

# Romani & Traveller Arts: from Byzantium to Britain

A brief history of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller art, music, performance  
and literature, in Wales, U.K. and beyond

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# Romani origins, imagery, & identity, through the arts

*In their Gypsy Maker report of 2019, the Romani Cultural & Arts Co. (Romani Cultural & Arts Company) suggests that, "... Arts Council of Wales (ACW) recognises that there remains a regrettable shortage of knowledge about this exciting but overlooked community. By commissioning new works by GRT artists the Gypsy Maker project generates new knowledge relating to Gypsy, Roma & Traveller arts and culture and the related communities in Wales and beyond. In commissioning GRT artists, Gypsy Maker also leads the way in the UK and beyond by adding to the bank of GRT artworks available to the public. This is reflected real terms in the building of the RCAC art collection, the focus of which is to reflect the climate of GRT arts in Wales today..." Here, we explore the reasons behind that 'overlooking' of Romani and Traveller arts and artists, through the centuries...*

## 'Egyptians' in Byzantium

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES, ROMANI PEOPLE WERE ARTISTS AND PERFORMERS, AS WE CAN SEE FROM RECORDS OF THEIR PRESENCE and appearance in the Byzantine Empire, from 1050CE (Common Era). The very first mention of these 'Egyptians' comes from a *hagiography* (a saint's life), written in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century CE about St George the Athonite (of the Holy Mountain, Athos, now in Greece and the place of many ancient and historic monasteries where women are excluded). St George of Iviron was Abbott of the monastery of the Georgian Orthodox church on Mount Athos, and adviser to the Emperor of the Romans (*Romanioi*) or *Byzantines*, Constantine IX 'Monomachos' (*Konstantinos a to Krato Rom eono Monomaxos*; "he who fights alone"), ruler from 1042CE to 1055CE<sup>1</sup>. Constantine, a keen hunter, was having problems with wild predators in his hunting grounds just outside the city walls. These were slaughtering his game in large numbers, leaving none for the emperor and his nobles to hunt. He asked the 'Egyptians' to rid the hunting park of these troublesome beasts, which they did (apparently through sorcery), before returning to the emperor's court at the Blachernae Palace, to claim their reward. St George, in passionate language, denounced the 'Egyptians' as magicians, followers of the sorcerer Simon

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Magus<sup>2</sup>. The ‘Egyptians’ demonstrated their power by charming a dog at the court, which consequently died, but the fierce saint, “...with the grace of God”, was able to resurrect the dog and have the ‘Egyptians’ banished (unpaid) from the court as enchanters and necromancers.



Fig.1: The Crown of Constantine IX Monomachos (centre) Photography Andrew Massyn - own work, Public Domain, Crown of Monomachos

Later accounts of the ‘Egyptians’ emphasise their more usual performative skills, as bear-leaders, acrobats, tumblers, and jugglers. We have no definite accounts of Romani musicians and dancers, suggesting that these activities were not performed for public consumption, and suggesting the oft-times discussed notion that Romani performers operate in two modes: one for public performance, one for private, community performance<sup>3</sup>. We can see two dancers on the Crown of Monomachos (1047CE; figure1)<sup>4</sup> that we might conjecture, could be Romani entertainers at the court of the Emperor of the Romans, which might give us an earlier date of arrival in Constantinople, but such speculations are likely unwarranted. ‘Egyptian’ women continued appearing in the Byzantine records, encyclicals of patriarchs, and commentaries by churchmen. They maintained their reputation for prophecy, fortune-telling, and divination, together with providing charms and amulets against the “evil eye”. ‘Egyptian’ women were especially condemned for practising fortune-telling in the homes of Byzantines, presumably and predominantly women, who were themselves sanctioned by church authorities and excommunicated for period of five to seven years, if caught consulting the *Aiguptissa* (‘Egyptian’ women, from Byzantine Gk. *Aiguptoi*).

### **Byzantium, Byzantine, Roman, *Romaioi* – who were the Byzantines? Who were the ‘Egyptians’?**

Donald M Nicol captures, perhaps more succinctly than any other historian, the notion of who the Byzantines were and what the Empire itself was:

The Greco - Roman tradition and the mystique of the *imperium Romanum* of the ancient world never died east of the Adriatic Sea. The myth of the immortality of the Roman Empire was sustained rather than weakened by the Christian faith, so foreign to the mind of ancient Rome. The blood of the ruling families of the Byzantine Empire and the stock of its farmers and soldiers were enriched rather than

adulterated by integration with races such as the Syrians, Armenians and Slavs, which the true Greeks and Romans of old would have regarded as barbarous. The Byzantine armies which ensured the survival and expansion of the Empire in the middle ages were very far from being either Greek or Roman. The emperors and officers who commanded them were as often as not of Macedonian or Armenian family and were not concerned to claim descent from Pericles or Augustus. The Byzantine Empire was a multiracial and multilingual society. Yet Greek in its spoken form was the *lingua franca*, and Greek in its highly elaborate literary form was the language of the court, the church, the law of Constantinople, and of the literati, the poets, the historians, theologians, and essayists ...<sup>5</sup>

