the genesis of several Roma songs associated with extermination and work camps in which Czech and Slovak Romanies were interned during WWII (Holý – Nečas 1993).

The question of how songs are composed and who are their authors arose as a result of the increased interest in folk poetry in English pre-Romanticism in the 18th century. German writer and philosopher Johann G. Herder and many subsequent scholars viewed folk songs as an anonymous and ancient product of a nation springing from spontaneous and collective activity of its folk layers (Tyllner 1989: 29). Today, it is clear that folk (ethnic) songs had their individual authors, but folk people did not see authorship as relevant.⁴ This approach to song authorship has persisted amongst the Roma to this day, even despite the fact that the environment in which ethnic Roma song folklore still lived its independent life a generation ago has radically changed. The dramatic technological development in the last decade has caused fast changes and young Roma today commonly listen to Roma songs on YouTube where they also upload their own tracks. The Roma do not attach any importance to individual authorship, or the individual contributions to the song-writing process. Like in the past, they do not search for the songs’ author. They suffice with the name of the band playing songs adopted for their repertoire. This name guarantees the quality of the music, while at the same time providing sufficient information regarding the song’s authorship. However, it must be noted that new songs are often produced only as

4 Anonymous authorship was characteristic for medieval song production and it persisted until early Modern Times. It is one of the characteristic features of folk arts.

new arrangements of existing tunes and textual variations. Various Roma bands thus produce variations on compositions by Ján Slepčík “Ačo” and Gejza Horváth from Brno. These two musicians and singers are examples of authors whose original texts draw on traditional songs in terms of their content and form to such an extent that as soon as they have established themselves as individual authors, they are drowned in the stream of collective folk song production.

At the time when oral dissemination was the most common method of spreading folk songs prior to the arrival of the Internet it was usual that some singers identified with the songs to such an extent that they considered them their own work. And although they worked with what they “had already heard”, they might have been right in having approached the subject with such a zeal that all traces of their inspiration sources had usually been eliminated. Such a “*déjà vu* type authorship”⁵ is naturally one of the features of folk art.

An illustrative example of a composition produced as a result of such a process is *Cinav tuke rokla skladanka*. Its tune (in a slowed tempo) and also its lyrics clearly elaborates on the main motif of the widely popular *Maksi rokla tuke cinava*, the constant stanza of which goes as follows:

13.

1.
Maksi rokla tuke cinava,
pre zabava manca phireha.
[:Maľovačka pro vuštora,
o lagocis pro najora,
baro čudos tuke perela.:]

1.
I’ll buy you a long skirt
And you’ll come with me to parties.
[:You’ll colour your lips
And paint your nails,
You look amazing.:]

The authorial variant of *Cinav tuke rokla skladanka*, provided below, employs a dialogical form to reveal the inner conflict of its author Gejza Tuleja “Banošis”. When writing the song, he lived with a woman and her grown-up children from her previous relationship. As apparent from the song’s lyrics, they were both extremely jealous.

⁵ This term has been adopted from Adam Votruba: “...you overhear something that you later forget and recollect again on some occasion thinking that it was actually your own idea” (Votruba 2009: 154).

14.

1.

Cinav tuke e rokľa skladanka
a šukar khosno, Devla, šafolka.
A topanki čarlagove,
bo tire vušta sar mjadove,
maj me raři, maj len čumidava.
[:Palis tuke šeptinava,
sar me tuha paštuvava,
či me tuha, Devla, dživava:]

2.

Dikh tu, Gejza, s'oda tu keres!
Dikh tu, Gejza, sar manca soves!
Te man čora khabňareha
u romňake man na leha,
sostar, Devla, me (...)
Či pro cikno počineha,
bo manca tu dživeha?
So tu, Gejza, so tu kereha?

3.

Te počinel tuke na pořinav,
sar romňaha tuha na dživav.
Bo me džanav, savi tu sal,
kecen dikhes, ajcen kames,
u man čores diliňares.
Kecen dikhes, jajcen kames,
u man čora diliňares,
so tu lubňi, so tuke kames?

4.

Cinav tuke rokľa skladanka,
a šukar romňi (...) šafolka.
Topanki čarlagove,
tire vušta sar mjadove,
maj me, maj len čumidava.

1.

I'll buy you a pleated skirt
and a beautiful scarf, God, a *šafolka*⁶.
And scarlet pumps,
for your lips are like honey,
and tonight, tonight I will kiss them.
Then I will whisper to your ear
when I'll be lying with you,
whether I will, God, live with you.

2.

Look, Gejza, what you are doing!
Look, Gejza, how you are sleeping with me!
If I get pregnant with you
and you don't marry me,
how, (oh) God, (...)
Will you support the baby,
or will you live with me?
What will you, Gejza, what will you do?

3.

I won't, I won't pay anything
nor will I live with you.
Because I know who you are,
any man you see, you want him,
and you're fooling me, poor man.
Any man you see, you want him,
and you're fooling me, poor man,
what do you, bitch, what do you want?

4.

I'll buy you a pleated skirt
and a beautiful woman (...) *šafolka*.
Scarlet pumps,
for your lips are like honey,
right away, right away I'll kiss them.

6 Translator's note: *šafolka* is a kind of a traditional woolen neck scarf with a flower pattern worn as a part of the traditional folk costume in eastern Slovakia.

Ča eletrika murdarena,
maj paš tu, Devla, džava,
maj me paš tu paštuvav.

As soon as the light is off,
right away I will, God, come to you,
I'll lie down with you.

Ajsa džuvľa pro drom me chudľom,
aja gili pal late sthodom.

I caught this woman on the road,
and this song is about her.

Comparing the constant stanza of *Maksi rokla tuke cinava* with the variant *Cinav tuke e rokla skladanka* we can see that the variant bears the authorial signature of its writer and interpreter. The lyrical reflection of the relationship between a man and a woman is to such an extent connoted with erotic desire and mixed feelings swaying the author that it can hardly be accepted by the wider community and passed on in such a form. However, this extremely subjective form makes it difficult to adopt the lyrics, although the intersubjectivity expressed in the text is a generally shared experience across Roma communities. Worth noting are also the last couplet that are a sort of a “copyright” at the end of the song indicating that Gejza Tuleja saw himself as the song’s author. Some song variants are always associated with a certain author, as is also the case of *Cinav tuke e rokla skladanka*. Others have been adapted and polished up by other interpreters to become a long-term integral component of the song folklore of a certain Roma group. However, there are songs that shine like a comet and then they fade and die. One of such songs is a tune sung by the Romanies in 1990 after Václav Havel had been elected as the president of Czechoslovakia at the end of the preceding year.

15.

[:K’oda, k’oda, k’oda
šaj avel?:]
[:O Havel, o Havel
šaj avell:]
[:K’oda, k’oda, k’oda
šaj avel?:]

[:Who can, who can
who can come?:]
[:Havel, Havel,
Havel can come!:]
[:Who can, who can
who can come?:]

On the other hand, there are songs of an ephemeral nature that have – metaphorically speaking – been stillborn. They neither have any textual prototype nor a successor because they lack any pivotal idea and aesthetic quality. However, such songs (which obviously have not caught anyone’s ear and

hence have not been further cultivated) paradoxically represent a valuable collector find.

16.

Sig tosara šilalo paňi džal,	[Early in the morning cold water is flowing,
e čaj peske o muj melalola.	girl's face gets dirty:]
[:Šaj džava, šaj,:]	[: I'll be able to go:]
[:ke miri phuri daj.:]	[:to my old mother.:]

As already mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this Chapter, the primary environment that made it possible for songs to be passed on from generation to generation was the extended family. Children learnt songs from their parents, younger siblings from their elder brothers and sisters, daughters-in-law from their mothers – and sisters-in-law in multi-generational families,⁷ and youngsters from each other. Jaroslava Giňová from Rokycany recalls singing lessons in her family:

O murša bašavenas a o dada phenenas, no ča av a gilav kadi gíli! Jov la bašavelas pre lavuta, amen la šunahas, no a amen samas ochtodžeňa pheňa, no a ňikas upre na has. Man upre has, kana man kada bavinlas, o gilavipen, tak me chudavas a gilavavas le dadeske, no a pačinlas pes lenge, a tak paľis sikľuvahas o gíla. No a paľi zas avelas aver čhajori, has but talentimen čhajora, so prostě gilavahas trojhlas, dvojhlas a sikavenas amen purane gíla. No ámen paľis sikavás amáre čhavenge, aľe amáre čháve phenen..., lenge pes kada na pačinel.

“The men played and the fathers said: come on and sing this song! He played it on the violin and we were listening, we were eight sisters and nobody could match us. I took the time to learn music, I enjoyed it, the singing, so I started singing and sang to my dad, and well, they liked it, and then they taught us to sing songs. And then another girl joined, the girls were very talented, we sang in three voices, in two voices and we were learning old

⁷ When I recorded songs in Roma homes, young women usually started singing after some persuasion from the others. I remember one typical recording session in Kolín nad Labem in the early 1980s where I witnessed music tuition within the family circle: The mother-in-law was standing by the stove and cooking. At the same time, she was carefully listening to her two daughters-in-law and when she did not like their singing, she corrected them. In the case of old hallgató *Veša, veša, churde veša*, which has a very difficult opening sequence, the girls failed to develop the melody properly. The woman intoned the opening part of the song for them and they had to repeat it until they got it right.

songs. And now when we sing them to our children, they tell us... that they don't like them."⁸ (Andrš 2002a: 14)

In the communist era, Roma songs disseminated mainly due to the circulation of migrating Roma within the territory of the former Czechoslovakia. Visits to relatives as well as work and better housing were the main pull factors of their migration (see Chapter 7.2). Aside from social groups of a purely family character, groups that had formed on the basis of institutional needs played their role in the geographical distribution of Roma songs. Such groups were work teams working on construction sites and in big factories. Roma men travelled even hundreds of kilometres for work and lived at factory dormitories. They visited home usually once or twice a month. They spent their evenings at the dorms, telling stories and singing songs⁹.

A major, albeit time-limited, ethnic-revitalisation role in the dissemination of Roma songs, was played by the Czech Gypsy-Roma Association that, along with the Slovak Gypsy-Roma Association, was the only notable Roma organisation in the Czechoslovak communist era. Aside from their political and economic activities, these two organisations were actively promoting the Roma culture. In the course of their short existence in 1969–1973, they initiated the formation of music and dance ensembles, for which they organised several competitions. These activities culminated in 1970 with the festival of winners of district rounds held in Jihlava, and a showcase of music ensembles that took place in 1972 in Bratislava.

Following the dissolution of Czechoslovakia at the very end of 1992, songs still spread from one country to the other, no longer only due to travel and migration, but also thanks to recordings. Initially on audio – and videotapes and later on CDs and DVDs; today they mostly spread via the Internet.

Their horizontal dissemination did not occur only within the Roma communities, as indicated in Chapter 2 using the comparison of the Hungarian and Roma song lyrics. Melodies and lyrics were adopted in different ways regardless of ethnical and other boundaries. It is only natural that related variants of songs can be found in different Roma groups. In the case of constant stanzas

8 The translation has been slightly modified compared to the original.

9 In 1980, I had the opportunity to closely observe the life at one of such dorms. I used to work at the Eastern Slovakian Ironworks and I lived at a dorm for “the dark skinned” as it was referred to by the clerks from the company’s accommodation management department. Roma working teams and workers from all parts of Slovakia were constantly coming and going. There was a lot of singing and music, they loved getting together and having fun.

and verses in songs played by Slovak and Vlashika Rom, the question arises as to whether they “migrated” as a result of contact between Roma sub-ethnicities or due to their genetic affinity. For example, the simile “ačhilom korkoro / sar čhindo kaštoro” (I was left alone / like a fallen little tree) is featured with slight modifications in many traditional Roma songs. The fact that various versions of this couplet can be found in different Roma groups hypothetically implies their common basis – a metaphor dating far back into the past. The following stanza was recorded in the town of Spiš in Slovakia.

17.

3.
Man dajori nane,
ča me som, korkori.
[:Ča me som, korkori,
sar čhindo kaštoro.:]

3.
I don't have a mother,
I'm all alone.
[:I'm all alone,
like a chopped down little tree.:]

The aforementioned couplet was recorded by J. Ficowski in South East Poland in a Roma community whose dialect is closely related to the Spiš variety of North Central Romani (1985: 232–233).

18.

Nane man dajori,
ňi kalo dadoro,
ačhilom korkoro
sar čhindo kaštoro.¹⁰

I don't have a mother,
nor do I have my black father,
I was left alone
like a chopped down little tree.

I will conclude with an excerpt from a Vlashika Rom song recorded by K. Kovalcsik (1985: 55).

19.

De mulas o papu, mamó.
de jAšílám čóřořa
sar šinde kaštóřa.

Grandfather died, mother.
We're orphaned
like little felled trees.¹¹

¹⁰ The transcription has been made according to the standardised spelling, see Note on the Transcription of Song Lyrics and Their Translation.

¹¹ Orig. translation by K. Kovalcsik.

In the case of closely affiliated song variants in different Roma groups, there is another, much more probable explanation. The song, stanza or verse have been adopted from an existing song. This is clearly the case of *Gelas e Iboja* “Odešla Iboja” (Iboja Has Left). The following lyrics, or their first line, indicate that the words have not been divided correctly when the text was newly adopted. The girl’s name in Vlashika Rom is Boja¹², not Iboja. The vowel “i” preceding the name represents a feminine article. In the eastern Slovak variety of North Central Roma, this article has the form of “e”.

20.

1.
de Gelas e Iboja,
de trin dīves oleske. joj
de Rodav la, rodav la,
dikh, či arakhav la.

2.
Arakhlom la, mami,
de andro ruži bešel. joj
de Andro ruži bešel,
jodoj pes kamavel.

3.
de Oke le, Iboja!
de Ma dara Romendar. joj
de Ma dara Romendar,
le šele dženendar.

1.
 Iboja left,
 It’s been three days,
 I’m looking for her, looking,
 See, if I find her.

2.
 I found her, grandma,
 Sitting in roses,
 Sitting in roses,
 And making love (with someone).

3.
 Look over there, Iboja!
 Don’t be afraid of Roma,
 Don’t be afraid of Roma,
 (Not even if there were) a hundred.

The song was recorded in Bohemia in a family of Slovak Rom hailing from the eastern Slovak region of Šariš. The Vlashika Rom who settled in the vicinity of Sabinov approximately a hundred years ago have partially mixed with the local population of Slovak Roma.

A variation of this song in Vlashika Rom rendition was recorded by Katalin Kovalcsik in south-eastern Slovakia. Only the first three stanzas of the song’s lyrics are cited below because the following two stanzas are not related to *Gelas e Iboja* in terms of their content (Kovalcsik (1985: 104–105).

12 See Boja – Bojina in Roma calendar. (Tonka 2008)

21.

1.

jaj de Gelastar i Roza,
Trin djes kodoleske,
hej de Rodav la, rodav la,
Kathi či rakhav la.

2.

jaj Taj rakhlem la, mama,
hej de Maškar roži bešel,
hej de Maškar roži bešel,
de Maškar le luludja.

3.

jaj de Aptar khere, Roza,
hej de Ma dara řomendar,
hej de Ma dara řomendar,
Či šeleženendar.

1.

Roza is gone
For three days,
I look for her, I look for her,
I don't find her anywhere.

2.

I find her, mother,
She is sitting amongst the roses,
She is sitting amongst the roses,
Amongst the flowers.

3.

Come home, Roza,
Don't be afraid of the Gypsies,
Don't be afraid of the Gypsies,
Even if they are hundred.¹³

13 Orig. translation by K. Kovalcsik.

Song as a Live Performance

The interpretation of a song is always bound to the specific singing situation. If there is at least one listener present, each song represents a specific form of social interaction.¹ The immediacy of such communication depends on the degree of improvisation both in the song's lyrics and in its music component – melody, harmony, and style. Improvisation significantly affects each of the variants of lyric and to a lesser extent also lyric-epic songs. And since lyric songs represent a major part of the song folklore of Slovak and Hungarian Roma, improvisation is characteristic for the rendition of these songs. Lyric-epic compositions are prevalent in the song fund of Vlashika Rom that, unlike lyric songs, feature a simple plot, which makes the improvisation a bit more complicated.

Romani culture perceives authorship differently from the concept common in literary societies. The interpreter may consider himself or herself to be the song's author if the original song has been substantially modified (see Chapter 4). Therefore, it is sometimes very difficult to draw a line between a mere interpretational improvisation and authorial improvisation². Even when performed by the same singer, Roma songs never have the same rendition, which differs depending on the character of the singing situation, the interpreter's frame of mind and on other circumstances.

Improvisation mostly takes place in two types of singing situations. In the first one, the singer tells a story about himself or herself in the lyrical form – as in the following example – using traditional poetic figures anchored in the collective memory.

1 This concerns folklore genres in general, as was already concluded by the representatives of the Russian formal school.

2 Regarding the terms “authorial” and “interpretational improvisation”, see Vičar – Dykast (2001: 122).

22.

1.

jaj Odi mri phuri daj
andr'odi phuv pašlol.

ej Nane man ņiko *jaj*,
ej ča me korkororo.

2.

jaj Ke kaste me džava,
te man ņiko nane?

ej Sem mar na birinav *jaj*
ej andre bari žala.

3.

ej Mamo, mamó, mamó,
soske man na kames?

ej Či me na som tiro *jaj*,
sar okala čhave.

4.

ej Ačhilóm korkoro
mire čhavoreha.

ej Sem mar na birinav *jaj*
javri te likerel.

5.

E daj mange mułas,
ačhilóm korkoro.

ej Ke kaste me džava *jaj*,
ej te man ņiko nane?

6.

ej Gav gavestar phirav,
pal o kotor maro,

ej kaj me te chal te dav *jaj*
ej mire čhavoreske.

7.

jaj O Del la marena
pal kada čhavoro,

ej So džanav te kerel *jaj*
andre bari žala?

1.

My old mother
is lying in the soil.

I don't have anyone,
[I've been left] all alone.

2.

To whom will I go,
if I don't have anyone?

Why, I don't have the strength anymore
to bear this sorrow.

3.

Mother, mother, mother,
why don't you love me?

Am I not yours,
as the other kids?

4.

I've been left alone
with my little son.

I'm at the end of my tether,
I can't bear it [any more].

5.

My mother died,
I've been left alone.

To whom will I go,
if I don't have anyone?

6.

I go from village to village,
[to beg] for a chunk of bread,

[only] to feed
my little son.

7.

God will punish her,
because of the boy.

What should I do
in this great sorrow?

8.
ej Na kamel man e daj
aňi mire ciknes.
jaj Marla la o Del *jaj*
jaj vaš mange, čoro som.

9.
ej Aven ke ma, aven,
mire phralorenca!
ej Nane man ňiko *jaj*,
ej ča miro čavoro.

10.
jaj Mamo, mamó, mamó,
soske me som ajso?
ej Soske me som ajso *jaj*,
ej ajso bibachtalo.

11.
ej Kher kherestar phirav
a na džanav, kaj som,
ej sem mar na birinav
avri te likerel.

8.
My mother doesn't love me
not even my little one.
God will punish her
because of me, poor man.

9.
Come to me, come,
with my brothers!
I don't have anyone,
just my little son.

10.
Mother, mother, mother,
why am I like this?
Why am I like this,
cursed like this?

11.
I go from house to house
I don't know where I am.
I'm at the end of my tether,
I can't bear it [any more].

This hallgató stems from the poetics of *čorikane gila* “songs about hard life”. It consists of migrant stanzas and couplets that have been polished over generations to assume this succinct form, and that convey very compact meanings. In order to fully grasp the “autobiographic compositions” of this type it is important to be well versed in the cultural context in which they appear. For example, going from a village to village and house to house (stanza 6 and 11) used to be a traditional form of livelihood conducted by women among Slovak and Hungarian Roma. They mostly visited farmers who knew them well and gave them food. In return, the Roma provided various services such as greasing ovens, manufacturing bricks and other menial jobs. Services of smiths and musicians were the most valued.

The second clue to a deeper understanding of the aforementioned lyrics – which also applies to other hallgatós, is the singer's biography. The singer of the song is a gay man who tried to live in a heterosexual partnership from which he has a little son. This knowledge better clarifies

why he feels rejected by his mother (stanza 3) and why he sings about being the victim of his fate (stanza 10). When depicting how he is searching for food for his little son, he stylises himself into a female role. If we did not know about the author's³ sexual orientation, these lines (stanza 6 and 11) would seem out of place. Another thing is the anachronism of the above-mentioned "going from village to village". For a lack of a better metaphor, the singer uses an archaic figure to describe his existential problems. In Roma songs, logical flaws in the plot do not matter either. To stick to this hallgató: it starts with the lament that the "mother is already buried in ground", and then in other stanzas she is both referred to as being alive and being dead. Perhaps because these improvisations are brimming with emotions, this type of flaws does not diminish these compositions in the eyes of the listeners.