The key here is to focus upon the notion of the Roman Empire (as the *Romaioi* understood themselves to be living in *Romanland*), as a "...multiracial and multilingual society", so far removed from modern notions of ethnicity, identity and linguistic uniformity in the territorial nation-state. The latest Byzantine studies scholarship strongly argues the case that the *Romaioi* were an ethnic community, not an imperial community that obscured ethnicity in allegiance to the emperors and dynasty. Anthony Kaldellis<sup>6</sup>, in his well-argued, historiographical treatise on the prejudices of past historians, towards recognising them as such, argues these people were Romans, not 'Greeks', nor 'Byzantines' (all labels designed to remove the Romans from association with the glory-days of the Roman Republic and Empire under Augustus), disparaging them as 'effeminate', corrupted by women rulers and eunuchs, and that worst of all 'sins', 'Orientals'<sup>7</sup>.

As regards minority ethnic communities in *Romanland*, in their claims to be a part of the wider multiracial, multilingual society, the early 'Egyptians' (as they were called by others) had declared themselves, in some circumstances, to be an *ethnos*, within the larger ethnic community of *Romaioi*, a sub-ethnic group, if you will – though it is probable that the *Romaioi* rejected such a notion. This had taken place in c.1384; the earliest record is when a Florentine nobleman, Lionardo di Niccolo Frescobaldi, on a pilgrimage with thirteen companions and servants, arrived at the port of Modon in the Morea (Peloponnese), and meeting with a dark-skinned group of poor people living in black tents outside the walls of the city, asked who they were. The reply, as Frescobaldi records it, was the "We are *Romiti*." It is more likely to have been *Romitoi*, but the meaning was clear; in Greek, these tent-dwellers had answered that they were the "sons of the Romans", literally, 'little Romans'.

Consistent with descriptions from many late mediaeval and early modern travellers, these were the 'Egyptians' expressing, in their own 'voice' for the first time ('voices' unheard again until the 1540's in Tudor England, in our sources), their self-identity, their self-ascription of *ethnicity*. By 1415CE, a courtier banished from Constantinople was writing a satirical letter from 'Hades' (Hell), describing the 'primitive' conditions he was forced to endure in the Peloponnese, and noting the 'Egyptians' amongst the other seven *natio* 'nations' or ethnic communities: Laconians<sup>8</sup>, Italians

(Venetians, Genoese, Florentines), Peloponnesians<sup>9</sup>, Slavs, Albanians, Jews, and ‘Egyptians’, with their barbarous tongues<sup>10</sup>. Clearly Mazaris did not consider the *Romitoi* to be associated with the *Romaioi*, or was not even aware of the self-ascription used in Modon a half-century earlier, but he did note them amongst the minority ethnic communities in that part of the Empire of the Romans, in the early fifteenth century CE<sup>11</sup>.

### **‘Egyptians’, *Atsinganoi*, *Romitoi* – naming the Romanies**

The confusion over early Romani identity arises from the four-century period spent in Byzantium; St George had condemned the ‘Egyptians’ as ‘Samaritans’, followers of a notorious magician from the Bible’s *New Testament* tradition and the notion that these dark-skinned, *barbaraphonos* (speaking a foreign tongue), practisers of magic, sorcery, acrobatics, juggling, and traders in amulets were, in fact, descendants of an extinct, Anatolian heretic community from the ninth-century CE, the *Atsinganoi*. This latter group had sprung up at the time when the Aramaic and Syrian *Manichaeans*, Armenian *Paulicians*, Thracian *Bogomils*, and other dualist, pseudo-Christian communities had also been active in Cappadocia, Phrygia, and spread across the empire into the Balkans (especially Bulgaria, and Bosnia-Herzegovina). From thence to Italy as *Paulicani*, and on to southern France, as the *Cathars* (from the Greek, *katharos*, meaning ‘clean’, ‘pure’), or *Albigensians*, they were repressed with great brutality in the Albigensian Crusade of 1209CE to 1229CE led by Simon de Montfort and sanctioned by the Pope in Rome, Innocent III.

The ‘Great Heresy’ was stamped out much earlier (c.970CE) in Byzantium, with ferocious suppression of the dualists (believers in a ‘good’ God and ‘evil’ *demiurge*, who made the corporeal world and all its sins). Pop Bogomil was burnt at the stake in Constantinople towards the end of the ninth-century CE, though significant communities of dualists, *Bogomils*, *Manichées*, *Paulicians* remained in the outlying border lands, before being dispersed beyond into the successor states of the former western Roman Empire, and most especially Languedoc.