Another quite rare singing situation, in which improvisation plays a significant role, is a criticism of someone who has violated social norms. In these cases, songs serve a social-regulation function. The person who is exposed to *pre ladž* "shame", has to be present to the singing. The purpose of the singing improvisation is to make the offender change his or her conduct. The target of criticism is usually a husband because this social sanction is mostly used by women. The song form allows Roma women to say what they would not dare to express in a verbal confrontation. Regardless of the fact that Roma culture sees direct criticism as proof of bad manners.

Some examples of situations when songs fulfilled the socio-cultural regulative role in Slovak Roma are mentioned by Hübschmannová (1988: 81–82), and by Stewart in relation to Vlashika Rom (2005: 171). As mentioned above, such criticism is mostly targeted at a misbehaved man. The following is a rare example of a song that rebukes a woman for her behaviour.

3 In similar examples, when the singer creates a unique composition using traditional poetic figures in the form of constant couplets and stanzas, a specific type of authorship is concerned that could be called "composition" authorship.

23.

1.

*ej de Adadžives ki je rači Roma bašaven,
de miri romñi, kori mači, jodoj giľavel.
jOdoj giľavel, bo joj mači hin,
[:mra romñake jandro vasta jepaš ľitra hin:].*

2.

Ma vičin man andre karčma, bo me na pijav!
Cinel peske ľitra vinos, avri les pijel.
Frima tuke hin, s' oda tu keres?
Le gadženge, le Romenge, pre choľi keres,
le Romenge, le gadženge, pre choľi keres.

1.

Tonight Roma are playing,
my wife, drunk as a lord, is singing.
She's singing there because she's drunk,
[:she's holding, my wife, half a litre of wine:].

2.

Don't tempt me to go to the pub, I won't drink!
Buying a litre of wine, gulping it down.
Is it not enough for you? What are you doing?
[:To gadzhe, to Roma, to Roma, to gadzhe, you're doing it on purpose:].

Aside from criticising those who violated social norms, or *pařiv* "honour" in Roma terms (see Chapter 6.2), a song can also be used to tease someone, or to draw attention to a certain person. In such cases, the song's communication function comes to the fore and the improvisation element consists in mentioning a name of a particular person during a live performance.

24.

Nane oda lavutaris,
kaj mri giľi te bašavel.
[:Bašavela mro pirano,
bo joj⁴ lačho lavutaris:.]

There's no such a musician
who would play my song.
[:My dearest will play (it)
because he's a good musician:.]

4 The vernacular form of personal pronoun meaning both „he“ and „she“.

The constant stanza of this *csardas* is very widespread.⁵ The third line in most of the variants includes a name of a certain person instead of the word *pirano* “beloved”. The singer usually sings about someone present, most often a musician playing an accompanying instrument, for example *Bašavla la o Lubošis, bo jov lačho lavutaris*. “Luboš will play because he is a great musician”.

Singing situations used to occur spontaneously in response to various life events and incidents. The Roma used to sing most of the day. The situation today is different because live music and singing has been replaced by recorded music. However, music, singing and dance have not lost their importance during various family events. Be it ceremonies and life cycle celebrations, annual holidays⁶ or visits of friends and relatives. Romani settlements no longer resound with the tones of *pre vatra* “out in the open in a settlement”⁷ or *tele paš o pañi* “down by the water”⁸.

25.

[:Odoj tele o Roma bašaven,
mri pirañi mulatinel:]
Sar me kodoj pal late džava
the me laha mulatinava.
[:Odoj tele o Roma bašaven,
mri pirañi mulatinel:]

[:Down there Roma are playing music,
my sweetheart is merry:]
When I go down there
I will be merry too.
[:Down there Roma are playing,
my sweetheart is merry:]

The key term in this and other similar songs is *te mulatinel* “to celebrate, to feast, to rejoice”. In Vlashika Rom, a social session during which men sit

5 For example, the songbook of Jožka Černík features two variants of this song (Černík [1921]: 11, 20).

6 In terms of life cycle ceremonies, Slovak Roma attach most importance to *boňa* “christening”. *Bijav* “wedding” is often organised after the first children are born, and *mangavipen* “engagement” is held only exceptionally. Gradually, the Roma started celebrating other events such as *berša* “birth-day” and in some communities also wedding anniversaries. Romani lacks names for holidays that were originally missing in the Roma calendar. As for annual holidays, the Roma celebrate *Karačoňa* “Christmas”, *Nevo berš* “New Year” and *Patrađi* “Easter”. Along with ample food and drink, Roma celebrations most importantly feature music and dance – unlike in the majority society.

7 This tradition has gradually subsided with the growing quality of housing in Roma settlements. Electrification and the arrival of television in the 1960s and 1970s put an end to this pastime.

8 Roma settlements in Slovakia were usually established on the slopes above rivers and lakes, often by woods that stretched above. On meadows pertaining to the village or parish – mostly infertile land. Water and woods were vital to the Roma; Roma women in some East Slovak settlements still fetch water with a pail and burn wood at home.

at one table, sing and drink is called *mulatšágo*. The fact that they sit separately from women stems from the masculine character of these parties during which *pátiv* is strictly observed. In this case, “*pátiv*” can most aptly be translated as “manifestation of respect in the form of status hierarchy”. These sessions mainly consisted in telling stories through songs, as illustrated by M. Stewart on the example of Hungarian Vlashika Rom (2005: 164). Peter Stojka, himself a Vlashika Rom, sums this phenomenon up as follows: *Šaj phenas paj Ďíli vi kodo hoď či Ďilabel hoď ‘i Ďíli Vorbij paj Manušesko Trajo!*’ “We can also say that a song is not only about singing but also about ‘telling stories about life!’” (Stojka – Pivoň 2003: 109). In functional terms, songs that are sung during *mulatšágo*, represent a separate genre and Vlashika Rom call them *mulatouša Ďíla* “celebration songs”, or *mesálake Ďíla* “table songs”. (See Chapter 2).

As mentioned above, an important role during *mulatšágo* is played by the social status. This is reflected in the mutual communication of the participants, most notably in the speech etiquette, highly sophisticated in Vlashika Rom and being of great importance during such sessions.

Although it is not the aim of this chapter to describe *mulatšágo* of Vlashika Rom in further detail, in terms of the song rendition it must be noted that the person who wishes to sing has to first ask his mates at the table for permission. This request may have the following form: *Baxtále t’aven Romale! Del tume o Dél lungo trajo taj sastimo! Engedinas, te kerav tumari šukár vója.* “Be happy, Roma! May God bless you with long life and good health! Allow me to set you in excellent mood.” Having expressed their approval, the listeners encourage the singer during his performance and when the song is over, both sides utter courtesy formulas to express mutual respect and wish each other luck. For instance, the singer says: *Pe šukáre sastimas, Romale! T’aven sáste taj baxtále!* “To your excellent health! May you, Roma, be healthy and happy!”⁹

Mulatšágo is not associated strictly with formal celebrations of holidays and anniversaries; it may take place practically anytime. This is fully in line with its mood-making function (see Chapter 3). Although in view of the ethic approach, this type of celebrations may be considered a ritual¹⁰ used

9 Peter Stojka 1999: Praha-Nusle.

10 Vlashika Rom would not categorise *mulatšágo* as a ritual, they consider it a “joyful get-together” (Milan Sztojka 2014: personal testimony), see also Chapter 3.

by Vlashika Rom to reinforce their sense of belonging, mitigate potential disputes and renew and affirm their identity, it seems that, as put by Fiona Bowie, “the conduct itself, not only its symbolic meaning, may be the main topic for the participants” (Bowie 2008: 152).

In the eastern Slovak variety of North Central Romani, *te mulatinel*, the more original term for “to celebrate, to feast, to rejoice” is usually replaced by *te slavinel* loaned from the Slovak language. In Slovak Roma communities, singing sessions similar to *mulatšágo* are not very formalised, they are simple and the speech etiquette is rather poor as compared with that of Vlashika Rom. Spoken introductions to songs, or introductions of singers in the case of recorded sessions, are usually a rare occurrence. Speeches before or after the songs do not represent a formal part thereof. This is evidenced by the fact that such a speech in Slovak Roma has the character of a monologue, with no answer to follow (cf. Davidová – Gelnar 1989: 42–43 or Holý – Nečas 1993: 87–88).

Song as a Vehicle of Ethno-cultural Meanings

Poetic figures passed on from generation to generation in the form of Roma songs draw on a shared social history. In order to grasp this history in all of its diversity, we have to explore the uncharted waters of Romani verbal culture – this field of research has long remained a terra incognita to European scholars and the “Gypsy language” was shrouded in mystery. In the late 18th century, in the period of Enlightenment, evangelical priest and amateur ethnographer Samuel Augustini ab Hortis, who hailed from the Slovak region of Spiš, wrote the following: “When something bad happens to them, they usually sing a song to the others to inform them about their misfortune and so it may seem that they compose laments about their misery. They may be using some poetic expressions that could be explained if only one would understand them.” (Augustini 1994: 56).

Naturally, these expressions “could be explained”, but it is first necessary to grasp the meanings of established phrases that recur in Roma songs in the form of migrant verses, couplets and stanzas. To study semantic fields of lexical units, metaphoric properties of the songs, and to ask where their tropes come from. As Anna Wierzbicka stated in her book on semantics “...if we want to fully grasp another culture, we have to be able to understand the meanings that are specific thereto” (Wierzbicka 2014: 38). In Romani, a specific meaning is conveyed for example by the term *lubňi*, an integral part of almost every *bertenošiko gili* “prison song”, which also occurs as an “incantation” in all situations when a Roma complains about his fate.

26.

1.
ej Marel o Del marel,
hej kas kamel te marel,
[:*hej e* the man o Del marda,
ej bo na šundom mra da.:]

2.
ej Marel o Del marel,
hej kas kamel te marel,
[:*hej e* the man o Del marda,
ej vaš tuke lubňije!:]

1.
God punishes, punishes,
who he wants to punish,
[:God punished me too,
because I didn't obey my mother.:]

2.
God punishes, punishes,
who he wants to punish,
[:God punished me too,
because of you, you bitch!:]

The semantic field of this expression is very wide, from the rough “whore” to the affectionate “vixen”. “Lubňi” is to blame for all that has happened to the singer, as bluntly said in the concluding line. As Michael Stewart (2005) states – in Vlashika Rom, a man who has not kept his word usually blames his failure on his wife because it is socially unacceptable for other men to discuss the issue with women. (See, for example, the final stanzas of *Denaš phrala*, *denaš* in Chapter 7.1).

In terms of literary genres, lyric songs prevail in the song folklore of Slovak and Hungarian Roma over lyric-epic compositions, with no genuinely epic songs represented at all. The folklore of Vlashika Rom is comprised mostly of lyric-epic songs, some of which have the character of a ballad; however, as Bálint Sárosi notes: “Those of their protracted songs that are sung in the style of ballads do not have a fixed traditional form” (Sárosi 1977: 31). Katalin Kovalcsik is of a similar opinion: “With the exception of a few ballads with fixed contents, the lyrics of slow songs are composed of various motifs” (Kovalcsik 1985: 33). B. Sárosi provides an example of a song whose character comes close to a ballad – a song about a Roma girl who is forced by her lover to poison her own brother with the meat of a poisonous snake (Sárosi 1977: 31). In the Czech and Slovak context, Eva Davidová recorded such a “ballad” in a Vlashika Rom community in eastern Slovakia (Stojka – Davidová – Hübschmannová 2000: 22).

Roma songs are particular in their elliptic nature that manifests itself in the conciseness of the expressions and whose secondary manifestations may have the form of various anacolutha and grammatical disagreements (for further details see the analysis of *O vešóro e pajtrenca* in Chapter 6.1).

“The effort to be as concise as possible stems primarily from the necessity to fit the idea into a verse form as there are fewer melodies than there are song lyrics. (...) The second rule that generally applies to lyric songs, but is often pushed to the extreme limit, is the fact that what is the singer’s driving force and what the listeners want to hear is not the logic of the song’s plot – but the feelings, the emotions! A Roma wants to feel the song in his or her heart!” (Andrš 2002b: 41).

The lyrics may, but do not need to, convey a message that makes some sense. Many Roma dance tunes, especially in Vlshika song folklore, are performed using rhythmisation syllables that do not convey any meaning. In addition, *khelimaske džilla* “dance songs” also work with the so-called oral bass. In these cases, the Vlshika Rom say that the singer is “pumping” *pumpázij* because this singing technique is based on sharp aspiration and expiration with a sound accompaniment resembling pumping water from a well. Rhythmisation syllables are often included in protracted sad songs which also provide considerable space for improvisation. Syllables such as *joj/jaj, de, že* etc., but also words with a semantic meaning, such as the exclamation *Devla!/devlale!* “God!/gods!”, etc., are used to complete the metric pattern in places where the singer feels that the song’s rhythmic scheme is failing. Rhythmisation syllables also come in handy when the singer forgets the lyrics.

In terms of the meanings conveyed in the songs, the so-called key words are of crucial importance. Many words that play a key part in Romani culture also have their natural place in other languages. For example, in many languages, the word “heart” has connotations that are widely shared and understood across cultures. However, the metaphor *kalo jilo*, lit. “black heart” used to be misunderstood by translators of Roma songs to Czech because they started from the assumption that *kalo jilo* is a primary attribute of the Roma identity (cf. Hübschmannová 1960: 73, Davidová 1989: 42). Although in some cases, this connotation cannot be excluded, the collocation *kalo jilo* stands primarily for “sad, desperate heart”. Key words that in various languages denote emotions are difficult to translate because they refer to integral terms that cannot be translated by means of a combination of culturally specific words from another language (Wierzbicka 2014: 37).

In some cases, a certain phraseme in Romani represents an equivalent to the same meaning in Czech, for example, the following line in the song below: *me tuke miro jilo dava* “I will give you my heart”. The only difference

is in the pragmatic aspect of the language; in the Czech context, phrasemes of this type are considered clichés, or, at best, archaisms.

27.

Čhaje, čhaje, šukar sal,
phen mange, kaskri sal?
Me tuke miro jilo dava,
ča tu phen, či man kameha.

Girl, girl, you are beautiful,
tell me, whose are you?
I'll give you my heart,
just tell me if you'll love me.

If we were to find one tag word in Romani to summarize the song type of hallgató, a sad protracted song sung by Slovak and Hungarian Roma, it would definitely be *čoro*. This term has a very wide semantic field – poor, indigent, destitute, miserable, unfortunate, unlucky, lamentable, orphaned (and accordingly also in the substantive form – a poor man, etc.). Many other lexemes derive from the lexical morpheme *čor* that forms a stem of *čoro* – such as the abstract noun *čoripen* encompasses a whole range of negative qualities, states and processes. *Čoro* and *čoripen* are etymologically closely related to the verb *te čorel*, “to steal”! This connection then clearly indicates where some features of the “Gypsy” culture (considered asocial by the majority society) stem from. It was extreme poverty and the fight for physical survival that formed Roma culture over centuries (see Chapter 6.1). Not without a reason is the main traditional genre of hallgató songs called *čorikane gila* – a term that is rather difficult to translate (see Chapter 2).

Law and Injustice

The Roma were greatly different from the population with whom they came into contact on their journey across Europe in their appearance and lifestyle. These differences were only slightly becoming blurred, primarily in those Roma groups that had settled down. However, they were still treated as strangers, being subject to hardships and humiliation that they repaid with tricks and deception. They were lawbreakers, either deliberately or out of necessity. Feudal ordinances targeting “the Gypsies” for centuries gave them the label of renegades. One of the reasons for their persecution was the widespread belief that they were Turkish spies. It was apparently not by mere coincidence that several years after the Turkish invasion of central Hungary in 1526, the Roma population started to be expelled from the Czech lands¹. The persecution, which involved corporal and capital punishments and expulsion of Roma beyond the borders, did not come to an end until 1782. Emperor Joseph II issued a decree pursuant to which Gypsies obtained the status of subjects of the crown. Although this decree did not mark the end of the persecution policy, it at least gave it a more civilised form.

In 1819, almost forty years after the issuance of Joseph II’s decree, Czech poet and catholic priest Antonín Jaroslav Puchmajer recorded a song that aptly illustrates the effect of living permanently on the run on the Roma mentality. Puchmajer discovered the song in a group of nomadic Roma that had set up their camp close to the West Bohemian town of Pilsen. He paid regular visits to the campsite to study the Romani language. The camp was only inhabited

¹ In 1538, the Moravian Provincial Assembly issued its first stipulation banishing Gypsies from Moravia, and in 1545 the obligation to leave the country was extended by means of an imperial decree also to the territory of Bohemia (Nečas 1997: 10).

by women and children who had for ten weeks been waiting for their men, who had been incarcerated in Pilsen and investigated by the local court. The song *O vešoro e pajtrenča* “O lesýčku s listjm”² (Oh Forest n’ Leaves, Puchmajer 1821: 77–78) is a lyrical testimony that speaks of the vulnerability and insecurity that had had a constant influence on the psyche of Bohemian and Moravian Roma.

28.

1.
O vešoro e pajtrenča,
O čiriklo e pchakenča!
Te me e dar dykava,
Andre tute chuťava.

2.
Veša, veša zelenone,
De tut pale angál mande!
Te me e dar dykava,
Štar bárora chuťava.³

1.
Wood has leaves,
bird has wings.
If I see danger,
I’ll jump into you (wood).

2.
Woods, green woods,
make way for me!
If I see danger,
I’ll jump over four fences.

Due to the grammatical disagreement and elliptic figures used in the lyrics, the first stanza of this song poses a real challenge in terms of its translation. The literal translation of the first couplet goes as follows:

(The) wood with leaves,
(the) bird with wings,
If I see danger,
I’ll jump into you.

However, a translation that would fully express the gist of the message would be the following:

Wood, you have leaves to hide.
Bird has wings to fly away.
I have no leaves or wings but if I see I’m in danger,
I’ll jump into you to hide.

² Original orthography.

³ Cited in the original form recorded by A. J. Puchmajer.

The following translation by Jan Sobota (1954: 22) is an illustrative example of how a lack of knowledge of historic facts and Roma lifestyle may lead to misinterpretation of the song's message. In the Czech translation, the central theme of insecurity has been replaced by a bucolic depiction of nature.

1.

Oh, green woods, woods!
Birds with wings in the sky!
I must leave, I must go there,
I'll jump over four fences!

2.

Woods, my dear woods,
you're opening your arms to me –
when I'm afraid,
I'll run to you again.

The general theme of *O vešóro e pajtrença* most certainly originated in the mid-18th century, and perhaps even earlier. I failed to find any variant of this song from a different source in the available literature⁴, which makes it impossible to track its modifications in time.

Bohemian Roma and other Roma groups leading a nomadic life⁵ used to follow their own unwritten laws and their own judges who made sure that these laws were enforced. These laws regulated the relations and methods of communication with the non-Roma majority and strengthened the cohesion among Roma families. They also served as a defence shield against the state's law enforcement agencies. The approach to the Roma population in the Austrian part of the Habsburg Monarchy, including the Kingdom of Bohemia, was even stricter than in Hungary. In the 19th century, the Roma wandering around the kingdom were still considered outlaws, and some of them were indeed robbers. The most notorious of these was Jan Janeček from Kozojedy who was sent to the gallows in Pilsen in 1871. Eleven years later, Josef Ješina published a prison song *Pchandyne, pchandyne*⁶ “Spoutali,

4 The printed versions of the song mentioned in Chapter 1 drew on the works of Puchmajer (1821).

5 On the territory of former Czechoslovakia also Sinti and Vlshika Roma.

6 Original orthography.

spoutali” (They Handcuffed Me, Ješina 1882: 144–145)⁷ and František Štampach who reprinted Ješina’s version added the following note: “This song of Gypsy bandits is said to have been sung by bandit gangs of Gypsy Janeček of Kožojedy...” (Štampach 1930: 345).

29.

1.
Pchandyne, pchandyne,
pre dyzóri dyne.
Biš funty sastera,
dyne pre mre chéra.

2.
Choľa kordyňas mro šéro,
mri dajóri, tro šeróro.
Kana tut dykava!
Mro jílo dukala.⁹

1.
They cuffed me, they cuffed me,
in prison they’ve put me.
Twenty pounds⁸ of iron
they put on my legs.

2.
My stubbornness angered
your little head, my dear mother.
When I see you
my heart will ache.

The first stanza of the song, perhaps the only of the thematic group of prison songs recorded in the Czech lands, appears to be a constant lyrical theme. The second part of this stanza resembles a constant couplet abundant in *bertenošika gíla* “prison songs” of Slovak Roma, for example in the following form:

30.

2.
hej de Soske mange trasta
pre mre kale vasta?
hej de Mire kale vasta
na džanen te kerel.
hej de Či pre buťorate,
či pre lavutate.

2.
Why do I have chains
On my black hands?
My black hands
Weren’t made for working.
They weren’t made for working,
Nor for playing the violin.

⁷ I only quote the first two stanzas because I agree with F. Štampach that the two other stanzas, the themes of which are different, form an independent lyrical unit.

⁸ I.e. shackles of an overall weight of 10.275 kg.

⁹ Cited in the original form as recorded by J. Ješina.

From the analytical perspective, the second stanza of *Pchandyne*, *pchandyne* is of an increased interest. The lyrical subject turns to his mother and seems to be regretful. According to a legend¹⁰, Janeček had a strange last wish: “He said he wished his mother went to see him at the gallows to bid her farewell and kiss her good-bye. When she arrived, he bent over and bit off her nose. Is there some connection with the second stanza of the song? This stanza is itself rather challenging to translate and could also be translated in different ways. Among Vlashika Rom, women were punished for infidelity by having the tip of their nose cut off (a practice similar to that of the Apache). Was the woman perhaps his lover who has betrayed Janeček? Does the song *Pchandyne*, *pchandyne* really depict Janeček’s last moments? Where did Štampach’s assumption come from?

In the Czech Republic and in Slovakia, the Roma law *románo sokáši* is still enforced more or less only by Vlashika Rom. This is taken care of by the institution of the Roma court, *románo krísi*. The judges are summoned in cases of serious transgressions of unwritten laws. In some cases, violent clashes between Vlashika families occur. Perhaps the most notorious story still living in legends and songs, is the story of a revenge exacted on a Roma called Báno in the 1950s. He was a mighty man who used his contacts with the police to spite his enemies. And because he hurt many people, the legend has it that his adversaries killed him and stuffed his corpse into a gutted horse. The horse’s belly was sewed up and the body was buried in the woods. The song about Báno was recorded by Eva Davidová (Davidová – Jurková 1999: 62) and Katalin Kovalcsik (1985: 108–109).

A frequent theme in Roma songs is the persecution to which the Roma had long been exposed. When a Roma happened to be in the vicinity of a crime scene, they were automatically treated as the main suspect. Alleged or real grievances are depicted in the following *hallgató* sung by Slovak Roma:

31.

1.
Aňi pincos na rozmarďom,
aňi gadžes na murdarďom.
jaj de O klejici mar čerchinen,
jaj de o prajtora tele peren.

1.
I haven’t robbed a shop,
nor have I killed a gadzho.
(Prison) keys are rattling already,
leaves are (already) falling down.

¹⁰ http://www.rozhlas.cz/cesky/puvoduslovi/_zprava/koupit-za-pet-prstu--1363227, 16 June 2014.

The aforementioned song again falls within the thematic group of *bertenoška gila* “prison songs”¹¹ that are categorised as *čorikane gila* “songs about hard life”. However, the lyrical themes of the prison songs are also regularly featured in the newer song layer, the so-called *neve gila*.

¹¹ In a more literal translation – “prisoner songs”.

Respect and Poverty

Corresponding to the degree of persecution to which the Roma were exposed at various times during their nomadic travels was the importance of unwritten laws that maintained group cohesion and protected the group members from the “gadžo world” full of traps. A crucial role in the value system of Roma communities that have been following these laws is played by *paťiv/paćiv*¹ “honour, respect”. In different contexts, this central term assumes additional meanings. For example, it may represent loyalty to leaders and distinguished personalities, good manners and observance of speech etiquette, a feast or a celebration, and morals in general. The native concept of *páťiv* is aptly characterised by Peter Stojka:

Andej Vlašika Rom i Páťiv nađon fontoššo-j taj bári-j ke bi lako náštik avilas či o Romimo taj kado le Rom náštik muken t’avel (...) o Vlašiko Rom mindík kerel kodo sar trobuj ando Románo Sokáši ke feri la Páťivasa šaj dentij i Románi Krísi, šaj vezetij ande pesko Telepo, ande pesko Them le manušen, save dine les kodi Páťiv. O Paťiválo Manuš, voun sikavel maj but le ternenge kacavo drom pe savo kamel te žal sako jejkh anda Románo Táršaššágo. (Stojka – Pivoň 2003: 91)

“The Vlashika Rom attach great importance to ‘páťiv’ as it is essential for the very existence of the Romani culture. The Vlashika Rom always act as expected according to Roma customs. Only those who are respected may sit on a Roma court, may be the leaders and representatives of the Roma community. The Roma who are greatly respected by their community serve as an example especially to young people showing them the right path that every Roma strives to follow.”

¹ For more details see Andrš (2006: 84–87).

As a principle of good manners and respectful speech, *pařiv* is an important aspect of social gatherings. For example, during Vlashika Rom *mulatřágo*, “celebrations”, where men sit at a table and sing, the singer has to ask for permission first (for details see Chapter 5).

The opposite of *pařiv* is *ladř* “shame, disgrace”. However, *ladř* is not only the opposite of *pařiv*, it also represents an essential condition of its existence – one cannot be defined without the other. In social terms, it serves a socio-cultural regulative role. Those who bring *ladř* upon themselves, or their family, have to be sanctioned. The following csardas illustrates what importance was assigned to virginity – girls who were found in breach of this social standard were exposed to a considerable degree of derision.

32.

1.
i Akor e řhaj barikaři,
ej kana hiři pařivali.
 [:*ej* U sar nane pařivali,
 mi řhivel pes andro paři.:]
 2.
 řhaje, řhaje, barikaři,
 kana tu sal pařivali.
ej U sar na sal pařivali,
 mi řhiven tut andro paři.
 U sar na sal pařivali,
 řhiv tut, řhaje, andro paři!

1.
 That’s when a Roma girl is proud,
 When she is chaste.
 [:And when she’s not chaste any more,
 She should jump into water.:]
 2.
 Girl, girl, you are proud,
 If you are chaste.
 But if you are not a virgin,
 May you be thrown into water,
 But if you are not a virgin,
 Jump, girl, into water!

As mentioned above, honouring guests with food and eating together on special occasions plays an important role in the broad range of meanings attached to *pařiv*. As regards visits, this term represents an “act of hospitality”, and in the case of celebrations it stands for a “feast”. The opposite of hospitality is stinginess – miserly Romanies, who have resources but are not willing to share them with others are regarded with utmost contempt. Although the unwritten law of *pařiv* required everyone to share everything with others, it also included a fail-safe – it was considered a shame to ask for something and the greatest shame was to ask other Roma for food.

33.

1.
Mek čak dural avav,
o Roma mange vakeren,
[:*jaj* kaj mangav lendar maro,
on man prekoškeren:].

1.
I'm only just coming
and people are already talking,
that I'm begging for bread
and they are cursing me (immediately).

Therefore, the opening constant stanza of the following song places emphasis on observing *pačiv*. A guest, albeit poor and hungry, cannot be given the slightest hint that they might be a burden.²

34.

1.
i Na vaš oda ke tu javłom,
kaj man te chal te des.
jaj de Ča vaš oda ke tu javłom,
kaj man bari pačiv te des.

2.
jaj de Ola Roma lačhe hine,
mro dživipen chale.
jaj de De tu mange o sastipen,
sar tuke, čhaje, jo kamlipen.

3.
jaj de Devla, Devla, so me kerđom,
bo me jajsi čori?
jaj de Mek čoreder *de* javava,
sar man ņiko, Devla, n' avla.

1.
That's not why I came to you,
for you to give me food.
I came to you
just for you to show me respect.

2.
Those Roma are good,
they ruined my life.
Give me health,
and to you, girl, love!

3.
God, God, what have I done,
that I am such a poor soul?
And I'll be even poorer
when I won't have, God, anyone.

The same principles apply to money-lending. Money is lent, if possible, within the circle of the closest family, and those who ask for a loan, do so *počoral*, “secretly”, so that their reputation would not be damaged. Those who are asked for a loan but do not possess enough funds or do not want

2 For example, my friend from Rudňany, who was doing well at the time, was daily visited by his daughter-in-law because she did not have enough to eat. She was a middle-aged disabled woman who was dependent on the benevolence of other inhabitants of the settlement. I met her around noon on the third day, she was angry and in a hurry. When I asked her what had happened, she replied: *Čhindas mange pačiv!* “He offended me!”

to grant the request also act in secrecy. A person who would refuse to lend the requested amount would also be regarded as a miser, as shown in the following hallgató. In the opening stanza, the lyrical subject talks to God as the last resort, a witness of her undeserved misery. She says that she is asking for money because her situation is desperate.

35.

1.	<i>jaj de</i> O Devloro, dikh, som čori!	1.	My God, look (how) poor I am!
	<i>jaj de</i> Korunaha na birinav.		I don't have a penny.
	<i>jaj de</i> Ko phral džava, kečen te lel,		I'll go and borrow from my brother
	<i>de</i> maj jov phenla, hoj les nane.		and he'll say he doesn't have any, straight away.
2.	<i>jaj de</i> Te tut nane, ma phen avri,	2.	If you don't have anything, don't talk about it,
	<i>i</i> te na šunel mri piraňi!		so that my sweetheart doesn't hear!
	<i>jaj de</i> Mri piraňi te šunela,		If my sweetheart learns about it,
	<i>jaj de</i> je bari ladž tutar kerla.		she'll make a big fuss.

Songs of Slovak and Hungarian Roma often feature the migrant verse *Nane man love* "I've no money". For sedentary Roma, this was a normal situation, because they were usually remunerated for their services in kind. The Vlachika Rom, mainly those who made living as horse traders, were richer and invested their fortune in gold and silver jewellery. In this regard, their songs may have a different character similar to the songs of once nomadic Russian and Moldavian Roma. The following csardas became popular thanks to the Soviet film "Gypsies Are Found Near Heaven" (Emil Loteanu 1975). The song spread fast among Roma in former Czechoslovakia. The herein included variety was recorded in eastern Slovakia.

36.

Dado, dado, cin čeňa,	Father, father, buy me earrings,
ole čeňa somnakune!	those golden earrings!
[:U sar tu mange na cineha	[:And if you don't buy them for me,
sa o čhaja rušena:].	all the girls will be angry:].

Love and Affection

Romantic and marital love comes in many different forms. Affection towards the opposite sex, or the manner in which it is expressed, is to a certain extent culturally dependent, and differs across nations, ethnicities, but also individual social classes and layers. The so-called “falling in love”, an affection that comes in the beginning of an amorous relationship whose progress is, in line with its biological purpose, time-limited¹, is only rarely depicted in Roma songs in a sentimental way. Already Michael Stewart noted in relation to the song folklore of the Vlashika Rom: “Very few songs about romantic love existed among Roma, no lamenting about unrequited love” (Stewart 2005: 178). Songs in which the enamoured complains about unrequited love are rather rare in Slovak and Hungarian Roma folklore. Worth noticing is the following excerpt – the constant opening couplet of the hallgató poetically conveys the fatalist belief that the universe is controlled by an invisible mover. The following two lines then give this belief real contours. Noteworthy is the distance of the lyrical subject who assumes the role of an observer, not typical for lyric Roma songs.

37.

ej Šuke prajta na čerkinen,
te balvaj na phurdel.

jaj O baro kamipen, o baro kamipen,
ə kerel jumblavipen.

Dry leaves don't rustle
when the wind's not blowing.²

(For) a great love, (for) a great love,
(many) hang (themselves).

1 Literature mentions approx. two years. See Weiss, Petr. *Ženská a mužská sexuální atraktivita z pohledu sociobiologie*. Available at <http://www.sexualne.cz/dokumenty/atraktivita.pdf>

2 This simile can be found at least in the form of a proverb also in Slovakia and Hungary (*Bez vetra sa ani lístok (na strome) nepohne. Nem zörög a haraszt, ha a szél nem fújja. A leaf doesn't move unless there's wind*).

Romantic “dating”, holding hands and public displays of affection had till recently been unacceptable in Romani culture, even in young couples. In the eyes of the middle-aged and old generation, such behaviour is still absolutely unacceptable, even in the closest family circle. Affection was displayed mainly non-verbally. Words were only slight indications of such an emotion, making use of diminutives or hypocorisms. Roma songs sometimes feature diminutives such as *romoro* “hubby”, *romňori* “wifey”, or the address *babám!* “honey!” that has been loaned from Hungarian. Central Romani uses the expression *piraňi* for “the loved one” (a girlfriend), and *pirano* for “the loved one” (a boyfriend). The Vlashika Rom use similar terms – *phirámni* and *phirámno*. According to their etymology, they are related to the verb “going out”, because *te phirel* means “to go” in Romani.

38.

Andro verdan grundzi nane,	There are no chunks of mud in the cart,
<i>hej</i> man pirano šukar nane.	My dear is not handsome.
[: <i>hej</i> Guľi phabaj prečhina,	[:I’ll cut a sweet apple in half,
jepaš leske, jepaš mange:]	(I’ll give) him a half and take a half:] ³

This terse text may be interpreted as a playful tune with which a woman is teasing her man. She refers to him as to her “loved one” and shares a sweet apple with him – other textual variants speak of *loľi phabaj* “red apple” which more clearly refers to erotic temptation which the apple may symbolise. Numerous semantic connections may arise; in many cultures, an apple is a symbol of fertility, etc.; however, the real meaning of this stanza is simpler: a woman loves a man although he is not handsome, and she sweeps the dirt out of the caravan and shares her apple with him.

Food and feeding plays an important role when expressing affection in the entire animal world. Humans are no exception. Since Romani culture views the display of affection between the sexes as bad manners (unless done in privacy), which makes way for expressions of feelings embodied in simple acts connected with food and drink (see also Chapter 6.4). In the following hallgató, love is symbolised with red wine, but the affectionate relationship between the two is also indicated by their way of communication.

³ This song sung by nomadic Roma became renowned thanks to the Soviet film “Gypsies Are Found Near Heaven” (1975) which made it very popular among the Roma in former Czechoslovakia.

39.

2.

Romňi miri šukar,
de an mange parňi mol.
Aná tuke louři,
de bo tut rado dikhav.

2.

My beautiful wife,
bring me white wine.
I'll bring you red (wine),
because I love you.

The Roma, similarly to the members of many other illiterate societies ⁴, originally used to live in open partnerships. These relationships were entered into voluntarily in front of the family communities, but they were not irrevocable. The turning point came during the reign of Catholic Empress Mary Theresa and her son Joseph II. In the last third of the 18th century, the state and Church started to impose its strict assimilation policy on the Roma population. In line with the Enlightenment ideals of the time, these rulers issued decrees forcing the Roma to get married in church, thus planning to eradicate unwritten law practices regarded by the Church as illegal and immoral. An entirely different approach to the cohabitation of a man and a woman, not affected by the Church dogma, is illustrated by the following csardas. Albeit a hyperbole, the song attests to – as there are many songs of this type – a greater degree of freedom in the relationships between the sexes.

40.

[Bikenava mira romňa vaš e litra mol:]	[I'll sell my wife for a litre of wine:]
Bo me laha na dživava,	Because I won't live with her,
bo me laha na sovava,	Because I won't sleep with her,
<i>oj lari dari daj,</i>	<i>Oi lari dari dai,</i>
na kamel man lakri daj.	Her mother doesn't like me.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the pressure of secular and church power with the gradual bureaucratisation of the state was growing and the Roma more or less, but mostly only externally conformed to the Christian values and norms. With the gradual change of the overall social conditions, much of the features of the former lifestyle was slowly disappearing, however, certain reluctance to official marriages that are only seen

⁴ The term “illiterate society” serves as the opposite to the term complex (modern, civilised, literate) society.

as a certain burden to the traditional Roma concept of the “marriage” persists to this day. As a consequence, many couples decide to get married after having several children and sometimes also at an age when they have grandchildren.

Partnerships between men and women traditionally rest on two main pillars. The first of them is social control within the community, the second is jealousy between the partners. It is irrelevant whether the partners are married or not. Social control takes on primarily the form of rumour and gossip; *te kerel pletki* means “to slander”, or *so o Roma vakeren* “what do Roma say”, as is aptly expressed in the song *Ola kale jakha*:

41.

3.
Mamo miri, mamo,
me les bares kamav,
me pal leste, mamo,
me pal leste džav.

4.
Mek ča dural avel,
o Roma vakeren,
kaj o Bano šukar,
o lubipen kerel.

5.
Kerel o lubipen,
mange bari žala,
me pal leste, mamo,
me pal leste džav.

3.
Mother, my mother,
I love him so,
I will, mother,
I will follow him.

4.
Since he appears in the distance,
People are talking,
Bano is handsome,
He'll get any girl.

5.
He sleeps with many girls
And that hurts me so,
(But) I will still, mother,
I will (still) follow him.

The key corrective of conduct in the partnership between a man and a woman is jealousy. In the case of Roma, it applies that someone who is not jealous is not in love. This relationship model based on the knowledge of the fact that a man is a “frail vessel” and openly counts on the possibility of infidelity or even promiscuous behaviour. Jealously expressed in keeping with socio-cultural norms of the Roma community serves as a stabilisation factor in the relations between men and women. Through jealousy, the partners prove to each other that they care for each other. At the same time, jealous scenes represent a threat of a sanction, or perhaps the actual

imposition of such sanction with the possibility of further escalation.⁵ In the following song, love is compared to a fight because jealousy – the foundation of such type of relationships, makes the partnership of a man and a woman very tumultuous.

42.

1.
Mar me džanav s' oda kamiben
o kamiben baro mariben!
Joj Devla, so me kerava?
Me adarig khere otdžava.

2.
Ačh, čhaje, čhaje, Devleha,
bo me džav tutar dromeha.
Andre meň mange chuťeħa,
sa man avri čumidkereħa.

1.
I know now what love is,
Love is a big struggle!
Oh God, what will I do?
I will leave for home.

2.
Farewell, my girl,
Because I'm leaving you.
You will put your arms around me
And kiss me thoroughly.

⁵ If a man noticed only a hint of flirtation in the woman's behaviour, he would slap her on the spot; and if a man turned his head to look at another woman, his partner could spit in front of him and make a scene. I have witnessed many such situations on various occasions.



Family and Detachment

The extended family formed the foundation of the life in Roma communities and the mutual aid within these social-economical units was encoded in another of its unwritten laws. In times of hunger and starvation, the Roma relied unconditionally on the collaboration and solidarity of all the members of their community. “When I have something, you have something too” *Ela man, ela the tut*, says one Roma proverb (Hübschmannová – Šebková – Žigová 1985: 20). The importance of this social norm is expressed in the following hallgató. At the same time, its drunken tone illustrates how different is the approach of the Roma to money and material possessions from the Czech and Slovak culture that places emphasis on thriftiness, regarding it as a virtue. In Romani culture, ostentatious spending is considered a virtue (the term profligacy in this connection has axiological connotations), and a way of enhancing one’s personal prestige, thus being also an instrument of vertical social mobility. From the anthropological cultural perspective, these two aforementioned contradictory examples represent different types of socio-cultural adaptation.

1.
ej de Pijav mange, pijav
 mire phralorenca,
joj de mire phralorenca,
jaj de lače manušenca.

43.

1.
 I’m drinking, I’m drinking
 with my brothers,
 with my brothers,
 good people.

2.

ej U sar love nane
kečen musaj te del,
jaj de kečen musaj te del
jaj de mire čhavorenge.

2.

And when there's no money,
they have to lend [me],
they have to lend [me],
for my children.

The less they had, the more natural it was for the Roma to share their possessions. Food played a crucial symbolic role in their lives (see also Chapter 6.3), and although it was plain and modest, hospitality was a law. In the second stanza of the following song, a brother invites his sister to visit him on a holiday. Although it is not expressly said, it goes without saying that she is invited to join his table. To invite someone to one's home and fail to offer a cooked meal has to this day been considered unthinkable in Romani culture (see also Chapter 6.2).

44.

1.

Romňi miri, romňi,
tav mange haluški.
Choč len na makheha,
ča len londareha.

1.

My wife, my wife,
cook *halushky*¹ for me!
[:Even if you don't grease them,
only put some salt in.:]

2.

Phenen odej, phenen,
ola mra pheňake,
kaj ke ma te avel,
kurke ke raťate.

2.

Tell, over there, tell
my sister
to come to me
on Sunday evening.

Songs that reflect on family relations most often refer to the figure of the mother. The mother is a sort of a keystone of the family dynamics, being in many respects the most dominant element. In Roma songs, emotions and feelings related to the mother figure are expressed through established phrases such as the first line of the following excerpt:

1 A traditional dish of Carpathian shepherds that has been incorporated into Roma cuisine.

45.

O jilo man dukhal pal e daj,
 džav pal late u na džanav kaj.
 [:Ma maren man,
 hin man phuri daj,
 džav pal late u na džanav kaj:]

My heart is aching after my mother,
 I'll go to her but I don't know where.
 [:Don't hit me,
 I have an old mother,
 I'll go to her but I don't know where:]

The following hallgató is an impressive example of a Slovak Roma song about a mother, employing a minimalist poetic image to depict the feelings that a son has for his mother. Note the cultural details used to achieve the desired emotional effect in the first stanza.

46.

1.
ej Tel oblaka bešel
i mri phuri dajori.
jaj Tel oblaka bešel
 a churde japsa čhorel.
 2.
ej Na somas me khere,
ej na džanav, ko javľas.
joj Avľas mri phuri daj
i pal o churde gava.

1.
 Under the window
 my old mother is sitting,
 under the window she's sitting
 and little tears shedding.
 2.
 I was not at home,
 I don't know who came 'round.
 My old mother came,
 [back from errands] around villages.