The ‘Egyptians’ were most frequently identified with the Biblical practitioners of magic; all magic came from Pharaoh at the time of Ramses II and Moses, so therefore, those who were dark-skinned, spoke a foreign tongue, and were sorcerers, magicians, and diviners of the future, must be ‘Egyptians’. Interest in magic was a legitimate and popular topic for scholar-bureaucrats and intellectuals in Byzantium. Even the empresses were invested with the idea of being sorceresses, particularly Zöe *Porphyrogenita*, wife of Constantine IX. Byzantine magic was based firmly in Egyptian magic, and had come to the empire via the Chaldeans, and the works of *Hermes Trimegistos* (‘thrice magical’). These were a group of so-called *Gnostic* texts that were consulted from mediaeval Byzantium and into the Renaissance, in magic, alchemy, and hermetic studies<sup>12</sup>.

With the addition of the 'Egyptians' own self-ascription of *Romitoi*, there existed in *Romanland* a complex picture of identity; were these people the followers of Simon Magus, as St George had identified them, devilish in their practice of magic and sorcery? Were they, as was commonly believed by most, 'Egyptians' who hailed from the land of the Pharaoh? Or were they who they said they were, 'little Romans', the "sons of the princes of the *Romaioi*" (to draw from the original Byzantine Greek term to the modern Romani, *Romanichals*)? Originally performers of magic, fortune-telling, bear-leading, acrobatics, juggling, and (possibly at court) dance, the 'Egyptians' had branched into metal-work and smithery, shoe-making (an 'Egyptian' cobbler is identified on the Holy Mountain in c.1200, in the sources), and transport (as waggoneers).

The conquest of Constantinople 1204CE, by the knights of the Fourth Crusade, in what was a vicious, destructive and rapacious assault on one part of Christendom by another, or, to put it another way, an attempt to force the will of the Pope of Rome upon the Patriarch of Constantinople, also brought extreme persecution of those deemed 'heretical' and all kinds of magicians, sorcerers, and diviners. The eradication of remnants of groups of *Bogomils*, *Paulicians*, and *Cathars*, in the feudal territories of the Latin empire of the Levant (as the crusader kingdoms are collectively called), by Robert Guiscard and other *Frankish* (French, German, Italian, Hungarian, Austrian), and Catholic Christian knights and nobles, reflected the intent of the papacy and its allies to repress any 'heresy' and introduce the inquisitorial process of investigation, arrest, torture, and execution of those suspected a dealing in magic, or of heterodoxy; the Albigensian Crusade of 1209CE followed shortly after the fall of Constantinople.

The 'Egyptians' were one such group that suffered during the period 1204CE to 1261CE, until Michael VIII Paleologos was able to retake the capital, largely as a result of dissension and squabbling amongst the Latin Franks over privileges and feudal rights. The other Byzantine 'empires' at Trebizond, Arta, Thessalonica, and Morea maintained a twilight existence at best, as 'rump' states during the Latin's control of the Levantine Empire, but all were reincorporated bar the Empire of Trebizond, which eventually fell to Mehmet II in 1461CE.

### **Performing 'Egyptian' identity and Roma slavery**

The 'Egyptians' arrived in Europe, in the wake of the *Saldjuk* (1071CE to 1320CE) and *Ottoman* (1320CE to 1453CE) assaults upon the Byzantine Empire – though many stayed in the lands of the Turkish *sultâns* (Figure 2) and, ultimately, were better treated than in Christian, late mediaeval and early modern Europe. It is in these early modern European lands that we see the extension of the 'Egyptian' identity into more varieties of performance; 'Egyptians' are recorded as dancers and musicians, jugglers and entertainers, at courts and cities across the continent. The enforced servitude and slavery of Romani people in the principalities of Wallachia (hence, *Vlach* Roma in the modern terminology of differing Roma groups), Transylvania, and Moldavia (now

comprising the state of Rumania), in the Serbian lands of Tsar and Autocrat of the Greeks and Serbs, Stefan Dushan (1331CE to 1355CE), and elsewhere in the Balkans was, in part, an attempt to 'bind' Romani labour, including performative labour, arts, and crafts to the households and courts of the *boyars*, or 'nobles', of the Rumanian and Balkan principalities. Those Roma slaves were treated merely as tasked and indentured racial labour, in ways that certainly precursors the slavery of Black African people in Europe; markedly different in this respect – though not less brutal, perhaps – than slavery in the late antique world of Rome, the Caliphate, and Indus valley societies<sup>13</sup>.



Fig.2: There are certain similarities between Byzantine dance, as depicted upon the Crown of Monomachos, and later, Ottoman Romani dancers with long skirts, highly decorated waistcoats, and veils, large handkerchiefs, and even spinning plates. [Ottoman Garment Database](#), Zacharias Wehme c.1582, *Ain Turggische Hochzeit*

Whilst the historical factors in the origins of Roma slavery in the Rumanian lands are frequently misattributed to Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, but are actually as a result of the labour needs of Christian institutions of monasteries, nobility, and kingship<sup>14</sup>, the primary impetus for this particular form of slavery became entirely *racial* by 1385CE in identifying Roma. Arguments that Wallachian and Moldavian peasants were also slaves are disingenuous; peasants were held in indentured servitude, not slavery, a form of tasked labour that evolved into feudalism, in the classic economic sense, and in village communes, not as individual families. Roma slavery was economic in impacts, and biological in its origins<sup>15</sup>.