These little motifs from the traditional Roma cultural background endow the song with artistic authenticity. Sedentary Roma lived their lives in the open, in front of their shepherd's huts and shacks, using their house only as a shelter from bad weather, and a place to sleep. Old people used to sit outside, with their backs leaning against the wall. "Tiny tears" symbolise suffering and trouble that the mother had to go through when bringing up her children. The second stanza depicts the son's return home to his mother after what might have been a long sentence in prison. The stylistic figure "I don't know who has come, my mother has come" generates tension. The final constant verse sums up the everyday hunt for food because Roma women used to visit the houses of "Gadje" and beg for food (see *Adađives trito đives* at the end of Chapter 3). Food surpluses were provided by housewives mostly as an "in-kind" compen-

sation for metal products forged by their men, or for field or farm work. Such situation persisted until World War II.

The father figure is a less common presence in Roma songs. The motif of the following song is rather unusual in that it depicts the father as the one who is looking after the children.

47.

Avka phares le partoha upre džav,	How hard for me it is to climb the slope,
avka phares pre mre pindre me phirav.	how heavy my legs feel.
joj Te kerav le pindrenca, vastenca,	I will slave away until I fall,
javka me mire čhaven na mukav.	but I won't let my kids [live like this].

Bori, “daughter-in-law”, holds a specific position in the traditional Roma family. A substantial share of housework rests on her shoulders. The Roma used to have families at a very early age. Young people started to live as partners immediately after achieving sexual maturity. At the age of thirteen or fourteen in the case of girls, and at fifteen or sixteen in the case of boys.² As a rule, partnerships between girls and boys used to be arranged by their parents at a very young age. This practice is still recalled by many members of the older and middle-aged generation of Roma.

Bori had the lowest social status in the family. A certain promotion in the social hierarchy came when she gave birth to her first children and when a new *bori* arrived in the family. Daughters-in-law had the hardest jobs in the household, for example, fetching water from the well or a stream. Water was also fetched by single girls, who were at the centre of attention because Roma brides were recruited from their ranks.³ The status of *bori* can be aptly illustrated by the following humorous csardas tune:

2 In some Roma settlements in eastern Slovakia, the situation has remained practically the same until today. Roma with a higher socio-cultural status found their families later, however, still at a much younger age than the majority population.

3 A girl who used to swing her hips was scorned, because she was walking “like a Gadjo girl”. This was considered immoral and ridiculous. (Iveta Červenáková in the film *What Magdalena Said*, Stewart 1994: BBC, London). Special thanks to Mgr. Hana Syslová for further clarification.

48.

Amari sal, amari,
amari terñi bori.
Mek sa feder aveha,
vedros pañi aneħa.

You are ours, ours,
our young daughter-in-law.
[And] you'll be even better,
[if] you bring a bucket of water.

The loss of a close person, detachment from home, exclusion from the community – these were the worst situations that a Roma could have encountered. No wonder that the lyrical themes expressing feelings of loneliness and detachment are primarily present in *bertenošika gila* “prison songs”.

49.

1.
Jekhvar kija raťate,
o phandle durkinen,
pre blaka durkinen,
lanci pro vast thoven.
2.
S'oda za vilagocis,
te man ñiko nane,
ća me jekh korkoro,
pre ada svetos som.

1.
Once in the evening
cops are knocking
on the window knocking,
handcuffs on me putting.
2.
What a world this is,
when I don't have anyone (there)?
Just alone, by myself,
I am in this world.

Feelings of depression and loneliness in a world where “I have no-one” is also the theme of those ancient hallgatós whose motifs are not related to prison. What is important is to express these feelings, regardless of the contradictory statements found, for instance, in the following song, as they are a natural consequence of improvisation.

17.

1.
Soske khere džava,
te man ňiko nane?
[:E daj mange mułas,
o dad romňa ilas.:]
2.
Khere džav, khere džav,
khere man užaren.
Khere man užaren,
oja mri dajori.
3.
Man dajori nane,
ča me som, korkori.
[:Ča me som, korkori,
sar čhindo kaštoro.:]
4.
Dado miro, dado,
bo man ňiko nane.
E daj mange mułas,
o dad romňa ilas.
E daj mange mułas,
ačhilom korkori.
5.
Ačhilom korkori,
bo man ňiko nane.
[:Te merel mušinav
la bara žalatar.:]

1.
Why would I go home
if I don't have anyone?
[:My mother died,
my father got married.:]
2.
I'm coming home, I'm coming home,
they are waiting for me there.
My dear mother
is waiting for me.
3.
I don't have a mother,
I'm all alone.
[:I'm all alone,
like a chopped-down tree.:]
4.
Father, my father,
I don't have anyone!
My mother died,
my father got married.
My mother died,
I was left on my own.
5.
I was left on my own,
I don't have anyone.
I must die
of great sorrow.:]

In terms of its composition, this hallgató consists exclusively of migrant couplets and stanzas that have been polished over generations of verbal tradition. The simile used in the third stanza ...*me som, korkori, sar čhindo kaštoro* “I am all alone, like a little fallen tree” is generally one of the most stable constant song couplets and is only featured in traditional protracted songs sung by Slovak Roma as well as Hungarian and Vlashika Rom communities (see two more song excerpts featuring this metaphor in Chapter 4).

Dying and Death

Roma song lyrics feature the motif of death, the fear of dying and the grief of parting in many different forms. This, however, cannot be simply attributed to a fondness of morbid poetics that merely tries to fill the emotional void by means of panoptical commercialism. Death in Roma songs does not take on the form of skeletons and nothingness, on the contrary, it evokes the experience of death in its complexity. It evokes immeasurable grief related to the loss of a beloved person, the end of one's own existence, or the loss of those whom we are leaving.

50.

1.
ej Dalke, dalke mri dajouri,
thou man pr'oda hačos,
pr'oda hačos mučikano,
mi saštuvav ávri.
2.
Sem mar na birinav,
o jilo man dukhal,
bo mar mange mro dživipen,
ča auke tele džala.

1.
Can't you see, I am helpless
My heart aches
Because there is not much left
of my life
2.
Mummy, mummy, dear mummy
Put me on this bed
Put me on this deathbed
So I may recover again

In functional and all other terms, songs about death and dying do not represent a separate genre category (see Chapter 3); however, they form an important thematic area within the category of *čorikane gíla*. One of the oldest protracted lamenting songs of Slovak Roma provenance is *Oda kalo čirkloro* "That Black Bird", a hallgató that can be found in several textual and mel-

ody variants, one of which, perhaps the original one, features the motif of death embodied by a black bird. In a premonition of her own death, a mother laments her fate:

51.

1.
ej Oda kalo čirikloro,
mangel mandar mro jiloro.
Mangel mandar, *joj* sig te merav,
ča le čhaven te na dikhav.

1.
The little black bird,
is asking for my heart,
asking me soon to die,
so I don't have to look at my children.

In another variant, the opening line has been modified to achieve an onomatopoeic effect, with the lyrical motif also having been changed – the bird no longer asks for a heart, but is carrying (or is supposed to deliver) a letter to a loved one (a mother-in-law in other variants). This variant is probably younger and has a motivic version in one Hungarian folk song (see Chapter 2). The motif of a bird carrying a letter frequently appears in songs of the *bertenošika gila* “prison songs” sub-genre.

1.

Čirikloro, mirikloro,
lidža mange mro liloro!
hej Lidža, lidža, kaj me phenav,
mra romňake andre žeba.

Birdie, bead,
Take my note for me!
Take it, to where I'll tell you:
Into my wife's pocket.

Oda kalo čirikloro was analysed in its numerous variations by Dušan Holý and Ctibor Nečas. Having focused on its origin they arrived at the conclusion that the textual variant “with a letter” forms the basis of the stanza cycle *Aušvicate hi kher báro*, “There's a Big House in Auschwitz”, in a lament stemming from the horrifying experience of Roma inmates of the extermination concentration camp Auschwitz II – Brzezinka (Holý – Nečas 1993: 106–118).

Going back to the constant stanza of an old variant of *Oda kalo čirikloro*. The employed motif clearly indicates that it represents a part of the most archaic layer of Roma songs – the symbol of a black bird as the herald of death is an ancient one. As Józef M. Bocheński puts it:

“...as early as in the 25th century BC, i.e. 4,500 years ago, ancient Egypt-

tians believed that after a person's death, the human *soul* (called 'Bá') walks around the grave of the deceased in the form of a bird with a human head (Bocheński 1993: 31–32)."

In this song, a black bird acts as the messenger of death. The belief that it is the herald of death or a messenger of the netherworld, a *mulo*, "the spirit of the deceased", who comes to fetch the dying one, used to be widespread among the Roma (cf. Andrš 2011b: 9–10).

Before citing the third variant of hallgató *Oda kalo čirikloro*, I will mention the semantic structure of the lyrics and figurative expressions associated with this type of songs. Lyrics about death employed various methods to achieve their emotional effect, including expressive exclamations *daje! dajke! dale! dalke! mamó!* etc., used to address the singer's mother, or invocations *Devla! devlale!* directed to God, or gods. The songs feature established phrases such as – *imar na birinav* "my strength is leaving me", *našti likerav avri* "I can't stand it", *merav, bo mušinav* "I'm dying because I have to", etc. These collocations that take the form of migrant verses, or couplets, are framed and interspersed with interjections *jaj* "ah", *joj* "oh" – a verbalised form of sighs and exclamations. Exclamatory formulas in songs represent the lamentation of the bereaved, but also the cries and moans of the dying.¹

52.

Oda kalo čiri(kloro piskinel)²,
mro pirano andro hađos stukinel.
i Dža ča, phrala, dž a ča, phrala, te dikhel,
i mro pirano *joj* te merel mušinel.

The black bird is whistling,
my dearest is groaning in bed.
Go, brother, go and look at him!
My dearest must die.

Death is very often the focus of songs of the *žalosna (čorikane) gila* genre – encompassing the motifs of disease and dying as well as a sudden and unexpected death. However, this topic has not been the exclusive domain of traditional lamenting songs. Lyrics that mention diseases, dying and death are also found in the *neve gila* category – the new layer of Roma folklore. For instance, the poetics of *ploužakos* (slow songs) *Mamo miri, so tut dukhal*,

1 I found this out inadvertently when I was called to the bedside of one young woman in a Roma settlement in Dreveník thirty years ago to bid my last farewell.

2 The text in the brackets has been completed based on the first line of the second stanza.

phen mange “Oh mom, what’s hurting you, tell me” like other Roma songs that are based on a melody adopted from modern popular music, draw directly on the hallgató tradition.

53.

Mamo miri, so tut dukhal, phen mange!

i Nasvaľi sal, na dŕanav, so tute.

O Roma phenen, ŕe tu bari nasvaľi.

Te mukel me na kamav le čhaven.

[:Doktorale, phenen mange,

či mri dajori, či dŕivela!:]

My mother, what’s hurting you? Tell me!

You are ill, I don’t know what’s the matter.

Roma say that you’re very ill.

I don’t want to leave the children.

[:Doctors, tell me

If my dear mother, if she’s going to live!:]

Songs about sickness and disease tell us much about the relations between the Roma and doctors. In the aforementioned modern song, the lyrical subject turns to doctors in the hope to hear positive news. There is a clear shift in the perception of medical professionals, because in old traditional songs, such as the following hallgató, doctors are portrayed as the “messengers of death” rather than those who could actually bring hope.

54.

1.

Imar avel o motoris,

joj andre o ŕtatno doktoris.

E Pepaňa reŕla e bari inekcija,

o Pepe zakoŕla la Pano Maria.

2.

E Pepaňa muľa.

ej Ko pal late rovla?

Le tu, Pepe, kalo khosno,

thov lake pro mochto.

1.

The car is already coming

inside a doctor [is sitting].

[When] Pepaňa got a big jab,

Pepe cursed the Virgin Mary.

2.

Pepaňa died.

Who will cry for her?

Pepe, take a black scarf

and put it on her coffin.

The Roma were absolutely scared of doctors and hospitals as in their eyes, it was a short journey from the hospital to the graveyard. As aptly expressed by the composition point employed in the following hallgató that from one stanza to another jumps from the hospital directly to the grave:

55.

1.
ej Andr'odi špitaľa
de štar vilaňa labon,
 [:*de* Čak odoj na labol, *joj*
de kaj miro dad pašľol.:]
 2.
ej de Pašľuv, dade, pašľuv,
de andr'odi kaľi phuv.
 [:Khatar tiro šero *joj*
že mulaňi čar barol.:]

1.
 In the hospital
 four lights are alight.
 [:There is no light
 where my dad is lying.:]
 2.
 Lie, daddy, lie,
 in the black soil!
 [:Dead man's grass
 is growing from your head.:]

The Roma sought medical help only in the most dramatic cases. They mostly died at home, as also documented by some of their songs. Doctors come into contact with blood, being in this respect considered unclean based on a taboo perpetuated in nomadic Roma communities relating to ritual uncleanness. Roma who happened to be taken to the hospital, suffered greatly from being separated from their families, feeling not only lonely but also helpless (see Chapter 6.4). They always tried to leave the unfamiliar “Gadjó” environment, in some cases by means of escape. The Roma did not trust the doctors, they were scared of them, and this basic fear has, to a certain extent, persisted to this day. On several occasions, I have witnessed misunderstandings between the Roma and doctors, who had often treated the Roma as second class citizens. In communist Slovakia, there used to be a common practice that the doctors, although medical services were free of charge – asked the Roma for bribes.³ Such situations are described in several songs:

³ When I worked in the Eastern Slovakian Ironworks, certain doctors were known to be willing to issue a sick note for a certain amount of money even to healthy people.

56.

1.

Mamo, nasvalo som,
le doktoris bare love den.
Mamo, nasvalo som,
terno som, te merel na kamav.

2.

Phenen odoj mira romňake,
kaj pro čhave oj te dodikhel.
Mamo, nasvalo som,
terno som, te merel na kamav.

1.

My mother, I am in poor health,
give doctor enough money.
My mother, I am sick,
I am young, I do not want to die.

2.

Tell her, please, tell my wife
to keep an eye on our children.
My mother, I am sick,
I am young, I do not want to die.

The fact that the motif of death often appears in slow songs intended for listening – both old and newer compositions – is not surprising. However, cheerful dance songs, such as csardases, would hardly address such topics. And yet, sad hallgató lyrics are sometimes accompanied with fast csardas melodies. To quote the words of folklorist Jiří Horák, this phenomenon common in folk songs is caused by the fact that: “...dance song lyrics only play a secondary role with the main focus being on the music and dance moves” (Horák 1946: 67).

One example is a song whose lyrics may in relation with the joyful csardas rhythm be considered an expression of black humour:

57.

[:Trin kolki, štar huri:]
La babake vigišagos,
le papuske o šarlagos,
labar, čhaje, momel'i!

[:Three pegs, four strings:]
Grandma is a goner
Grandpa's got scarlet fever
So light the candle, girl!

Colour Symbolism

Colour differentiation, denotation and perception based on the native classification may vary significantly across different languages. Languages with the least number of individual colours make do with the dark (black) and the light (white) colour. To this dual categorisation, red colour is usually added. Black, white and red represent the basic colour scheme in all world cultures.¹ The Romani language is an illustrative example of this fact since the three aforementioned colours, or the terms denoting black *kalo*, white *parno* and red *lolo*² pertain to the oldest layer of its word stock being of an Indian origin. Black, white and red are not only lexemes of Indian origin, the oldest in the Romani colour terminology, but also key terms in their cultural symbolism. The binary opposition of *kalo x parno (goro)* not only defines the symbolic line dividing the Roma and non-Roma and their cultures. This opposition reflects itself in Romani oral tradition in many forms and it can also be exemplified in songs:

58.

[:Akana šun, so me phenava!:] <i>je je je je</i>	[:Now listen to what I'll tell you!:]
[:Hoj o Roma kale,	[:that Roma are black,
o phandle parne,	and cops are white!
akana šun, so me phenava!:] <i>je je je je</i>	Now listen to what I'll tell you!:]

These terse lines may at the first reading appear as a trite statement of the fact that there are no Roma represented in the police ranks. However, the

1 Many authors have produced definitions of the colour terminology as well as various models of native categorisations of the colour spectrum: most notably Paul Kay, Brent Berlin, Barbara Saunders and Stephen Levinson, who have produced various hypotheses regarding the development of the colour terminology.

2 Colour adjectives in Romani are provided in the singular masculine form.

lyrics expresses something different – frustration and helplessness experienced by the Roma vis-a-vis “white” repressive power.

Black and white colours are internally contradictory in the Romani culture. Their ambivalence consists in the fact that the black colour that in all cultures is associated with the dark sides of existence, is also a significant attribute of the Roma ethnic identity. This contradiction of the two conflicting concepts of black can be illustrated by the following song:

59.

Kali me som, kali,
e Kali man vičinen.
[:*jaj* Ale mri phuri daj,
e vaš e parňi na del:]

I’m black, I’m black,
they call me Kali.
[:But my old mother
wouldn’t change (me) for a white one:].

Kali “black” (feminine) and *Kalo* “black” (masculine) are two most common nicknames in Slovak Roma. Dark skin is a stigma even within the Roma community. Families have always tried to find fair skinned brides for their sons. This, however, does not imply that the Roma with darker complexions would be ostracised by their community.

Also, the following song sung in Roma communities in Bohemia opens with the migrant line “Black, I’m Black” as recorded by Josef Ješina in the second half of the 19th century (1882: 146–147). Yet, its mission seems to be entirely different:

60.

1.
Me káli som, káli som,
sakoneske kamli som.
Hár gadženge, romenge,
čechikáne čhávenge.
2.
Lubňárde, lubňárde,
ma phíren pal mande!
Chudava mro tovér,
čhingérava tumen!

1.
I’m black, I’m black,
I’m dear to everyone.
To gadzhe, to Roma,
(even) to Czech boys.
2.
Womanizers, womanizers,
don’t come to me!:]
I’ll take my axe,
I’ll chop you to pieces!³

3 Transcription in Romani and Czech translation edited by Zbyněk Andrš.

In this song, the girl's dark complexion is presented as a plus. Sexual attraction is often the cause of violation of various social taboos. Including those that prevent contact between members of groups of a different anthropological type and culture. A closer analysis of the symbolic line dividing ethnic groups reveals, as also exemplified by the aforementioned song, that these boundaries are sometimes happily crossed.

Colour categories may vary in different languages in terms of their spectral range. In the case of Romani, *kalo*, as an original term, encompasses a wide range of dark shades, including navy blue and ink black. The eastern Slovak variety uses the term *kalipen* to denote a "bruise", containing "darkness" in its stem. The verb *te (s)kaľarel*, lit. "to cause something to turn black", in a particular context means "to bruise someone".

61.

Le, more, e brača,
čhivker tu čardaša!
E brača smerečiko,
kaj tut te skaľarel
pre tire duj jakha!

Take, my boy, a viola
and start playing czardas!
The viola, made of spruce wood,
and may you get
black eyes (if you won't play)!

The original colour category *kalo* is obviously coming close to the blue range which is also evidenced by the fact that the adopted terms denoting blue only stand for its light shades in the eastern Slovak variety of Central Romani. Light blue colour is expressed in Romani by the term *belavo* adapted from Slovak (however, *belavá* in Slovak stands for "light grey" or "turning to white"), and also *buro* for blue-grey, for example, *bure jakha* "blue-grey eyes" (in Slovak dialect *burý*, *buravý* in the sense of grey).

Kalo can also be used metaphorically and based on the context to express qualities – "bitter", "painful", "cruel" or feelings – "sad", "desperate". In the following song, a girl wants to reveal a painful truth to her boyfriend, comparing it to a bitter pill (Černík [1921]: 9).

62.

Phenav tuke, phenav,
mro kálo lavoro,
har oda gadžora
kana del draboro.⁴

I'll tell you, I'll tell you,
my bitter word,
like those gadzhe women,
when they're giving out medicine.

The following is an example of a song, in which the term *kalo* serves as a metaphor for despair or sadness:

63.

de Rovel andre mande
jaj de miro kalo jilo.
[:*jaj de* Sem mar na birinav,
de javri te likerel.:]

Crying in me, crying,
is my sad heart,
[:I don't have any strength left,
[to] endure it all.:]

Dark (black) has its opposite in light (white) colour – the colour of day, a symbol of chastity. Fair complexion and hair, especially in children and women, is considered to be beautiful and attractive in Romani culture. This can be illustrated e.g. on the example of a traditional hallgató from the repertoire of Věra Bílá (surname “Bílá” means “white” in Czech) from Rokycany who has paradoxically earned the nickname *Kali*⁵. The song has been adopted from a songbook by Jelínková and Hübschmannová ([197?]: No. 17).

9.

1.
Džalas mange suno
trine papiñenca,
oda na papiña,
oda mire čhave.

2.
I had a dream
about three geese.
Those weren't geese,
they were my children!

This hallgató is remarkable in that its first stanza contains an antithesis – a figurative means the effect of which consists in contrasting two contradic-

4 Romani transcription edited by ZA. A variation on the first two lines – *Phenav tuke mro kálo lavoro* can also be found in a song collection compiled by J. Sobota (1954: 47). However, his translation of “I’m bringing a black word” is rather misleading.

5 The nickname “Black” is not meant to be offensive. In fact, Věra Bílá’s band adopted the name Kale “Black”, deriving from the term *Kali*.

tory statements. This positional figure is used rarely in Romani songs. Terms referring to shades (or shine) of white and yellow colour: *goro* “pale” or “fair”, *rupuno* “silver” and *somnakuno* “golden”. The adjective meaning of *goro* in present-day Slovak Roma has apparently been forgotten⁶. As nouns, *goro* (masculine) and *gori* (feminine) stand for “non-Roma”, i.e. “a person with a fair complexion”. This is also the case of various forms of this word in many modern Indian languages. The terminological difference between *Goro* and the more often used *Gadjo* also referring to a non-Roma consists in its social connotation. *Goro* is a municipal citizen whose profession is not related to farming; *Gadjo* is a villager, or a countryman/woman, a peasant, a settled farmer.⁷

Shiny white and yellow (like in other languages) is denoted by terms deriving from precious metals – silver and gold. The Romani language uses the term *rupuno* for silver, and *somnakuno* for gold. The latter of these expressions is used in a metaphorical sense in many languages as a superlative. For example in collocations such as *mro somnakuno Devloro* “my dearest God”, lit. “my golden God”. Such an epithet ornaments does not have to be in line with the overall message of the song.

64.

1.
O somnakuno Del
jaj le čoren o(t)tradel.
jaj Le čoren o(t)tradel,
le barvalen kamel.

1.
The golden God
is chasing the poor people away.
Chasing the poor people away,
and loving the rich ones.

The third colour that has played a crucial role in Romani culture is red. In many cultures, not only in the Romani context, red connotes health,

6 In the Roma folklore, the adjective meaning of “pale, fair” has been preserved for instance in the riddle *Daj romaňi, raklo goro*, lit. “Matka romská, světlý syn.” (Roma mother, fair son – the night, and the moon). The authors of Roma-Czech and Czech-Roma concise dictionary, which includes this riddle (Hübschmannová – Šebková – Žigová 1991: 116), translate *raklo goro* inaccurately as “white son”. However, this meaning in the sense of differentiating the anthropological type is already conveyed in the term *raklo*. The attribute of *goro* is not a pleonasm but an opposite of the adjective *romaňi* which metaphorically expresses the “darkness” of the night. The riddle should more accurately translate as: “A dark mother, a fair son”.

7 Svetislav Kostić in his study “O dvou indických pojmenováních jiných etnik” (On Two Indian Denotations of Other Ethnicities, 1998: 23–27) focuses further on the etymology of the anthroponyms *gadžo* and *goro*.

sexuality, fertility and vitality in general. In this relation, one noteworthy tradition was the tying of a string, mostly red, around the wrist of a newborn – an ancient custom to protect babies.⁸ This used to be a widespread custom currently known and even used by the Roma.

Like the binary opposition of white and black, red can also be contrasted with black. If *lolo* (red) serves as a magical symbol of health and life, *kalo* (black) is a magical symbol of illness and death. Peter Stojka says⁹: “...kana varekon nasváloj o Ďáso či phiravel, kado žal vi p’ej Šáve taj vi p’ej šeja.” – “...when someone falls ill, they don’t wear black. The same applies to the sons and daughters of a deceased.” (Stojka – Pivoň 2003: 121).

Red colour used to be very popular among the Roma. Red garments – women’s or girls’ skirts or men’s shirts had an erotic function.

65.

[:O Deni(s), Deni(s), Deni(s), Deni(s):]	[:Denisa, Denisa, Denisa, Denisa:]
cinav tuke lolo viganos.	I’ll buy you a red dress.
O viganos le fodrenca,	(Long) dress with frills,
kaj te phires le muršenca.	So you can go out with men.
Deni(s), Deni(s), me tut na kamav.	Denisa, Denisa, I don’t want you.

In this dance song, a boy is teasing a girl, joking with her to conceal his desire. In the following excerpt from an ancient csardas, the act of erotic magic is unscrupulously underscored, only the roles have swapped – a woman promises to buy a red shirt for her man.

66.

Andro paňi lampašis, lampašis,	A lantern (is reflecting) in the water,
mro pirano beřaris, beřaris.	my lover is a rascal.
[:Cinav leske lolo gad, lolo gad,	[:I’ll buy him a red shirt,
ej kaj te phirel sako rat, sako rat.:]	so that he would come (to me) every night.:]

⁸ The so-called *indralori*, *loli dori*, etc.

⁹ “Amáro Trajo” is a remarkable publication by two “native ethnologists”, a product of the fruitful collaboration of two Romani authors coming from two different sub-ethnic backgrounds, The aforementioned Peter Stojka and Rastislav Pivoň.

Historicity of Roma Songs

Are there such Roma songs that help our collective memory retain accounts of remarkable historical events? This question does not have one clear answer – for the following two reasons: First – unlike lyric songs, epic songs that can capture “historical” events in their causal, temporal and spatial context – their historical authenticity being their foremost composition principle (Vlašín 1984: 94) – can, but do not have to, be represented in the oral folklore of a certain Roma group. Hence, we cannot focus on the historical authenticity or inauthenticity of Roma songs without first specifying the particular sub-ethnic group. For example, purely epic compositions are absent in Slovak Roma folklore and lyric-epic songs that have their epic elements suppressed at the expense of subjective and reflexive elements are found in rare cases. A different situation occurs in Vlashika Rom, whose song repertoire includes songs featuring a chronological composition that serve a story-telling function; however, purely epic songs are not present in their folklore either (see also Chapter 6).

The second reason why the question of whether a Roma song is historically authentic, or not, is not easy to answer is the actual concept of historicity that until relatively recently had dominated the Czech and Slovak expert discourse. Written sources were primarily considered historical documents, fixing the historical events in the form in which they had been recorded. The qualitative method of research in oral history was still in its infancy. In contrast, the Roma concept of the past draws on oral tradition which in the case of songs relies on style-forming standards of epic¹, or lyric-epic poetry.

1 Nevertheless, Roma groups that are the focus of this publication do not have any purely epic songs in their folklore. Epic songs are a characteristic artefact of the culture of the Kalderash.

Traditional Roma culture does not incorporate any account of “great history” because different measures are applied regarding the flow of time and the importance of events in pre-literate and literate societies.

However, many Roma songs depict local events, scenes from the history of everyday life that are currently the subject of serious research. Moreover, their lyrics do not always have to deal with murders or other mishaps as vividly described, for example, in Czech broadside ballads. Instead, they may perhaps only contain a simple comment about a person who was in some way remarkable, or eccentric. In the 1960s, the numerous Cína family moved to Prague from Stropkov in eastern Slovakia. When I met them in the 1980s, they lived in Letná where I also recorded the csardas about a man called Gašparik. He was most probably a local jack-of-all-trades, a “Gadjo” handyman whom the Roma used to make fun of. Although he lived and worked profoundly, “not a single mention of him can be found in history”.

67.

1.	1.
O Gašparik ajso fajno,	That Gasparik is kind of posh,
phenen Roma, že jov tajno.	Roma say that he is an undercover (policeman).
Bodaj lenge guta!	May he suffer a stroke!
Me pokindom šel pokuta.	I paid a hundred crowns fine.
2.	2.
O Gašparik nič na kerel,	That Gasparik does nothing,
ča orici prikerkerel.	he’s just always repairing watches.
Bodaj lenge guta!	May he suffer a stroke!
Me pokindom šel pokuta.	I paid a hundred crowns fine.

Note that although the lyrical subject curses Gašparik (in jest) because he failed to pay a fine “because of him” – in the curse itself, Gašparik is referred to as “them”, using the polite expression *lenge* “them” that is used to refer to respected or older persons. The opposite applies in relation to Roma, in eastern Slovak villages, “Gadjo” call the Roma by their first names regardless of their age.

Song *O Gašparik ajso fajno* is an example of how several authentic facts create a static image – a sort of a historical snapshot. The following song has a simple plot, which, however, unfolds as if behind a frosted glass, lacking the sharpness of historical facts.

68.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. | 1. |
| <i>hej de</i> Has man romňi, sako džanel, | I had a wife, everybody knows (it), |
| <i>hej de</i> o phral laha svetos geľas, | My brother went with her into the world. |
| <i>hej de</i> geľas, geľas, <i>hej</i> ňiĉ na phendás, | He left, he left, didn't even say a word, |
| peskra romňa jov murdardás. | He killed the wife (in the end). |
| 2. | 2. |
| Aĉhle leske <i>de</i> ĉhavore, | He was left with children |
| <i>jaj de</i> mirencia <i>jaj</i> ĉorenca. | And with my poor children too. |
| <i>jaj</i> So, devlale, so te kerel, | What, gods, what to do? |
| ĉi pes, ĉoro, te murdarel? | Should the poor man kill himself? |

This song was most presumably based on a real event² whose originally sharp contours have been blurred by the passage of time. We can see that in lyric-epic songs, the particular authentic event has to be recast using an emotional mould that would appeal to everyone and that could be shared by everyone.

A real historical event that can be pinpointed and confronted with written records is captured in hallgató *Chude, ĉhaje, e leketa*³ found in my song collection. Its first stanza reflects on an event that made headlines in 1929 not only in Czechoslovakia, but also internationally. The eastern Slovak town of Košice witnessed a trial with a 19-member criminal gang of Šándor Filke from Moldava nad Bodvou, who was so hungry for the publicity that the case had attracted that – as stated by E. Horváthová: “To spark the interest of the public even more, he forced his companions, some of which were not mentally sane, to testify that they had eaten the gang’s murdered victims” (Horváthová 1964: 166).

2 The song’s late interpreter and perhaps also author could have told us more about its origin. Geľza, nicknamed Banoš, produced his own arrangements and adaptations using existing melodies and lyrics. This maverick was an utterly creative music author, whose whole life revolved around music and women.

3 The following passage dedicated to this song draws on my article published in Romano Džaniben (Andrš 2002c: 30–35).

69.

1.

de Chude, čhaje, e leketa!*joj de* Čhivav tuke kokalica!*joj de* Kokalica manušane,*i de* trin šel cakli khatar mande.

2.

ej de Mamo miri, mamo miri,*jaj, de* sar man dukhal miro šero.*jaj de* Ko les mange sastsarela?*de* Sastsarla les mri phuri daj.

1.

Girl, grab an apron,

I'll pour in some bones,

some human bones,

there are three hundred bottles around me.

2.

My mother, my mother,

oh, how my head is aching.

Who will heal it for me?

My old mother will heal me.

The song was recorded in 1982 in Nelahozeves in a family that had come to Bohemia from Šariš, one of the historical regions of Slovakia. Singer Marta Peštová, who was about thirty years of age, spontaneously recalled the song. However, she could not tell what event is referred to in its lyrics. When asked again about the song in 2000, she could no longer remember it.

The fact that the lyrics actually refer to the case of “Moldavian cannibals” is documented by its half a century older transcription by Czech physical anthropologist and ethnologist František Štampach. He recorded the song in a Roma settlement in Smižany in Slovakia only a couple of months after the murder for which Filko and his companions were tried.

70.

1.

Chude, čhaje, e leketa,

čhivav tuke kokalica!

hej Kokalica manušale,

kaj o Roma o mas chale.

2.

Dža pal o olovrantos!

Beštom mange trin beršora,

perdal tute *de* lubňije.

3.

Chude, phrala, oda lancos,

čhiv les pal ma tele!

Devla, Devla, so me kerdžom!

1.

Girl, grab an apron,

I'll pour in some bones!

hey Some human bones,

Roma ate the meat.

2.

Go have a snack!

I served my three years,

because of you, you bitch!

3.

Grab, brother, the chain,

get it off me!

Oh God, God, what have I done!

Štampach describes the situation during which this song was written: “A very interesting song in terms of its origin, melody and lyrics, was sung by young bandits (...) I here present the words and the tune faithfully recorded from the mouth of a young Gypsy (...) His name is Mikša Šimonič, (...) an illiterate Gypsy of about twenty years of age from Levoča, whom I’ve invited to bandmaster Pech because I’d found out that he had learned a new song”. (Štampach 1930: 344). Another variant⁴ of this song was recorded in Malý Slavkov in the Spiš region in 1989 from Květoslava Pompová. Its first stanza is almost identical with the first stanza cited by M. Peštová, with the only difference in the last verse. However, the original motif of cannibalism has been obscured. Six centuries elapsed between Štampach’s variant in which the key line “and Roma ate the meat” and the line variant “those eaten by dogs”.

71.

1.
ej de Čhiv ča, čhaje, e leketa,
de čhivav tuke kokalica!
e jaj de Kokalica manušale,
de so len chale o rukone.

1.
 Girl, throw an apron over here,
 I’ll pour in some bones!
 Some human bones,
 gnawed by the dogs.

When composing new songs, their anonymous authors drew inspiration not only from existing melodies, but also from existing lyrics. In the case of *Chude, čhaje, e leketa* I managed to find a variant in the folklore collection of Polish physician and physical anthropologist Izydor Kopernicki (1930: 256). Kopernicki recorded the following song at the turn of the 19th and 20th century in Polish Spiš, in a region neighbouring on Slovak Spiš, from which Štampach’s variant and also my second variant originated (K. Pompová).

72.

Učiar, čiaije, leketova,
 čivà´ t´ke pendechora.
 Pendechora, sadragora,
 sar uła duj mamuchora.

Girl, open your apron,
 I’ll pour in some nuts.
 Nuts like grapes,
 like the two little people.

⁴ The poem is an amalgamation of three stanzas – with the second and third stanza thematically unrelated with the first one; therefore, I only include the first stanza. For the full version of the song, see the Appendix.

This song, the conclusion of which is somewhat mysterious, was certainly the inspiration source for the version recorded by Štampach, whose variants I also recorded. It was only “updated” – in the aftermath of the Moldavian case and the subsequent show trial.

Historical authenticity of Roma songs was also the focus of research of prominent expert on Roma folklore, poet and translator Jerzy Ficowski. Drawing on his song collection and the collection of folklore texts by Izydor Kopernicki (1925, 1930), Ficowski states:

“Gypsy folk songs are ahistorical; they speak about things that will always be relevant, eternal things such as love, death, poverty, travelling, etc. – yet not preserving the dates, place names or specific events”(Ficowski 1986: 240).

However, this assertion applies to lyrics of songs played by bands Polska Roma and Bergitka Roma, from which Ficowski collected most of the lyrics as well as to song folklore of Slovak and Hungarian Roma. However, it may not be automatically extended to songs of other Roma groups. After all, in reference to Kalderash songs, Ficowski himself says that their long epic ballads had apparently originated under the influence of Romanian folk epic (Ficowski 1986: 238). Romanian influences, not only in the song folklore, could also be found in our Vlashika Rom communities whose songs recount “events that had happened in the past”.

World War II

“Most of the Gypsy kids who I used to share my school desk with contracted tuberculosis. All without exception disappeared from my life during the war. Today, whole libraries could be filled with authentic testimonies about Nazi torture rooms and genocidal crimes in concentration camps. Gypsies too were facing extermination, however, only remarkably few written records document their sufferings during the war. There were no rich people or intelligentsia among the Gypsies, and no-one returned to talk or write about the Calvary of the Gypsy folk. Some songs might mention these events, but I am not familiar with this aspect of the Gypsy folklore” (Vojtech Mihálik 1980: 89).

Years and decades after the war, the Roma were still reminiscent of the conditions they were facing after the establishment of the Slovak Republic, an ally of Nazi Germany, until the liberation of Slovakia by the Red Army.¹ Tribulations that the Roma had to go through in work camps along with their fear of the Germans, humiliation and hardship they were exposed to from some of their fellow citizens, especially members of the so-called Guard², remained deeply engraved in their collective memory. It is therefore not surprising that these sufferings during WWII also found their way into folk songs.

In 1987, I was invited to join a celebration held by the Bombutos in the

1 In 1980, a group of young Roma from Romani settlement Lomnička worked in the Eastern Slovakian Ironworks. They told me that their houses had been pulled down and they had been forced to leave the villages. And how they built their huts on the edge of the woods and survived the winter there with their children and old people. This was the testimony of their grandads and grandmas.

2 Members of the Guard belonged to Hlinka Guard, a paramilitary organisation operated by the clerical-fascist state.

Dreveník settlement in eastern Slovakia. I asked them to play and sing some ancient folk song – *čirlatuňi gili*. One of the sons of the head of the family, an older man called Kalo Muj,³ took a guitar in his hand and sang with his wife the following old hallgató:

73.

1.
ej de Denaš, phrala, denaš,
de bo o Němci javen.

joj de Bo o Němci javen,
e de šaj amen murdaren.

2.
ej de Šaj amen murdaren,
nane amen ňiko,

joj de nane amen ňiko,
ej ča amen dujdzene.

3.
ej de Romale, čhavale,
ej de den man koter maro!
joj de Den man koter maro,
ej de bo me som bokhalo!

4.
ej de Denaš, phrala, denaš,
ej de o baraka labon!
joj de O baraka labon,
ej de o bachara javen.

5.
ej de O bachara javen
de mre vasta te phandel,
joj de mre vasta te phandel,
ej de vaš tuke, lubňije!

1.
Run, brother, run!
Germans are coming!
Germans are coming,
they can kill us.

2.
They can kill us,
we don't have anyone,
we don't have anyone,
there's just the two of us.

3.
Roma, folks,
give me some bread!
Give me some bread,
I'm hungry!

4.
Run brother, run,
the barracks are on fire!
The barracks are on fire,
the guards are coming.

5.
The guards are coming,
to tie my hands,
to tie my hands,
because of you, bitch!

3 "Dark Face" – his nickname by which he was known in the settlement. Nicknames in Roma settlements serve the main identification role.

6.
ej de Pre deska man phandle,
i de avka man domarde,
joj de avka man domarde,
ej de vaš tuke, lubňije!

6.
They tied me to a bench,
And beat me brutally,
They beat me brutally
Because of you, bitch!

This lyric-epic song is a reflection on WWII events as experienced by the generation of the singers' grandparents. At the time of the recording, old Bombutos and his wife, the parents of Kalo Muje, were still alive. Therefore, it is not that remarkable that this hallgató had remained in the memory of the Bombutos family for almost fifty years after the end of the war.

In terms of the composition, the song consists of two parts. The first one (stanza 1–3) has the form of a dialogic monologue, in which the lyrical subject, calling at his brother, describes an escape from a Roma settlement which has been invaded by the Germans.

A motivic variant of the first stanza of *Denaš*, *phrala*, *denaš*, depicting a sudden flight of the Roma from their settlement after the arrival of German soldiers, was recorded by Jelínková and Hübschmannová ([197–]: No. 5).

74.

3.
Denašen čhavale,
tele la jarkaha,
te na tumen chuden,
o ňemcika phandle.

3.
Run, boys,
down to the stream,
so that German policemen
won't catch you.

The second part of the song (stanza 4–6) again focuses on an escape, or attempted escape, this time from a work camp in flames. However, this attempt had failed and was followed by a punishment common in work camps. The transgressors were tied to a flogging bench⁴ and ruthlessly beaten.

Songs reflecting on war events fall within a specific thematic area that does not have any fixed native term in Central or Vlashika Rom. Nevertheless, Roma persecution during WWII may also be described in songs whose lyrics seemingly lack a temporal or factual connection that would frame them as war events. For the sake of better understanding the atmosphere of the

4 A bench to which those who were sentenced to a flogging punishment were tied.

times and presenting the perspective of witnesses who had been exposed to the raging of the Guards, I have included an excerpt from a story related by Ladislav Tancoš, recorded in 1994 in Močarmany in eastern Slovakia.

But Roma katinenas paš o Němci. Dine len andro koncentračno taboris the igen moneki has marde. Oda has paš o slovensko štatós, paš o Tiso. Akor has nekbareder o Šaňo Mach, generalis, u jov the o gardisti igen katinenas adaj pre Slovensko le Romen. Na sas amen řisavo čačipen. Na tromahas te džal kijo Perješis, pro mašini, andro karčmi...

“Many Roma suffered under the Germans. They were sent to concentration camps where they were severely punished. This was in the period of the First Slovak Republic, under Tiso. The chief commander was Šaňo Mach, a general, and the members of the Guard tortured the Roma here in Slovakia. We had no rights. We couldn’t go to Prešov, travel by train, go to a restaurant...”⁵

75.

1.
Andre korčma geľom,
de pivocis na pilom.
[:de Mek me teje bešľom,
duj pal o muj chudľom.:]

1.
I went to the pub
I haven’t (even) finished the beer.
[:Just as I was drinking
I got two slaps.:]

This hallgató used to be very widespread, not only in eastern, but also at least in central Slovakia. I believe that the motif of “kicking ‘a Gypsy’ out of a pub” proves that this song was written in response to discriminatory laws that deprived the Roma in Slovakia during the war of some of their citizen’s rights as mentioned by Ladislav Tancoš. This is documented by the hallgató that combines the theme of an attack in a pub with a motif of an escape from German soldiers⁶ (Jelínková – Hübschmannová [197–]: No. 5).

5 The text, from which this excerpt had been adopted, was published in the monthly, *Nevo Roma-no Gendalos/Nové romské zrcadlo*, 5/1994.

6 They are mistakenly referred to as “German policemen”.

74.

1.