The devastation of the Byzantine Empire (and across the known world) by typhus was a regular occurrence from the reign of Justinian (527CE to 565CE) onwards; the Black Death arrived in Constantinople, Galata (the Genoese port and 'concession' in Pera) in 1347CE and in ten subsequent waves between then and 1466CE, when its frequency diminished. It is therefore no coincidence that Roma slavery happened at the same time as the profound loss of settled, indentured peasant labour to the ravages of disease over a period of two centuries. Christian noblemen, abbots of priories, kings and tsars, all sought to tie labour in servitude of varying degrees to the land, to make it profitable and bring back areas of cultivation that had been 'lost' to the devastation of 'plagues'.

One of the consequences of Roma slavery, in the case of the Balkan lands and especially the Rumanian principalities (c.1260CE to c.1860), was the emergence of so-called ‘royal Roma slaves’.



Fig.3: Famille Tsigan en voyage en Moldavie, 1837 [pub.1839]; Nomadic Romani family traveling in Moldavia, by Auguste Raffet; Public Domain, [Nomadic Romani Family](#)

These were blacksmiths, gold-workers, performers, musicians, dancers, and entertainers on the royal *demesne*, or landholdings. Although bound to the royal estates, these Roma were better treated and had greater freedoms of movement and lifestyle in comparison to the ‘ordinary’ Roma slaves held by churches, monasteries, *boyars*, and landowners, by remaining mobile.

Denis Auguste Marie Raffet (2 March 1804 – 16 February 1860) in his

1837 lithograph of a Romani family on the move<sup>16</sup>, depicted a Roma family complete with waggons (Figure 3).

Here are the origins of two particular *Vlach* Romani identities (*Lovari* and *Kalderash*), language dialect, and cultural forms. Performing Romani identity was integral to the lives of these ‘royal Roma’, their very existence depended upon

it, in a sense. Like all performative forms that emerge from racial slavery, clear differentiation can be seen in Romani *Vlach* communities between ‘domestic’ and ‘public’ or ‘popular’ forms. Catering to the tastes and expectations of the *gadjé* (non-Romani) in Wallachia, Moldavia and the Balkans, would become a pattern for Romani and non-Romani interactions and transactions. Performing Romani identity was *both* an economic necessity

*commercialising* ‘Egyptian’ identity and selling the *gadjé* what they expected and ‘wanted’, and an expression of self-hood through cultural *inversion*, a semiotic *re-imagining* of ‘Egyptian-ness’ or ‘Gypsy-ness’, as an act of resistance and resilience. Not, as current identity politics would have

*...[u]n rustique chariot dans lequel sont entassés au milieu d'agrès et de toiles de campement des femmes échevelées et des enfants à demi-nus s'avance lentement traîné par deux buffles à travers une plaine immense à droite un Tsigane l'aiguillon à la main marche auprès d'un second chariot. Le chef de cette famille de bobémiens à cheval ainsi que les deux serviteurs qui le suivent chemine au premier plan... Denis Auguste Marie Raffet (2 March 1804 – 16 February 1860)*



us believe, a passive acceptance of negative stereotypes and connotations, but a self-conscious use of enchantment, of *performing* 'Egyptian'<sup>17</sup>.

### Fortune telling as performance; 'Egyptians' and cartomancy

*Cartomancy* is the art of divination using Tarot, or other decks of cards, practised by Romani people (as 'Egyptians') since the earliest period from when cards arrived in Europe, c.1370'sCE. It is possible (though by no means proven<sup>18</sup>), that playing cards arrived with the ancestors of modern Romani people, the 'Egyptians', as part of their *paraphernalia* for performing magic and divination in Byzantium. However, the descriptions of 'Egyptian' fortune-tellers in Constantinople and elsewhere in the empire usually describe water in silver bowls, as a form of early *scrying*, later used by Renaissance magicians and alchemists such as Edward Kelly and Dr John Dee in their communications with angels, or a sort of palm-reading, as the basis for their divination<sup>19</sup>. So, it is likely that playing cards entered Byzantium and Europe via Genoese, Venetian, Milanese (Figure 4), and Florentine merchants, from China, via Persia, Arabia, and Egypt, not India, c.1377CE.



Fig.4: Visconti-Sforza Tarot cards, from Duchy of Milan, mid-15th century CE. By Bonifacio Bembo (original) - [Wikipedia DE](#), Public Domain, [Wikipedia](#)

The earliest reliable references to cards are from Florence, issued as a ban on the playing of them. Through the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries CE, there are frequent interdictions from authorities across Europe, some based upon the notion of gambling and 'loose' behaviour, others on the basis that these were the invention or production of the 'infidels' (Muslims) and designed to lure Christians into immoral behaviour. An especially fine pack of Ottoman playing cards, from the *Topkapı Sarayı* (Topkapı Palace) in Istanbul, was discovered in 1939, probably of *Mamluk* origins<sup>20</sup>. It is the association of Gypsies with Tarot cards in particular, which has become

embedded in the popular imagination, and the self-identity of many Romani people, with the practice of cartomancy and divination, though erroneously.

However, 'Egyptians' are most often depicted telling fortunes, in paintings and woodblock prints, using palm-reading (Figure 5) as the basis for their clairvoyance, not Tarot cards<sup>21</sup>. Such is the pervasiveness of this image of 'Egyptians' in European art and literature, in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries CE, that Shakespeare could write, *Dukdame*, knowing that



'Fig.5: Egyptians' fortune-telling; woodcut from Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographie Universelle*, Basle, 1552CE

his audience would understand the reference being to 'Egyptians' and their palm-reading and fortune-telling.

The Romani word for fortune-telling, *dukkering*, is likely behind this corrupted and misheard version of the original words, which would have been called out by 'Egyptian' fortune-tellers in markets in England, Scotland, and Wales, '*Dukker mandi, dukker mandi*, 'Fortunes I tell, fortunes I tell!'. Sixteenth century Romani language was associated with Greek because of the connection, albeit misunderstood, with the 'Greeks' of Byzantium. That Shakespeare was also aware of Byzantium is clear from his play, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1599-1601), where the prince and the politics of the play closely resembles aspects of Byzantine history, particularly the murder of some emperors<sup>22</sup>.

"Jacques: "*Dukdame, dukdame, dukdame*... a Greek invocation to draw fools into a circle..." As *You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 5

Shakespeare's *Jacques* might play at being 'Egyptian', without adopting any of the paraphernalia, but Ben Jonson's 1621, *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*<sup>23</sup>, deliberately chose to explicitly portray the popular image of the 'Gypsies', in order to exploit both the

audience's preconceptions and prejudices about 'Gypsies', and to astonish them with the final transformation of 'Gypsies' into courtiers, at the end of the masque. The 'Gypsies' are all 'Ethiopian' in skin colouring<sup>24</sup>, that changes with the arrival of the king (James I and VI of England and Scotland) to become 'pure' white again, at the close of the play. During the masque, players 'wandered' amongst the courtiers in the audience standing watching, wearing their *tatterdemalion* and *parti-coloured* clothing and hats, pick-pocketing or *piking*, as it was called in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries<sup>25</sup>, telling fortunes, and breaking into dance and song. In

short, the actors and courtiers behaved and looked like ‘Gypsies’, according to popular stereotypes. The resolution to the masque, when good order is restored by kingly rule, means their costumes are thrown off, their faces become ‘white’ (by being wiped clean of make-up), and all the purloined goods returned to the audience.

### **Power, perception, [mis]representation, & curation**

With the close of Ben Jonson’s masque, the last remnants of ‘enchantment’ with the Gypsies also ends. The draconian laws of the sixteenth century, from 1536CE to 1550CE had seen the increasing disenchantment with ‘Egyptians’, sturdy beggars, lawless and land-less poor, and vagabondage in general. Romani people were no longer able to represent themselves except as *temporary*, *contingent* and *contested* versions of the ‘Gypsy’, or to perform ‘Egyptian’ identity, through their economic activities (palm-reading, fortune-telling, cartomancy, dancing, minstrelsy). Indeed, these now became the subjects for depiction by artists, in an almost entirely negative light.

Caravaggio’s 1594CE *The Gypsy Fortune Teller* is a fairly neutral work, with only the ‘Gypsy’ and her client depicted actually gazing at each other, though the ‘Egyptian’ in the painting has only the outward dress of the ‘Egyptians’; Caravaggio’s ‘Gypsy’ is otherwise not presented as ‘Egyptian’ at all. Caravaggio’s followers were less interested in neutrality, and more in the stereotypical depiction of ‘Gypsies’ as petty thieves. A painting by one of them (unnamed) from c.1571CE to 1610, shows three ‘Gypsy’ women<sup>26</sup>, dark-skinned and curly-haired, wearing *dalmatica* (long tunic with very full sleeves to the wrist), *chlamys* (colourful, or patterned wrap), and *himation* (semi-circular cloak buttoned or pinned at the right shoulder). Somewhat unusually, they are also wearing *maphorion* (a mantle over the hair and shoulders), rather than the usually depicted *turban*<sup>27</sup> (Figure 5) of the ‘Egyptians’. The conservative attitudes towards dress in Byzantium, as depicted in mosaics, murals and iconographic art, was one that seems to have impressed itself upon the ‘Egyptians’ as their departure from the Byzantine lands, c.1300CE onwards, did not lessen their adherence to Byzantine costume until well into the seventeenth century.

Lionello Spada’s 1615 *The Gypsy Fortune Teller*, is an early representation of the notion of ‘Gypsy’ children being involved in criminality. Jan Cossiers 1630 painting of *The Fortune Teller*, portrays ‘Gypsies’ picking pockets of the unwitting ‘gull’ having their palm read. Costume is again depicted as a *chlamys* or *himation*, consistently depicted as ‘Egyptian’ wear from the earliest illustrations through to the late seventeenth century – a remarkably long duration, from shortly after the appearance of the ‘Egyptians’ in Byzantium, c.1050CE to c.1650, clearly indicating the conservatism of Romani dress and costume.