Andre karčma gejlom
pivocis te pijel,
aňi les na pilom,
Duj pal o muj chudlom.

2.

Chudlom mange chudlom
le phandles te marel,
pro čhave dumindom,
e čhuri začidom.

3.

Denašen čhavale,
tele la jarkaha,
te na tumen chuden
o ňemcika phandle.

1.

I went to the pub
to drink some beer,
I haven't drunk up yet,
(and) I got two slaps.

2.

I began
to fight with the policeman,
I remembered my children
and threw the knife away.

3.

Run, boys,
down to the stream,
so that German policemen
won't catch you.

Equally gruesome was the situation of Roma in 1938 when fascist Hungary led by Miklós Horthy occupied Slovakia's southern territories. Even here there were forced work camps, but at the same time, mass transports were sending Roma to the Dachau concentration camp. In the eastern part of the occupied area, especially in Košice and the surroundings, the Roma were subject to deportations towards the end of 1944 (Nečas 1981: 142). These events were also reflected in the following song recorded in Košice and sung by Ganci, a young man of approx. twenty years of age, in 1988. He had learnt the song from his grandmother.

76.

u Kašate legbareder vagaňis,
ej akanake mar le Romen šikinen.
de Phralorale, *de* mangav tumen šukares,
den paňori *jaj* ole čore Romoren.

In Košice there is the biggest slaughterhouse,
now they are grouping Roma there (for transport).
My dear brothers, pretty please,
give some water to the poor Roma!

The following hallgató could be a continuation of the previous song, another singer and guitar player, Ján Slepčík “Ačo”, originally from Košice, elaborates on the work of his predecessor. The song was recorded in 1983 in Prague.

77.

E mašina mar piskinel,
ole Romen mar ladinen.
ej de Čore Roma avke roven,
ej pro Sudeti mar len lidžan.

Steam locomotive is already whistling,
they are loading Roma (on the train).
Those poor Roma are crying so much...,
they are taking them to the Sudetenland.

The first line of the above-cited song is of a migrant nature, appearing, for example, in a hallgató affiliated in terms of its motifs, the record of which was sent to Dušan Holý by Roma writer Elena Lacková (Holý – Nečas 1993: 122–123).

78.

E, mašina mar piskinel,
o, le Romen kije Aušvica kiden,
sar len kiden the murdáren,
but čhávoren jon čorráren.⁷

The train is already hooting
they are taking the Roma to Auschwitz,
by taking them and killing
they are making many children orphans.

Songs about Roma sufferings during World War II were composed using tunes of the *čorikane gila* “songs about hard life” category and their lyrics were often inspired by *bertenošika gila*, songs from prisons and penitentiaries. The thematic area of prison songs was a rich source of motifs and poetic figures especially for songs about concentration and extermination camps. These inspired, for example, song cycles *Aušvicate hi kher báro*, “There’s a Big Barrack in Auschwitz” and *Andr’oda taboris*, “In That Camp” the various textual and melodic variants of which were analysed by Dušan Holý (Holý – Nečas 1993).

⁷ The first part of the opening two lines has been corrected in the Roma text transcription: “E, mašina” to “E mašina”, since “E” is an article, a part of speech that is not separated by a comma, and “o, le Romen” was corrected to “ole Romen” because it is not a lexeme.

Migration to Bohemia

After the end of World War II and the restoration of Czechoslovakia, this time without Subcarpathian Ruthenia that had been annexed by the Soviet Union, there were approx. 140,000¹ Roma living on the Slovak territory. The Roma, especially in eastern Slovakia, were among the poorest people in the country. After the war, the significant gap between the standard of living of the Roma population and the majority grew even wider. Many Roma families and entire local communities that in the pre-war years had managed to leave the segregated Roma settlements were, in line with the racially discriminatory policy of the Slovak Republic, forced back to camps without water and power supply and other basic infrastructure.

Following the expulsion of the Germans from Bohemia and Moravia in 1948 pursuant to the presidential decrees of president Edvard Beneš, there was a high demand for labour forces in the border regions (which had been almost entirely depopulated) and in industrial agglomerations. After the forced migration of nearly three million Germans, job vacancies in industry and agriculture were gradually filled by Czechs and Moravians from the inland regions, as well as Slovaks, Hungarians, Ruthenes and, last but not least, Roma from Slovakia. The original Roma population in Bohemia and Moravia had almost entirely been eradicated.

The post-war migration of Roma from Slovakia to Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia inspired new topics and new songs. The economic migration that started already in the early post-war years with people coming primarily from east-

¹ An approximate figure derived from data for the given period provided by E. Horváthová (1964: 173). Today's Roma population in the Czech Republic has grown twice as a result of immigration and natural population growth; however, no accurate statistical data is available.

ern Slovakia – the most poverty stricken region – did not subside even during the 1950s. In the second half of the 1960s, the gradual integration process was interrupted by state-controlled assimilation. Communists proceeded to the demolition of Roma settlements in Slovakia and the so-called dispersion – a mismanaged attempt to relocate inhabitants of the demolished settlements to the Czech lands. This social experiment resulted in further deterioration of the relations between the Roma and the majority society, leading to increased disintegration of the Roma as a specific ethnic group.

Already in the early post-war years, the chain migration of the Roma to the Czech lands was gradually transformed into circulation migration. Along with mutual visits of families who had their relatives on both sides of the Czech and Slovak border, this phenomenon gave rise to ideal conditions for the dissemination of songs throughout the entire territory of Czechoslovakia. As documented by the following song, the Roma initially had a very idealised vision of the “Czech lands”² that in their eyes had become the “promised land”:

79.

[Ola Roma pr’ola Čechi nič na keren,
č’andre karčma pijen:]
Pijen, pijen, mulatinen,
o caklici sa phageren.
Pijen, pijen, mulatinen,
u man čora na vičinen.

[Those Roma in Bohemia do nothing,
just drink in pubs:]
They drink, drink and are merry,
always breaking the glasses.
They drink, drink and are merry,
and they won’t invite me, poor.

After the war, Slovakia, especially its eastern part, suffered from a lack of job opportunities. Private enterprises and farms were eliminated by the communist establishment and so was the complementary system of economics – a system of services mutually provided between the “Gadje” and the Roma that enabled the Roma to survive. The first departures and arrivals of Roma work teams still during the circular migration process are documented in the following song. Since the song’s lyrics recorded by writer Jiří Binek (1953: 9) most presumably in Velká Ida was clearly garbled, I have included its reconstructed version.³

2 Slovak Romani does not distinguish between its parts – the individual historical countries. To go to Moravia or Silesia still means to go *pro Čechi* “to the Czech lands”. I have heard Roma from eastern Slovak settlements refer also to western Slovak towns, such as Trnava, as to the “Czech lands”.

3 For the original version see the chapter Song lyrics included in the monograph.

80.

U man nane buři,
 džav pre štacijova.
 Amare Roma khejre aven
 pal o Čehiko.

I have no job,
 I'll go to the station.
 Our Roma are coming home
 from Bohemia.

Work migration opened new possibilities for the Roma. Most job opportunities were found in factories, on construction sites and state-owned farms. For their work they were remunerated in cash with which they could buy services and products. To most, this was an entirely new system as in Slovakia they used to work for in-kind compensation and only Roma musicians were paid by Gadje in cash.

81.

1.
 O Roma pro Čechi aven,
 me džav, andre buři džav.
 O Roma pro Čechi aven,
 me džav, andre buři džav.
 2.
 [:Sar on pro Čechi aven,
 bare love zakeren.
 O Roma pro Čechi aven,
 me džav, andre buři džav.:]

1.
 Roma are going to Bohemia,
 I am going (too), going to work.
 Roma are going to Bohemia,
 I am going (too), going to work.
 2.
 [:When they arrive in Bohemia,
 they earn a lot of money.
 Roma are going to Bohemia,
 I am going (too), going to work.:]

Several Vlashika Rom families also relocated to the Czech lands after the war. Their settlement in Bohemia and Moravia was only gradual until 1959, when an actual breakthrough was marked by the passing of a bill proposed in the previous year entitled “On the Permanent Settlement of Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic People”. Despite having been forced to settle, they still continued to make their living by reselling goods, palmistry, etc. Slovak and Hungarian Roma rather quickly managed to adapt to hard labour in various industrial sectors, primarily in the construction industry. This is documented by many reports and accounts recorded at the time, for example, a memory of writer Josef Burgr from the 1970s: “...(Kuruc family) from some part of Slovakia. About fifteen of them in total, but I never saw all of them together. They were no musclemen, no

‘Rambos’ and they also had women in their ranks. I didn’t know much about their partnerships, they acted as one family. And according to the foreman, they worked on the building as if it was theirs. This I can only confirm. I met them in Jižní Město on the construction site of a retention dam close to the Na Košíku district. The women kept pace with their men and they also shared household chores. How else could the whole dormitory be so clean and orderly? In the evening, they used to get together quietly to have a little drink and to sing. It would certainly be appropriate to rename the dam as ‘Kuruc’s Dam’ ” in their honour ” (Burgr 2014: 207). The possibility to escape the poor rural conditions and find work elsewhere was a blessing in their miserable economic situation in Slovakia. As time went by, the chain migration opened up more and more work and housing opportunities through relatives living in Bohemia and Moravia. Those who did not have much, i. e. the majority of the Roma population in Slovakia, had nothing to lose. They often left for Bohemia on a sudden impulse. Thanks to lively interactions of families and individuals, the songs spread as fast as one could travel from one end of the country to the other.

82.

ej Urav bokačča
parne šňurkenca.

[:Me len na jurava,
pro Čechi me džava:]

I’ll put on my shoes
With white laces.

[:I won’t put them on,
I’ll go to Bohemia:]

However, it was not always only work and the possibility of more dignified housing that attracted the Roma to the Czech lands. It could also be love or sudden affection, as documented by the following song.

83.

ej Sľahas man piraňi,
 ŝukar čhaj romaňi.
ej Odi man ligendas
 andro Čehosagos.
joj Bares me la kamás⁴,
 pal late me merás⁵.
de Imar na birinav,
joj bo me na birinav
 andre bari žala.

I had a sweetheart,
 A beautiful Roma girl.
 She took me
 To Bohemia (with her).
 I loved her very much,
 I was dying of desire.
 I can't take it (any more),
 Because I can't (bear)
 This great sorrow.

The initial approach of the Czechs and Moravians to Roma newcomers was generally positive as they represented a welcomed workforce. However, with the migration flow gaining force, cohabitation problems started to surface. The Roma were mostly unqualified labour with a high fluctuation potential, who had a corresponding status in the Czech society, regardless of the prejudices which they had to face, this time on the Czech territory.

84.

Otkanastar geľom pro Čechi,
 phari bući me čak keravas.
 Keravas, pro raja,
 ča vaš kodi kaľi kaveja.

Since I left for Bohemia,
 I've been working so hard,
 slaving away for the lords,
 just to get black coffee in return.

4 Contracted form of "kamavas".

5 Contracted form of "meravas".



Conclusion

The precondition as well as one of the goals of my work has been the processing and analysis of Roma song recordings from my archive. The time period in focus has been framed by the years 1979–2000 since a comprehensive analysis of all of the recordings would be much more time-intensive. In the course of my work, when I was processing data collected during the early part of my field research, I realised that the core of my efforts – the analysis of songs from the ethno-semantic and ethno-historical perspective – does not, by far, utilize the full potential of research of Roma song folklore. I came to the conclusion that a more comprehensive study should be elaborated to cover the issues that have not yet been satisfactorily addressed as well as new questions posed by modern ethnomusicology. Hence, I have expanded my original research scope. I have also included chapters dealing with the taxonomical, functional and ecological aspects of the Roma song folklore.

As regards the reference sources, I have drawn primarily on my own song collection. Similar collections of field recordings of Roma songs from the former Czechoslovakia (yet spanning a longer time period) had been compiled by two Czech researchers – Eva Davidová and Milena Hübschmannová. In collaboration with musicologists, Davidová also delved into the music component of Roma songs, whereas Hübschmannová focused on their verbal aspect. Another song collection – only comprised of the Slovak song production – was compiled by Jana Belišová, who started recording Roma songs in late 1980s, as well as Katalin Kovalcsik, whose single field research conducted in 1981 was concerned with the song folklore of the Vlashika Rom living in southern Slovakia.

The verbal component of Roma songs in taxonomical terms was analysed

based on their native categorisation. The conclusions that I have drawn are in their basic points consistent with the so-far accepted categorisation originally produced by M. Hübschmannová. However, there are also great differences when it comes to differentiating the old song layer (hallgató and csardases) from the new one, and also as far as some native terms are concerned. Unlike Hübschmannová and those who found inspiration in her works, I do not consider the transitional song layer, sometimes called “Rom-pop”, as a category encompassing all song types with the exception of csardases and hallgatós. In fact, this style layer started to be shaped under the influence of radio broadcasting in the first third of the 20th century that is now regarded by the Roma as a traditional music style. Therefore, “Rom-pop” is only set apart from new music styles such as Roma slow songs (romantic songs) and Roma disco. Also my definition of semantic fields of native categories of the individual genres and styles in Roma song are in some regards different from the findings presented in specialised publications. By means of a thorough analysis of the native classification of Roma songs I have pointed out some mistakes and inaccuracies in the interpretation of native terms resulting from erroneous assertions adopted from other authors.

Based on an analysis of accounts of native speakers as captured on recordings and accounts of their own experience, I have identified the songs’ basic functions. Although the presented list is not complete, I believe that the two basic functions fulfilled by the Roma song folklore in the life of the Roma ethnicity are the mood-making and psychotherapeutic function. The latter is closely related with the destinies and the social status of the Roma. By means of old recordings of songs from the 19th century as well as examples from the new layer of the song folklore I try to illustrate how deeply the life style of past generations of Roma has imprinted itself into their collective memory and how it has found its outlet in the lyrics of their songs. The central part of my work dedicated to an ethno-semantic analysis focuses on some of the most characteristic phrasemes and poetic figures in order to add to the previous knowledge of the Romani language in ethno-cultural terms thus contributing to the clarification of issues that had thus far stood at the margins of scientific interest.

Song lyrics included in the monograph

Čirikloro, mirikloro,
lidža mange mro liloro!
hej Lidža, lidža, kaj me phenav,
mra romňake andre žeba.

Birdie, bead,
Take my note for me!
Take it, to where I'll tell you:
Into my wife's pocket.

Šaca (SK) 1980: Ladislav Petík sr., b. 1920.

2.

Madárka, madárka,
Csacsogó madárka,
Vidd el a levelem,
Vidd el a levelem,
Szép magyar hazámba!

Little bird, little bird,
twittering little bird.
Take my message,
take my message,
to Hungary, my beautiful homeland!

(See Magyarnóta [online]. 2014. available at:
[http:// www.magyarnota.com/text_Madarka](http://www.magyarnota.com/text_Madarka)).

3.

1.

i de Vója maladas ma,
i de vója maladas ma, te mejrav!
i de Vója maladas ma
de maškar le Romende. jaj

2.

jaj ej de Te me te žanglemas,
i de khote sig gelemas, te mejrav!
i de Khote sig gelemas,
de o Del te márel ma! jaj

3.

i de Vója maladas ma,
i de vója maladas ma, te mejrav!
i de Vója maladas ma,
i de maškar le Romende. jaj

4.

i de Kana khote pejlem,
i de kana khote gejlem, Romende,
i de bešlem tele, mama,
de vorbenca phendem. jaj de

1.

I got into a good mood,
I have zest for life. I'll be damned!
I got into a good mood,
among these Roma.

2.

Had I known (it),
I would speed there. I'll be damned!
I would speed there.
May God punish me!

3.

I got into a good mood,
I have zest for life. I'll be damned!
I got into a good mood,
among these Roma.

4.

When I got there,
When I got there, to the Roma,
I sat down, mother,
and I sang.

Košice (SK) 1995: anonymous.

4.

[:Evo, bičhav mange fotka!:]

U sar mange na bičhaves,
chudeha tu rakovina.
Evo, bičhav mange fotka!

[:Eva, send me your picture!:]

And if you don't send (it),
you'll get cancer.
Eva, send me your picture!

Torysa (SK) 1980: Ludevít Pešta „Lole Jakha“, b. 1947.

5.

1.
Esja man piraňi,
šukar čhaj romaňi.
Oja šudri baľvaj
ligenda la mandar.

2.
Phu(r)de, Devla, baľvaj,
an mange la pale.
An mange la pale,
thov *ej* la pašal ma!

1.
I had a sweetheart,
a beautiful Roma girl.
The cold wind
took her away from me.

2.
Blow, God, (make) the wind (blow),
Give her back to me!
Give her back to me
and put her next to me!

Chyžné (SK) 1983: anonymous.

6.

Benga, benga, len mra romňa!
ð Piraňora šukarora.
ð Piraňora *a* šukarora,
ð kija mande falešnona.

Devils, devils, take my wife!
(My) beautiful sweetheart.
(My) beautiful sweetheart,
(but) false to me.

Čáslav (CZ) 1982: Zdeněk Koňák, b. approx. 1943.

7.

1.

i Karačoňa avel

u man love nane.

jaj E daj le dadeha

kija mande *javel*.

So len dava te chal,

te man love nane?

2.

de Bikenav gerekos,

maro lenge *janav*.

ə So chana mre čhave,

te len ňiko na del?

3.

joj Karačoňa *javel*

u man love nane.

jaj de Bikenav gerekos,

maro lenge *janav*.

4.

ejej Bikenav gerekos,

mire čhavorengē.

Oda *de* maroro,

me chan mire čhave!

1.

Christmas is coming

and I have no money.

Mother and father

are coming to me.

What will I give them to eat

when I have no money?

2.

I will sell my coat

and bring them bread.

what will my children eat

if nobody gives them anything?

3.

Christmas is coming

and I have no money.

I will sell my coat

and bring them bread.

4.

I will sell my coat

because of my children.

A little bread

for my children to eat.

Markušovce (SK) 1999: Mária Holubová, b. 1937.

8.

Devla, Devla, erđavo svito restam!
Upruno Raj, amen bare čore sřam.
Na kampil ňikasko ungriki đili,
a ko kamla, oda i mukla smirom.
Upruno Raj, kaj džanes, ko me sřom,
Phuro řagi Jančiskero čhaj me sřom.
Adá đili ando briga me kerđom,
kaj o briga te pobisterav.

God, God, we are living in a bad world
dear lord, we are so poor
nobody needs Hungarian tunes any more
those who loved it, gave it up.
Dear lord, you should know who I am
I'm the daughter of old Janci from Siah
I composed this tune in sadness
to forget my sorrow.

(In Drenko: 1997: 54).

9.

1.
Džalas mange suno
trine papiņenca,
oda na papiņa,
oda mire čhave.
2.
Pijav mange, pijav
mire řougorenca,
[:mire řougorenca,
sar vlastne phralenca:]

1.
I had a dream
about three geese.
Those weren't geese,
they were my children!
2.
I'm drinking, I'm drinking
with my brothers-in-law,
[:with my brothers-in-law,
like with my own brothers:]

(In Jelínková – Hübschmannová [197-?]: No. 17).

10.

ej Gondoláne, Gondoláne,
bařav mange oja gili!
Bařav la romani,
kaj o gadže te na džanen!

Gondolan, Gondolan!
Play that song for me!
Play it in Romani,
so that 'gadzhe' wouldn't understand.

Roudnice (CZ) 1981: fam. Deter, b. approx. 1930.

11.

[:**Phagle mange mri musori**
bijal miri pirañi:].
[:Sar la mange te phaglehas,
ča la mange te dinehas.
sam Roma, sam, čore sam:].

[:**They broke my arm**
because of my sweetheart:].
[:Let them break it
if only they would let her be my wife.
We are Roma (after all), we are poor:].

Šaca (SK) 1980: Ladislav Petik jr., b. 1947.

12.

1.
ej de Mre churde čhavore,
ej de paš o pañi bešen.
ej de Paš o pañi bešen,
ej de churđi poši jon chan,
de churđi poši jon chan.
2.
ej de Mre churde čhavore,
ej de gav gavestar phiren.
ej de Gav gavestar phiren,
ej de maro peske mangen,
de maro peske mangen.

1.
My little children
are sitting by the water.
Sitting by the water,
eating fine sand,
eating fine sand.
2.
My little children
are walking from village to village.
Walking from village to village,
begging for some bread,
begging for some bread.

Varhaňovce (SK) 1982: anonymous.

13.

1.
Maksi rokľa tuke cinava,
pre zabava manca phireha.
[:Maľovačka pro vuštora,
o lagocis pro najora,
baro čudos tuke perela.:]

2.
Čhaje, čhaje, barikaňi sal,
rokľa ures barikaňi sal.
[:Tiri rokľa tu ureha,
čudos baro tuke perla,
kajsi rokľa ňikas na ela.:]

1.
I'll buy you a long skirt
and you'll come with me to parties.
[:You'll colour your lips
and paint your nails,
you look amazing.:]

2.
Girl, girl, you're alluring,
when you're putting on the skirt, you're alluring.
[:And when you'll wear that skirt,
you'll look amazing,
no other girl will have such a skirt.:]

Šaca (SK) 1980: Ladislav Petík jr., b. 1947.

14.

1.

Cinav tuke e rokla skladanka
a šukar khosno, Devla, šafolka.
A topanki čarlagove,
bo tire vušta sar mjadove,
maj me rați, maj len čumidava.
[:Pałis tuke šeptinava,
sar me tuha paštuvava,
či me tuha, Devla, dživava:]

2.

Dikh tu, Gejza, s'oda tu keres!
Dikh tu, Gejza, sar manca soves!
Te man čora khabňareha
u romňake man na leha,
sostar, Devla, me (...)
Či pro cikno počineha,
bo manca tu dživeha?
So tu, Gejza, so tu kereha?

3.

Te počinel tuke na pošinav,
sar romňaha tuha na dživav.
Bo me džanav, savi tu sal,
kecen dikhes, ajcen kames,
u man čores diliňares.
Kecen dikhes, jajcen kames,
u man čora diliňares,
so tu lubňi, so tuke kames?

1.

I'll buy you a pleated skirt
and a beautiful scarf, God, a *šafolka*.
And scarlet pumps,
for your lips are like honey,
and tonight, tonight I will kiss them.
Then I will whisper to your ear
when I'll be lying with you,
whether I will, God, live with you.

2.

Look, Gejza, what you are doing!
Look, Gejza, how you are sleeping with me!
If I get pregnant with you
and you don't marry me,
how, (oh) God, (...)
Will you support the baby,
or will you live with me?
What will you, Gejza, what will you do?

3.

I won't, I won't pay anything
nor will I live with you.
Because I know who you are,
any man you see, you want him,
and you're fooling me, poor man.
Any man you see, you want him,
and you're fooling me, poor man,
what do you, bitch, what do you want?

4.
Cinav tuke rokľa skladanka,
a šukar romňi (...) šafolka.
Topanki čarlagove,
tire vušta sar mjadove,
maj me, maj len čumidava.
Ča eľetrika murdarena,
maj paš tu, Devla, džava,
maj me paš tu paštuvav.

4.
I'll buy you a pleated skirt
and a beautiful woman (...) *safolka*.
Scarlet pumps,
for your lips are like honey,
right away, right away I'll kiss them.
As soon as the light is off,
right away I will, God, come to you,
I'll lie down with you.

Ajsa džuvľa pro drom me chudľom, I caught this woman on the road,
aja gili pal late sthodom. and this song is about her.

Šaca (SK) 1980: Gejza Tuleja „Banošis“, b. approx. 1940.

15.

[:K'oda, k'oda, k'oda
šaj avel?:]
[:O Havel, o Havel
šaj avell:]
[:K'oda, k'oda, k'oda
šaj avel?:]

[:Who can, who can
who can come?:]
[:Havel, Havel,
Havel can come!:]
[:Who can, who can
who can come?:]

Frýdlant (CZ) 1990: anonymous.

16.

Sig tosara šilalo paňi džal,
e čhaj peske o muj melaľola.
[::Šaj džava, šaj,:]
[:ke miri phuri daj.::]

[:**Early in the morning cold water is flowing,**
girl's face gets dirty:]
[:: I'll be able to go:]
[:to my old mother.::]

Sobrance (SK) 1988: anonymous.

17.

1.

Soske khere džava,
te man ňiko nane?
[:E daj mange mułas,
o dad romňa ilas.:]

2.

Khere džav, khere džav,
khere man užaren.
Khere man užaren,
oja mri dajori.

3.

Man dajori nane,
ča me som, korkori.
[:Ča me som, korkori,
sar čhindo kaštoro.:]

4.

Dado miro, dado,
bo man ňiko nane.
E daj mange mułas,
o dad romňa ilas.
E daj mange mułas,
ačhilom korkori.

5.

Ačhilom korkori,
bo man ňiko nane.
[:Te merel mušinav
la bara žalatar.:]

1.

Why would I go home
if I don't have anyone?
[:My mother died,
my father got married.:]

2.

I'm coming home, I'm coming home,
they are waiting for me there.
My dear mother
is waiting for me.

3.

I don't have a mother,
I'm all alone.
[:I'm all alone,
like a chopped-down tree.:]

4.

Father, my father,
I don't have anyone!
My mother died,
my father got married.
My mother died,
I was left on my own.

5.

I was left on my own,
I don't have anyone.
I must die
of great sorrow.:]

Markušovce (SK) 1999: Mária Holubová, b. 1937.

Nane man dajori,
ñi kalo dadoro,
ačhilom korkoro
sar čhindo kaštořo.¹

18.

I don't have a mother,
nor do I have my black father,
I was left alone
like a chopped down tree.

(In Ficowski 1985: 232–233).

2.
De mulas o papu, mamu.
de jAšilam čořořa
sar šinde kaštořa.

19.

2.
Grandfather died, mother.
We're orphaned
like little felled trees.

(The full lyrics is in Kovalcsik 1985: 55).

1 The transcription has been made according to the standardised spelling, see Note on the Transcription of Song Lyrics and Their Translation.

20.

1.

de Geľas e Iboja,

de trin dĭives oleske. joj

de Rodav la, rodav la,

dikh, ĉi arakhav la.

2.

Arakhľom la, mami,

de andro ruĭi beľel. joj

de Andro ruĭi beľel,

jodoj pes kamavel.

3.

de Oke le, Iboja!

de Ma dara Romendar. joj

de Ma dara Romendar,

le ľele dĭzenendar.

1.

Iboja left,

it's been three days,

I'm looking for her, looking,

see, if I find her.

2.

I found her, grandma,

sitting in roses,

sitting in roses,

and making love (with someone).

3.

Look over there, Iboja!

Don't be afraid of Roma,

don't be afraid of Roma,

(not even if there were) a hundred.

Brandĭs nad Labem (CZ) 1983: fam. Lacko.

21.

1.

jaj de Gelastar i Roza,
trin djes kodoleske,
hej de Rodav la, rodav la,
Kathi či rakhav la.

2.

jaj Taj rakhlem la, mama,
hej de Maškar roži bešel,
hej de Maškar roži bešel,
de Maškar le luludja.

3.

jaj de Aptar khere, Roza,
hej de Ma dara řomendar,
hej de Ma dara řomendar,
či šeleženendar.

1.

Roza is gone
for three days,
I look for her, I look for her,
I don't find her anywhere.

2.

I find her, mother,
she is sitting amongst the roses,
she is sitting amongst the roses,
amongst the flowers.

3.

Come home, Roza,
don't be afraid of the Gypsies,
don't be afraid of the Gypsies,
even if they are hundred.²

(In Kovalcsik 1985: 104–105).

2 Orig. translation by K. Kovalcsik.

22.

1.

jaj Odi mri phuri daj

andr'odi phuv pašlol.

ej Nane man niko *jaj*,

ej ča me korkororo.

2.

jaj Ke kaste me džava,

te man niko nane?

ej Sem mar na birinav *jaj*

ej andre bari žala.

3.

ej Mamo, mamó, mamó,

soske man na kames?

ej Či me na som tiro *jaj*,

sar okala čhave.

4.

ej Ačhiłom korkoro

mire čhavoreha.

ej Sem mar na birinav *jaj*

javri te likerel.

5.

E daj mange mułas,

ačhiłom korkoro.

ej Ke kaste me džava *jaj*,

ej te man niko nane?

6.

ej Gav gavestar phirav,

pal o kotor maro,

ej kaj me te chal te dav *jaj*

ej mire čhavoreske.

7.

jaj O Del la marela

pal kada čhavoro,

ej So džanav te kerel *jaj*

andre bari žala?

1.

My old mother

is lying in the soil.

I don't have anyone,

[I've been left] all alone.

2.

To whom will I go,

if I don't have anyone?

Why, I don't have the strength anymore

to bear this sorrow.

3.

Mother, mother, mother,

why don't you love me?

Am I not yours,

as the other kids?

4.

I've been left alone

with my little son.

I'm at the end of my tether,

I can't bear it [any more].

5.

My mother died,

I've been left alone.

To whom will I go,

if I don't have anyone?

6.

I go from village to village,

[to beg] for a chunk of bread,

[only] to feed

my little son.

7.

God will punish her,

because of the boy.

What should I do

in this great sorrow?

8.

ej Na kamel man e daj
aňi mire ciknes.
jaj Marla la o Del *jaj*
jaj vaš mange, čoro som.

9.

ej Aven ke ma, aven,
mire phralorenca!
ej Nane man ňiko *jaj*,
ej ča miro čavoro.

10.

jaj Mamo, mamo, mamo,
soske me som ajso?
ej Soske me som ajso *jaj*,
ej ajso bibachtalo.

11.

ej Kher kherestar phirav
a na džanav, kaj som,
ej sem mar na birinav
avri te likerel.

8.

My mother doesn't love me
not even my little one.
God will punish her
because of me, poor man.

9.

Come to me, come,
with my brothers!
I don't have anyone,
just my little son.

10.

Mother, mother, mother,
why am I like this?
Why am I like this,
cursed like this?

11.

I go from house to house
I don't know where I am.
I'm at the end of my tether,
I can't bear it [any more].

Praha (CZ) 1983: Alexander Hmilanský, b. 1954.

23.

1.

ej de Adadžives ki je raći Roma bašaven,

de miri romñi, kori maći, jodoj giłavel.

jOdoj giłavel, bo joj maći hin,

[:mra romñake jandro vasta jepaš litra hin:].

2.

Ma vičin man andre karčma, bo me na pijav!

Cinel peske litra vinos, avri les pijel.

Frima tuke hin, s' oda tu keres?

Le gadženge, le Romenge, pre chołi keres,

le Romenge, le gadženge, pre chołi keres.

1.

Tonight Roma are playing,

my wife, drunk as a lord, is singing.

She's singing there because she's drunk,

[:she's holding, my wife, half a litre of wine:].

2.

Don't tempt me to go to the pub, I won't drink!

Buying a litre of wine, gulping it down.

Is it not enough for you? What are you doing?

[:To gadzhe, to Roma, to Roma, to gadzhe, you're doing it on purpose:].

Ostrava-Heřmanice (CZ) 1998: Roman Polhoš „Fiko“, b. 1975,

Ladislav Sivák „Piko“, b. 1974.

24.

Nane oda lavutaris,

kaj mri giłi te bašavel.

[:Bašavela mro pirano,

bo joj lačo lavutaris.:]

There's no such a musician

who would play my song.

[:My dearest will play (it)

because he's a good musician.:]

Náchod (CZ) 2014: Miroslav Varga, b. approx. 1965.

25.

[:**Odoj tele o Roma bašaven,**
mri piraňi mulatinel:]
Sar me kodoj pal late džava
the me laha mulatina.
[:**Odoj tele o Roma bašaven,**
mri piraňi mulatinel:]

[:**Down there Roma are playing,**
my sweetheart is merry:]
When I go down there
I will be merry too.
[:**Down there Roma are playing,**
my sweetheart is merry:]

Praha (CZ) 1979: Fabián Vojtěch „Marcel“, b. 1949.

26.

1.
ej Marel o Del marel,
hej kas kamel te marel,
[:*hej e* the man o Del marda,
ej bo na šundom mra da.:]
2.
ej Marel o Del marel,
hej kas kamel te marel,
[:*hej e* the man o Del marda,
ej vaš tuke lubňije!:]

1.
God punishes, punishes,
who he wants to punish,
[:God punished me too,
because I didn't obey my mother.:]
2.
God punishes, punishes,
who he wants to punish,
[:God punished me too,
because of you, you bitch!:]

Šaca (SK) 1980: Ladislav Petík sr., b. 1920, and other.

27.

Čhaje, čhaje, šukar sal,
phen mange, kaskri sal?
Me tuke miro jilo dava,
ča tu phen, či man kameha.

Girl, girl, you are beautiful,
tell me, whose are you?
I'll give you my heart,
just tell me if you'll love me.

Šaca (SK) 1980: Ladislav Petík jr., b. 1947.

28.

1.
O vešóro e pajtrença,
O čiriklo e pchakença!
Te me e dar dykava,
Andre tute chuťava.

2.
Veša, veša zelenone,
De tut pale angál mande!
Te me e dar dykava,
Štar bárora chuťava.³

1.
Wood has leaves,
bird has wings.
If I see danger,
I'll jump into you (wood).

2.
Woods, green woods,
make way for me!
If I see danger,
I'll jump over four fences.

(In Puchmajer 1821: 77–78).

29.

1.
Pchandyne, pchandyne,
pre dyzóri dyne.
Biš funty sastera,
dyne pre mre chéra.

2.
Choľa kordyñas mro šéro,
mri dajóri, tro šeróro.
Kana tut dykava!
Mro jílo dukala.⁴

1.
They cuffed me, they cuffed me,
in prison they've put me.
Twenty pounds of iron
they put on my legs.

2.
My stubbornness angered
your little head, my dear mother.
When I see you
my heart will ache.

(In Štampach 1930: 345).

3 Cited in the original form recorded by A. J. Puchmajer.

4 Cited in the original form as recorded by J. Ješina.

1.
hej de Mačilom, mačilom,
hej andro šancos pełom.
hej de Ko man avri lela?
Lela mri phuri daj.
2.
hej de Soske mange trasta
pre mre kale vasta?
hej de Mire kale vasta
na džanen te kerel.
hej de Či pre buťorate,
či pre lavutate.

Aňi pincos na rozmarďom,
aňi gadžes na murdardom.
jaj de O klejici mar čerchinen,
jaj de o prajtora tele peren.

30.

1.
I got drunk, got drunk,
and fell into a ditch.
Who's going to pull me out?
My old mother.
2.
Why do I have chains
on my black hands?
My black hands
weren't made for working.
They weren't made for working,
nor for playing the violin.

Neškaredice (CZ) 1981: anonymous.

31.

I haven't robbed a shop,
nor have I killed a gadzho.
(Prison) keys are rattling already,
leaves are (already) falling down.

Praha (CZ) 1988: Jozef Krajňák.

32.

1.
i Akor e čaj barikaňi,
ej kana hiňi pařivali.
[:*ej U sar nane pařivali,*
mi čhivel pes andro paňi.:]
2.
Čhaje, čhaje, barikaňi,
kana tu sal pařivali.
ej U sar na sal pařivali,
mi čhiven tut andro paňi.
U sar na sal pařivali,
čhiv tut, čhaje, andro paňi!

1.
That's when a Roma girl is proud,
when she is chaste.
[:*And when she's not chaste any more,*
she should jump into water.:]
2.
Girl, girl, you are proud,
if you are chaste.
But if you are not a virgin,
may you be thrown into water,
but if you are not a virgin,
jump, girl, into water!

Náhlov (CZ) 2014: Věra Zupková, b. approx. 1955.

33.

1.
Mek čak dural avav,
o Roma mange vakeren,
[:*jaj kaj mangav lendar maro,*
on man prekoškeren.:]
2.
de Phen ča mange, daje,
kaj mri romňi šukar hiňi?
[:*joj de Le bare vešenca*
prosto ke špitaľa.:]

Aja gili *de* giľavel
o Gejzas le Beňoha.
Rom the Čechos.

1.
I'm only just coming
and people are already talking,
that I'm begging for bread
and they are cursing me (immediately).
2.
Tell me, mother,
where is my beautiful wife?
Through deep woods
(she went) straight to the hospital.

This song is sung
by Gejza and Benyo.
A Rom and a Czech.

Šaca (SK) 1980: Gejza Tuleja „Banošis“, b. approx. 1940.

34.

1.
i Na vaš oda ke tu javlom,
kaj man te chal te des.
jaj de Ča vaš oda ke tu javlom,
kaj man bari paživ te des.
2.
jaj de Ola Roma lače hine,
mro dživipen chale.
jaj de De tu mange o sastipen,
sar tuke, čhaje, jo kaml'ipen.
3.
jaj de Devla, Devla, so me kerđom,
bo me jajsi čori?
jaj de Mek čoreder *de* javava,
sar man ņiko, Devla, n' avla.

1.
That's not why I came to you,
for you to give me food.
I came to you
just for you to show me respect.
2.
Those Roma are good,
they ruined my life.
Give me health,
and to you, girl, love!
3.
God, God, what have I done,
that I am such a poor soul?
And I'll be even poorer
when I won't have, God, anyone.

Markušovce (SK) 1999: Mária Holubová, b. 1937.

35.

1.
jaj de O Devloro, dikh, som čori!
jaj de Korunaha na birinav.
jaj de Ko phral džava, kečen te lel,
de maj jov phenla, hoj les nane.
2.
jaj de Te tut nane, ma phen avri,
i te na šunel mri pirañi!
jaj de Mri pirañi te šunela,
jaj de je bari ladž tutar kerla.

1.
My God, look (how) poor I am!
I don't have a penny.
I'll go and borrow from my brother
and he'll say he doesn't have any, straight away.
2.
If you don't have anything, don't talk about it,
so that my sweetheart doesn't hear!
If my sweetheart learns about it,
she'll make a big fuss.

Markušovce (SK) 1999: Mária Holubová, b. 1937.

36.

Dado, dado, cin čěna,
ole čěna somnakune!
[:U sar tu mange na cineha
sa o čhaja rušena:].

Father, father, buy me earrings,
those golden earrings!
[:And if you don't buy them for me,
all the girls will be angry:].

Brandýs nad Labem (CZ) 1983: fam. Lacko

37.

ej Šuke prajta na čerkinen,
te balvaj na phurdel.
jaj O baro kamipen, o baro kamipen,
ə kerel jumblavipen.

Dry leaves don't rustle
when the wind's not blowing.
(For) a great love, (for) a great love,
(many) hang (themselves).

Čáslav (CZ) 1982: Zdeněk Koňák, b. approx. 1943.

38.

Andro verdan grundzi nane,
hej man pirano šukar nane.
[:*hej* Guľi phabaj prečhinava,
jepaš leske, jepaš mange:].]

There are no chunks of mud in the cart,
my dear is not handsome.
[:I'll cut a sweet apple in half,
(I'll give) him a half and take a half:].]

*Bílý Potok (CZ) 1992: Margita Čajkovská, b. approx. 1930,
Anna Rusenková „Rapačana“, b. approx. 1927, and others.*

39.

Romňi miri šukar,
de an mange parňi mol.
Aná tuke louři,
de bo tut rado dikhav.

My beautiful wife,
bring me white wine.
I'll bring you red (wine),
because I love you.

Moldava nad Bodvou (SK) 1989:
Helena Rybárová „Bidirka“, b. approx. 1950.

40.

[:Bikenava mira romňa vaš e ľitra mol:] **[:I'll sell my wife for a litre of wine:]**
Bo me laha na dživava,
bo me laha na sovava,
oj lari dari daj,
na kamel man lakri daj.

because I won't live with her,
because I won't sleep with her,
oi lari dari dai,
her mother doesn't like me.

Praha (CZ) 1998: anonymous.

41.

1.

Ola kale jakha

te čumidel kamen,

ola vuštora

te čumidel kamen.

2.

Ma čumide tu man,

i bo žandara javen,

lancki pre mre vasta,

Devla, rakinen.

3.

Mamo miri, mamo,

me les bares kamav,

me pal leste, mamo,

me pal leste džav.

4.

Mek ča dural avel,

o Roma vakeren,

kaj o Bano šukar,

o lubipen kerel.

5.

Kerel o lubipen,

mange bari žala,

me pal leste, mamo,

me pal leste džav.

Ma čumide tu man...

1.

Those black eyes

want to kiss,

those little lips

want to kiss.

2.

Don't kiss me,

cops are coming!

Handcuffs on my hands,

oh, God, they are putting.

3.

Mother, my mother,

I love him so,

I will, mother,

I will follow him.

4.

Since he appears in the distance,

people are talking,

Bano is handsome,

he'll get any girl.

5.

He sleeps with many girls

and that hurts me so,

(but) I will still, mother,

I will (still) follow him.

Don't kiss me...

Košice (SK) 1981: Paľi Matta, Aňuš Matta and others.

42.

1.
Mar me džanav s' oda kamiben
o kamiben baro mariben!
Joj Devla, so me kerava?
Me adarig khere otdžava.
2.
Ačh, čhaje, čhaje, Devleha,
bo me džav tutar dromeha.
Andre meň mange chuťeha,
sa man avri čumidkereha.

1.
I know now what love is,
love is a big struggle!
Oh God, what will I do?
I will leave for home.
2.
Farewell, my girl,
because I'm leaving you.
You will put your arms around me
and kiss me thoroughly.

Moldava nad Bodvou (SK) 1989: anonymous.

43.

1.
ej de Pijav mange, pijav
mire phralorenca,
joj de mire phralorenca,
jaj de lače manušenca.
2.
ej U sar love nane
kečen musaj te del,
jaj de kečen musaj te del
jaj de mire čhavorenge.

1.
I'm drinking, I'm drinking
with my brothers,
with my brothers,
good people.
2.
And when there's no money,
they have to lend [me],
they have to lend [me],
for my children.

Varhaňovce (SK) 1982: anonymous.

44.

1.

Romňi miri, romňi,
tav mange haluški.
Choč len na makheha,
ča len londareha.

2.

Phenen odej, phenen,
ola mra pheňake,
kaj ke ma te avel,
kurke ke raťate.

1.