Fig.6: *The Fortune Teller* by Georges de La Tour - MET museum, Public Domain, [Wikimedia](#)

The most familiar representation of 'Gypsy' fortune telling in European art of the seventeenth century is, perhaps, that of Georges de la Tour, painted 1633 to 1639 (Figure 6), *The Fortune Teller*, where four 'Gypsy' women are surrounding a naïve young, well-dressed man. One woman picks his pocket, whilst another cuts a watch (Nuremberg Egg, as they were called), or medallion from his golden chain. An older

'Gypsy crone' (another stereotype to appear in arts and literature), looks at the young man intently, presumably to distract his gaze.

Bartolomeo Manfredi's 1616 (Figure 7) painting of *The Gypsy Fortune Teller*, is an interesting reversal of the trope, as it is the Gypsy woman who is having her purse stolen from by one young, elegantly hatted 'blade', whilst she reads the palm of his companion, watched by another 'Egyptian' woman; in Manfredi's depiction, the young 'blade' looks somewhat anxiously at his own hand.

Simon Vouet 1620, repeats this theme in his response to Caravaggio's 1594, *The Gypsy Fortune Teller*, in his, *The Fortune Teller*, a highly stagy and somewhat mannered depiction (Figure 10). Whilst the client is looking directly at the viewer, not at the 'Gypsy' nor her hand, she has a mocking smile and exaggerated flick of her right wrist, pointing to the fortune-teller as if to say, 'Look at this *charade*'. Meanwhile, a hatted companion of hers picks the pocket of the fortune-teller, whilst smiling at the 'Gypsy' man in the painting – who points to the client, though looks more like

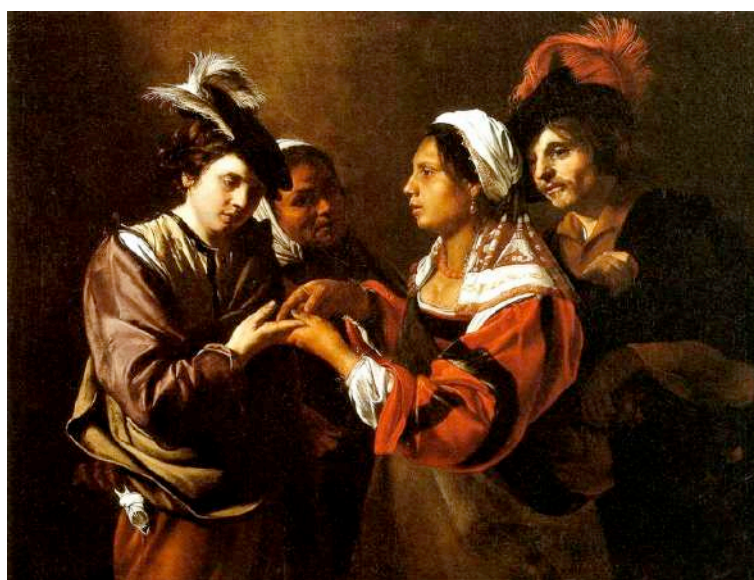


Fig.7: Bartolomeo Manfredi's 1616 painting of *The Gypsy Fortune Teller* – Web Gallery of Art: Public Domain, [Wikipedia](#)

actor in 'Ethiop' make-up and costume, unlike the fortune teller. However, Vouet's and Manfredi's paintings are unusual, and the trend in representative arts in this period is for replicating the dominant trope of 'Gypsies' as pick-pockets (*piking*), and thereby criminals in



Fig.10: Simon Vouet, 1620, *The Fortune Teller*, [Wikipedia](#)

general, a nation of 'rogues' and 'vagabonds', as many of the chap-books and pamphlets put it. We see in Vouet's earlier (1617) a treatment of the same subject ([Simon Vouet 1617 The Fortune Teller](#)). The portraits of the Gypsy women in both are also detailed and nuanced enough to be, perhaps, painted from actual Romani models, rather than the usual generic 'Egyptians' in paintings and woodcuts, 1500CE to 1700. There is a certain, almost trance-like quality to the gaze of the fortune tellers as they hold the hands of their young, fashionable clients.



Fig.11: *The Bohemians on the March: the Avant Guard*, [Cleveland Art Avant Guard](#) *the Rearguard*, [Cleveland Art Rear Guard](#) Jacques Callot, c. 1621-1625, publisher: Cleveland Museum of Art

A change is seen when bands of Romani people in Europe were actually occupied in fighting, as mercenaries, during the Thirty Years War, 1618–1648. Callot's four engravings of "The Bohemians" (Jacques Callot, c.1621 – 1625; Figure 11), are important to the historical and artistic record, as they depict, as realistically as possible, Romani costume, modes of transport, armaments, organisation, and occupations at this time, and indicate the remarkable continuity with the mediaeval and early modern past<sup>28</sup>. Callot's images also challenge the consistent (and incorrect) assertion that Gypsies, Roma, and Travellers have never been engaged in wars and military conflicts as anything other than victims of non-Romani aggression. From the Byzantine, Ottoman, and Venetian empires it is clear (and confirmed by these engravings) that the truth is

quite the opposite. The text that accompanies these illustrations is both cynical, and prejudicial towards ‘Gypsies’, clearly referring to pilfering and stealing, whilst the ‘origins’ of the group are deliberately referred to as ‘Egyptian’. In the final panel, a debauched feast takes place in a farmhouse pillaged by the Bohemians<sup>29</sup>.

David Tenier the Younger, during the 1640’s, depicted the imaginary, highly romanticised counterpart to the military ‘Gypsy’, in idyllic mountain scenery, twice, c.1644 ([Gipsy Fortune Teller in a Hilly Landscape](#)), and c.1645-46 (Figure 9), beginning the trend for idealised portraits of country living and a well-ordered demesne, featuring the rural ‘Gypsies’. This depiction of pastoral Arcadia is exactly the same date as the Wars of the Three Kingdoms (or the English Civil War) 1639–1653, and the worst of the wars of religion, the Thirty Years War (of which Callot’s *Bobemians* are part of, as mercenary troops).



Fig.9: Mountain landscape with a Gypsy fortune teller, after 1644, oil on canvas, by David Teniers the Younger - Public Domain, [Mountain Landscape with Fortune Teller](#)

In the century before, the Earls of Pembroke had created Wilton House, their sheep-dotted Wiltshire estate, where they set about creating an elaborate pastoral landscape that was entirely artificial. It was there that Sir Philip Sidney, brother to the second Countess of Pembroke, composed his poem, *The Countess of Pembroke’s Arcadia* (1593CE). This was a prose romance, much admired at the time, featuring knights and shepherds, and scattered with poems in praise of woods, vales and rustic solitude, and *feudal* relationships. Teniers, Aubrey, and Sidney all sought, in the face of such conflicts, enormous shifts in power, the execution of monarchs, and the ravaging of country estates, a return to a ‘Golden Age’ of peasants and lords, shepherds and shepherdesses, and, somewhat surprisingly, Gypsies telling fortunes or travelling through the country lanes and byways of Arcadian Europe. Backward looking and utterly opposed to the rise of the merchants and burghers, to say nothing of their political control of the mechanisms of power, pastoral idylls depicted in arts and literature were profoundly hierarchical and opposed to the changes that radical politics of the 17<sup>th</sup> century brought – especially to the erosion of traditional elites and their control. Clearly, the horrors of conflicts in which more than a third of the population of Europe at the time died during the Wars of Religion, inspired artists and writers, such as John Aubrey, a 17<sup>th</sup> century antiquarian, to opine that such idylls as the shepherds of Wiltshire “...do give us resemblance of the golden age”.

However, the later literary portrayal of 'Gypsies' was less enchanted, though connected to the last vestiges of Arcadian idyll, at least before Romanticism. In Jane Austen's *Emma*<sup>30</sup>, Harriet Smith, the friend of the title character, is accosted by a gang of Gypsy children in an episode that takes place on the outskirts of Highbury village. Austen hints the children are criminal, violent, dark-skinned, and terrifying, but perhaps intimating a subtle connection with Harriet Smith, an orphan with a common Romani surname, in the kind of 'There but for the grace of God go I', allusion. Regency England, in most novels and arts of the period, is still pastoral, idyllic, but *predominantly* English; the monarchy and army having spent the previous century reducing the Highland Scots and Irish rebels to ensure an Hanoverian hegemony. 'Gypsies' in the arts are fitted into the Regency as another 'untameable', 'irredeemable' population to be controlled and contained in Europe, as centralised monarchies and autocracies colonised both their own domains, and those of non-European peoples in imperial projects, through the prism of *Orientalism*<sup>31</sup>.

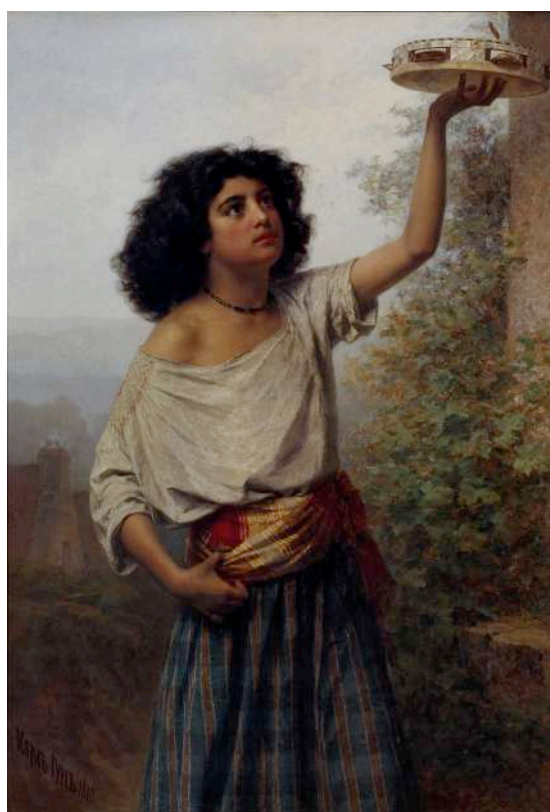


Fig.12: *Young Gypsy Woman* by Karlis Teodors Huns, at Google Cultural Institute, Public Domain, [Wikimedia](#)