My wife, my wife,
cook *halushky* for me!
[:Even if you don't grease them,
only put some salt in.:]

2.

Tell, over there, tell
my sister
to come to me
on Sunday evening.

Sobrance (SK) 1988: Zdena Kimová, b. 1957.

45.

O jilo man dukhal pal e daj,
džav pal late u na džanav kaj.
[:Ma maren man,
hin man phuri daj,
džav pal late u na džanav kaj:]

My heart is aching after my mother,
I'll go to her but I don't know where.
[:Don't hit me,
I have an old mother,
I'll go to her but I don't know where:]

Šaca (SK) 1980: Ladislav Petík jr., b. 1947.

46.

1.
ej Tel oblaka bešel
i mri phuri dajori.
jaj Tel oblaka bešel
a churde japsa čorel.
2.
ej Na somas me khere,
ej na džanav, ko javłas.
joj Avłas mri phuri daj
i pal o churde gava.

1.
Under the window
my old mother is sitting,
under the window she's sitting
and little tears shedding.
2.
I was not at home,
I don't know who came 'round.
My old mother came,
[back from errands] around villages.

Torysa (SK) 1980: Ján Laci „Pervalo“, b. approx. 1938.

47.

Avka phares le partoha upre džav,
avka phares pre mre pindre me phirav.
joj Te kerav le pindrenca, vastenca,
javka me mire čhaven na mukav.

How hard for me it is to climb the slope,
how heavy my legs feel.
I will slave away until I fall,
but I won't let my kids [live like this].

Šaca (SK) 1980: Ladislav Petík sr., b. 1920.

48.

Amari sal, amari,
amari terňi bori.
Mek sa feder aveha,
vedros paňi aneħa.

You are ours, ours,
our young daughter-in-law.
[And] you'll be even better,
[if] you bring a bucket of water.

Šaca (SK) 1980: Ladislav Petík sr., b. 1920.

49.

1.
Jekhvar kija raťate,
o phandle durkinen,
pre blaka durkinen,
lanci pro vast thoven.
2.
S'oda za vilagocis,
te man ňiko nane,
ća me jekh korkoro,
pre ada svetos som.

1.
Once in the evening
cops are knocking
on the window knocking,
handcuffs on me putting.
2.
What a world this is,
when I don't have anyone (there)?
Just alone, by myself,
I am in this world.

Praha (CZ) 1983: Ján Slepčík "Aćus", b. 1950.

50.

1.
ej Dalke, dalke mri dajouri,
thou man pr'oda haďos,
pr'oda haďos mulikano,
mi sasťuvav ávri.
2.
Sem mar na birinav,
o jilo man dukhal,
bo mar mange mro dživipen,
ća auke tele dźala.

1.
Can't you see, I am helpless
my heart aches
because there is not much left
of my life.
2.
Mummy, mummy, dear mummy
put me on this bed
put me on this deathbed
so I may recover again.

Praha (CZ) 1983: Ján Slepčík "Aćus", b. 1950.

51.

1.
ej Oda kalo čirikloro,
i mangel mandar mro jiloro.
i Mangel mandar, joj sig te merav,
ča le čhaven te na dikhav.

2.
ej Oda kalo čirikloro
pisin mange jekh lilor!
Pisin mange, joj sig te merav,
ča le čhaven te na dikhav!

1.
The little black bird,
is asking for my heart,
asking me soon to die,
so I don't have to look at my children.

2.
"You little black bird,
write me a short note,
write me to die soon,
just so I don't have to look at my children."

Jánovce-Machalovce (SK) 1999: fam. Pecha.

52.

Oda kalo čiri(kloro piskinel)⁵,
mro pirano andro haḁos stukinel.
i Dža ča, phrala, dž a ča, phrala, te dikhel,
i mro pirano joj te merel mušinel.

The black bird is whistling,
my dearest is groaning in bed.
Go, brother, go and look at him!
My dearest must die.

(Recorded by Josef Koudelka in the sixties of the 20th century).

5 The text in the brackets has been completed based on the first line of the second stanza.

53.

Mamo miri, so tut dukhal, phen mange!

i Nasvaľi sal, na dŕanav, so tute.
O Roma phenen, ŕe tu bari nasvaľi.
Te mukel me na kamav le ŕhaven.
[:Doktorale, phenen mange,
ĉi mri dajori, ĉi dŕivela!:]

My mother, what's hurting you? Tell me!

You are ill, I don't know what's the matter.
Roma say that you're very ill.
I don't want to leave the children.
[:Doctors, tell me
if my dear mother, if she's going to live!:]

Dravce (SK) 2014: Lukáš Ŕiga, b. approx. 2000.

54.

1.

Imar avel o motoris,

joj andre o ŕtatno doktoris.
E Pepaňa reŕla e bari inekcija,
o Pepe zakoŕla la Pano Maria.

2.

E Pepaňa muľa.
ej Ko pal late rovla?
Le tu, Pepe, kalo khosno,
thov lake pro moĉto.

1.

The car is already coming

inside a doctor [is sitting].
[When] Pepaňa got a big jab,
Pepe cursed the Virgin Mary.

2.

Pepaňa died.
Who will cry for her?
Pepe, take a black scarf
and put it on her coffin.

Praha (CZ) 1979: Fabián Vojtĉh „Marcel“, b. 1949.

55.

1.
ej Andr'odi špitala
de štar vilaña labon,
[*i de* Čak odoj na labol, *joj*
de kaj miro dad pašlol.:]
2.
ej de Pašľuv, dade, pašľuv,
de andr'odi kaľi phuv.
[:Khatar tiro šero *joj*
že mulaňi čar barol.:]

1.
In the hospital
four lights are alight.
[:There is no light
where my dad is lying.:]
2.
Lie, daddy, lie,
in the black soil!
[:Dead man's grass
is growing from your head.:]

Praha (CZ) 1990: Jolana Žigová, b. approx. 1955.

56.

1.
Mamo, nasvalo som,
le doktoris bare love den.
Mamo, nasvalo som,
terno som, te merel na kamav.
2.
Phenen odoj mira romňake,
kaj pro čhave oj te dodikhel.
Mamo, nasvalo som,
terno som, te merel na kamav.

1.
My mother, I am in poor health,
give doctor enough money.
My mother, I am sick,
I am young, I do not want to die.
2.
Tell her, please, tell my wife
to keep an eye on our children.
My mother, I am sick,
I am young, I do not want to die.

Praha (CZ) 1983: Ján Slepčik "Ačus", b. 1950.

57.

[:Trin kolki, štar huri:]

La babake vigišagos,
le papuske o šarlagos,
labar, čhaje, momeli!

[:Three pegs, four strings:]

grandma is a goner,
grandpa's got scarlet fever,
so light the candle, girl!

Praha (CZ) 1988: Cína Pavel "Koro", b. 1954.

58.

[:Akana šun, so me phenava!:] je je je je

[:Hoj o Roma kale,

o phandle parne,

akana šun, so me phenava!:] je je je je

[:Now listen to what I'll tell you!:]

[:that Roma are black,

and cops are white!

Now listen to what I'll tell you!:]

Bystrany (SK) 1981: Emil Horváth „Ďodo“ and others.

59.

Kali me som, kali,

e Kali man vičinen.

[:jaj Ale mri phuri daj,

e vaš e parni na del:]

I'm black, I'm black,

they call me Kali.

[:But my old mother

wouldn't change (me) for a white one:].

Nelahozeves (CZ) 1981: Marta Peštová, b. approx. 1955.

60.

1.
Me káli som, káli som,
sakoneske kamli som.
Hár gadženge, romenge,
čechikáne chávenge.
2.
Lubňárde, lubňárde,
ma phíren pal mande!
Chudava mro tovér,
čhingérava tumen!

1.
I'm black, I'm black,
I'm dear to everyone.
To gadzhe, to Roma,
(even) to Czech boys.
2.
Womanizers, womanizers,
don't come to me!:]
I'll take my axe,
I'll chop you to pieces!

(In Ješina 1882: 146–147).

61.

Le, more, e brača,
čhivker tu čardaša!
E brača smerečiko,
kaj tut te skaľarel
pre tire duj jakha!

Take, my boy, a viola
and start playing czardas!
The viola, made of spruce wood
and may you get
black eyes (if you won't play)!

Jánovce-Machalovce (SK) 2014: Ladislav Paločaj „Đuri“, b. approx. 1995,
Pavol Čonka „Kalo Muj“, b. approx. 1995, and others.

62.

Phenav tuke, phenav,
mro kálo lavoro,
har oda gadžora
kana del draboro.⁶

I'll tell you, I'll tell you,
my bitter word,
like those gadzhe women,
when they're giving out medicine.

(In Černík 1921: 9).

⁶ Romani transcription edited by ZA.

63.

de Rovel andre mande

jaj de miro kalo jilo.
[:*jaj de* Sem mar na birinav,
de javri te likerel.:]

Crying in me, crying,

is my sad heart,
[:I don't have any strength left,
[to] endure it all.:]

Košice (SK) 1981: Pali Matta, Aňuš Matta and others.

64.

1.

O somnakuno Del

jaj le čoren o(t)tradel.
jaj Le čoren o(t)tradel,
le barvalen kamel.

2.

Tel o zeleno veš
o Roma bašaven.
jaj de jO Roma bašaven
u man love nane.

3.

Bašaven, Romale,
poćinav tumenge!
jaj Poćinav tumenge
vaš o šukar giľa.

4.

Sar jon *de* bašavnas,
mro jilo rovelas.
jaj Mro jilo rovelas
la bara žaľatar.

5.

Dale, miri dale,
so džanav te kerel?
Bare pharipnastar,
la bara žaľatar.

1.

The golden God

is chasing the poor people away.
Chasing the poor people away,
and loving the rich ones.

2.

Under the green forest
Roma are playing (and dancing).
Roma are playing (and dancing),
and I don't have any money.

3.

Play Roma,
I'll pay you!
I'll pay you
for the beautiful songs.

4.

While they were playing,
my heart was crying.
My heart was crying
with enormous grief.

5.

Mother, my mother,
what should I do?
(How to come out) of this sorrow,
out of the great grief?

Markušovce (SK) 1999: Mária Holubová, b. 1937.

65.

[:O Deni(s), Deni(s), Deni(s), Deni(s):] cinav tuke lolo viganos. O viganos le fodrenca, kaj te phires le muršenca. Deni(s), Deni(s), me tut na kamav.	[:Denisa, Denisa, Denisa, Denisa:] I'll buy your a red dress. (Long) dress with frills, so you can go out with men. Denisa, Denisa, I don't want you.
--	---

Stará Lubovňa-Telosadki (SK) 2000: anonymous.

66.

Andro paňi lampašis, lampašis, mro pirano beťaris, beťaris. [:Cinav leske lolo gad, lolo gad, ej kaj te phirel sako rat, sako rat.:]	A lantern (is reflecting) in the water, my lover is a rascal. [:I'll buy him a red shirt, so that he would come (to me) every night.:]
--	--

Ostrava-Heřmanice (CZ) 1998: Roman Polhoš „Fiko“, b. 1975.

67.

1. O Gašparik ajso fajno, phenen Roma, že jov tajno. Bodaj lenge guta! Me pokindom šel pokuta.	1. That Gasparik is kind of posh, Roma say that he is an undercover (policeman). May he suffer a stroke! I paid a hundred crowns fine.
2. O Gašparik nič na kerel, ča orici prikerkerel. Bodaj lenge guta! Me pokindom šel pokuta.	2. That Gasparik does nothing, he's just always repairing watches. May he suffer a stroke! I paid a hundred crowns fine.

Praha (CZ) 1988: Cína Pavel “Koro”, b. 1954.

68.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1.
hej de Has man romňi, sako džanel,
<i>hej de</i> o phral laha svetos geľas,
<i>hej de</i> geľas, geľas, <i>hej</i> nič na phendas,
peskra romňa jov murdardas. | 1.
I had a wife, everybody knows (it),
my brother went with her into the world.
He left, he left, didn't even say a word,
he killed the wife (in the end). |
| 2.
Ačhle leske <i>de</i> čhavore,
<i>jaj de</i> mirenca <i>jaj</i> čorenca.
<i>jov</i> So, devlale, so te kerel,
či pes, čoro, te murdarel? | 2.
He was left with children
and with my poor children too.
What, gods, what to do?
should the poor man kill himself? |

Šaca (SK) 1980: Gejza Tuleja „Banošis“, b. approx. 1940.

69.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1.
de Chude, čhaje, e leketa!
<i>jov de</i> Čhivav tuke kokalica!
<i>jov de</i> Kokalica manušane,
<i>i de</i> trin šel cakli khatar mande. | 1.
Girl, grab an apron,
I'll pour in some bones,
some human bones,
there are three hundred bottles around me. |
| 2.
<i>ej de</i> Mamo miri, mamo miri,
<i>jaj, de</i> sar man dukhal miro šero.
<i>jaj de</i> Ko les mange sastsarela?
<i>de</i> Sastsarla les mri phuri daj. | 2.
My mother, my mother,
oh, how my head is aching.
Who will heal it for me?
My old mother will heal me. |

Nelahozeves (CZ) 1981: Marta Peřtová, b. approx. 1955.

70.

1.
Chude, čhaje, e leketa,
čhivav tuke kokalica!
hej Kokalica manušale,
kaj o Roma o mas chale.
2.
Dža pal o olovrantos!
Beštom mange trin beršora,
perdal tute *de* lubňije.
3.
Chude, phrala, oda lancos,
čhiv les pal ma tele!
Devla, Devla, so me kerdžom!

1.
Girl, grab an apron,
I'll pour in some bones!
hey Some human bones,
Roma ate the meat.
2.
Go have a snack!
I served my three years,
because of you, you bitch!
3.
Grab, brother, the chain,
get it off me!
Oh God, God, what have I done!

(Noted by Štampach: *Smižany* [SK] 1929: Mikša Šimonič).

71.

1.
***ej de* Čhiv ča, čhaje, e leketa,**
de čhivav tuke kokalica!
e jaj de Kokalica manušale,
de so len chale o rukone.
2.
jaj de Dela o Del oda linaj,
de kaj te keras baro bijav.
e joj de Te na bijav, aspoň boňa,
de kaj te pijen cudza Roma.
3.
ej de Pro ňebocis trin čerčeňa,
de phiren pal ma so trin pheňa,
e jaj de Aver kaľi, aver parňi,
de oja trito mri piraňi.

1.
Girl, throw an apron over here,
I'll pour in some bones!
Some human bones,
gnawed by the dogs.
2.
May Lord give such a summer,
that we can make a big wedding,
if not a wedding, [then] at least a christening,
so that [even] other Roma can drink.
3.
Three stars are in the sky,
all three sisters are coming to me,
one is black, the other is white,
the third one is my sweetheart.

Malý Slavkov (SK) 1988: Květoslava Pompová, b. 1967.

72.

Učiar, čiaije, leketova,
čivà' t'ke pendechora.
Pendechora, sadragora,
sar uła duj mamuchora.

Girl, open your apron,
I'll pour in some nuts.
Nuts like grapes,
like the two people.

(In Kopernicki 1930: 256).

73.

1.
***ej de* Denaš, phrala, denaš,**

de bo o Němci javen.
joj de Bo o Němci javen,
e de šaj amen murdaren.

2.
ej de Šaj amen murdaren,
nane amen ňiko,
joj de nane amen ňiko,
ej ča amen dujžene.

3.
ej de Romale, čhavale,
ej de den man koter maro!
joj de Den man koter maro,
ej de bo me som bokhalo!

4.
ej de Denaš, phrala, denaš,
ej de o baraka labon!
joj de O baraka labon,
ej de o bachara javen.

5.
ej de O bachara javen
de mre vasta te phandel,
joj de mre vasta te phandel,
ej de vaš tuke, lubňije!

6.
ej de Pre deska man phandle,
i de avka man domarde,
joj de avka man domarde,
ej de vaš tuke, lubňije!

1.
Run, brother, run!

Germans are coming!
Germans are coming,
they can kill us.

2.
They can kill us,
we don't have anyone,
we don't have anyone,
there's just the two of us.

3.
Roma, folks,
give me some bread!
Give me some bread,
I'm hungry!

4.
Run brother, run,
the barracks are on fire!
The barracks are on fire,
the guards are coming.

5.
The guards are coming,
to tie my hands,
to tie my hands,
because of you, bitch!

6.
They tied me to a bench,
and beat me brutally,
they beat me brutally
because of you, bitch!

Žehra-Dreveník (SK) 1987: Stanislav Mižigár, b. approx. 1967, and his wife.

74.

1.

Andre karčma gejlom

pivocis te pijel,
aňi les na piľom,
Duj pal o muj chudľom.

2.

Chudľom mange chudľom
le phandles te marel,
pro čhave dumindom,
e čhuri začidom.

3.

Denašen čhavale,
tele la jarkaha,
te na tumen chuden
o ňemcika phandle.

1.

I went to the pub

to drink some beer,
I haven't drunk up yet,
(and) I got two slaps.

2.

I began
to fight with the policeman,
I remembered my children
and threw the knife away.

3.

Run, boys,
down to the stream,
so that German policemen
won't catch you.

(In Jelínková – Hübschmannová ([197–]: No. 5).

75.

1.

Ande kočma gejlom,

pivocis me na piľom.
[:*de* Mek les na dopiľom,
duj pal o muj chudľom:].

2.

jaj Duj pal o muj chudľom,
o rat mandar čuloľ.
[:*jaj* O kalo gad pre ma
i le ratenca sapňol:].

1.

I went to the pub

I haven't (even) finished the beer.
[:Just as I was drinking
I got two slaps.:]

2.

I got two slaps,
Blood is pouring out of me.
[:The black shirt I'm wearing
is soaking with blood:]

Kokava nad Rimavicou (SK) 1983: anonymous.

76.

u Kašate legbareder vagaňis,
ej akanake mar le Romen šikinen.
de Phralorale, *de* mangav tumen šukares,
den paňori *jaj* ole čore Romoren.

In Košice there is the biggest slaughterhouse,
now they are grouping Roma there (for transport).
My dear brothers, pretty please,
give some water to the poor Roma!

Košice (SK) 1988: Jozef Bikar "Gancis", b. approx. 1968.

77.

E mašina mar piskinel,
ole Romen mar ladinen.
ej de Čore Roma avke roven,
ej pro Sudeti mar len lidžan.

Steam locomotive is already whistling,
they are loading Roma (on the train).
Those poor Roma are crying so much...,
they are taking them to the Sudetenland.

Praha (CZ) 1983: Ján Slepčík „Ačus“, b. 1950.

78.

E, mašina mar piskinel,
o, le Romen kije Aušvica kiden,
sar len kiden the murdáren,
but čhávoren jon čorráren.

The train is already hooting
they are taking the Roma to Auschwitz,
by taking them and killing
they are making many children orphans.

(In Holý – Nečas 1993: 122–123).

79.

[:**Ola Roma pr'ola Čechi nič na keren,** [:**Those Roma in Bohemia do nothing,**
č'andre karčma pijen:] just drink in pubs:]
Pijen, pijen, mulatinen, They drink, drink and are merry,
o caklici sa phageren. always breaking the glasses.
Pijen, pijen, mulatinen, They drink, drink and are merry,
u man čora na vičinen. and they won't invite me, poor.

(In Jelínková – Hübschmannová [197-?]: No. 45).

80.

U man nane buři, **I have no job,**
džav pre štacijova. I'll go to the station.
Amare Roma khejre aven Our Roma are coming home
pal o Čehiko. from Bohemia.

(In Jiří Binek 1953: 9).

81.

1. 1.
O Roma pro Čechi aven, **Roma are going to Bohemia,**
me džav, andre buři džav. I am going (too), going to work.
O Roma pro Čechi aven, Roma are going to Bohemia,
me džav, andre buři džav. I am going (too), going to work.
2. 2.
[:Sar on pro Čechi aven, [:When they arrive in Bohemia,
bare love zakeren. they earn a lot of money.
O Roma pro Čechi aven, Roma are going to Bohemia,
me džav, andre buři džav.:] I am going (too), going to work.

(In Kotlár 2007: 72).

82.

ej Urav bokačča
parne šnurkenca.
[:Me len na jurava,
pro Čechi me džava:]

I'll put on my shoes
With white laces.
[:I won't put them on,
I'll go to Bohemia:]

Bystrany (SK) 1981: anonymous.

83.

ej Sľahas man piraňi,
šukar čaj romaňi.
ej Odi man ligendaš
andro Čehosagos.
joj Bares me la kamás,
pal late me merás.
de Imar na birinav,
joj bo me na birinav
andre bari žala.

I had a sweetheart,
A beautiful Roma girl.
She took me
To Bohemia (with her).
I loved her very much,
I was dying of desire.
I can't take it (any more),
because I can't (bear)
this great sorrow.

Praha (CZ) 2001: Rudolf Dzurko.

84.

Otkanastar geľom pro Čechi,
phari bući me čak keravas.
Keravas, pro raja,
ča vaš kodi kaľi kaveja.

Since I left for Bohemia,
I've been working so hard,
slaving away for the lords,
just to get black coffee in return.

Roudnice (CZ) 1981: fam. Deter.



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