With the shift to more naturalistic portrayal, in aesthetic terms, literature gathered up the 'Gypsy' into early Gothic novels<sup>32</sup>, most famously in the English language perhaps in Heathcliffe, from *Wuthering Heights* in 1847, by Ellis Belle (Emily Brontë's pen name). Romanticism, as it develops from the Gothic<sup>33</sup> in the arts and literature of the early-to-mid nineteenth century, produced a subtle alteration in portrayal of Romani people, from outright deviant and criminal, to figures in Nature, ciphers for various romantic, anti-industrialised, societal notions, in common with other 'noble savages' of the period. Romanticism's imagery of 'Gypsies' developed and overtook the more usual depiction of pick pockets and fortune telling.

Gypsies later became incorporated into the symbolism of Victorian 'lost' childhood innocence (and exploitation), through paintings such as Karlis Teodors Huns' *Young Gypsy Woman* 1870 (Figure 12), begging for coins in a suitably Gothic, castellated landscape. As the railways expanded across industrialised nations, bringing modernity to all parts of the continent, imagery that sought to portray an historic, natural vision of 'simpler' times, included 'Gypsies' as symbols of such aspirations, whilst still hinting at notions of 'wildness' through their depiction in 'untamed' or 'savage' environments.



Fig.13: Jacques Wagrez, 1901, *The Gypsy Fortune-teller*, Salt Lake City Arts Council – Public Art Projects, [Salt Lake City Arts Council](#)

The wheel comes full-circle, as it were, with Jacques Wagrez' *The Gypsy Fortune Teller*, 1901 (Figure 13) who situates his young 'Gypsy' woman in a composition designed to echo a kind of mediaeval Italy (reflecting, in the artist's mind perhaps, the original 'Egyptians' in 15<sup>th</sup> century Genoa, Florence, and Venice), though she is dressed much more akin to folk-costumes of the age of nationalism, with its explosion of myths of origins and 'invented traditions'<sup>34</sup>, than anything late nineteenth-century Romani people might recognise. The fortune-teller has moved from the late mediaeval markets of Münster's *Cosmographie* woodcuts (1552),

to the Pre-Raphaelite stone stairway of an imagined Verona, in a conscious echo of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's

*Ancient Mariner*, stopping wedding guests on their way, with his lament of innocence lost<sup>35</sup>. The sophisticates of Wagrez' painting are contrasted strongly, through their costly velvets, bare arms, and fine shoes, with the barefoot 'Gypsy' girl, her hair and arms modestly covered and basket of flowers she is on her way to sell, by her feet.

### Challenging the centuries long, *gorgio* (non-Romani) 'gaze'

From their earliest arrival in Byzantium (11th century CE: see above), to the middle of the twentieth century, Romani imagery, portrayal, and description was entirely defined by the non-Romani imagination, the *gorgio* 'gaze'. 'Gypsies' were fashioned in the heads and hands of *non-Romani* writers, artists, folklorists, encyclopaedists, anthropologists and ethnographers. The process of replication of previous prejudices and stereotypes through imagery and text was one that had been a staple of any treatise on the 'Egyptians', inspiring numerous versions of the same, or very similar, and largely fantastical descriptions, conjectures, and outlandish assumptions.

The darker side of this 'imagining the Gypsy' was devised in the minds of the racial biologists, eugenicists, and others during the period of the beginnings of scientific racism. The concept of selectively 'improving' populations through breeding programmes, had originally been suggested by Plato, c.400BCE, whilst ancient Sparta had practised infanticide, and the Roman 'Law of Twelve Tables', No.IV states, "A dreadfully deformed child shall be quickly killed", c.450BCE. British eugenicists led by Sir Francis Galton (1822 to 1911), a committed proponent of scientific racism and social Darwinism, developed hierarchies of 'race', propounded selective breeding, and forced sterilisation of inferior populations and races, amongst whom were 'Gypsies'. Such ideas became



quickly adopted over the rest of Europe, Scandinavia, the United States, Japan, and colonial India and Africa (particularly southern Africa and the Boer states).

The ultimate realisation of such notions were devised as part of the Nazi racial state (1936 to 1945), but aspects of eugenics were embedded in many countries' policies of forced sterilisation, immigration control, monitoring of movement, restrictive social welfare, family, and education. Even sexual health had its eugenicists, such as Marie Stopes (1880-1958), who otherwise promoted women's reproductive control and understanding of sexuality. Under the Nazis and allied fascist regimes, approximately 1,500,000 Roma, Sinti, and other Romani and Traveller communities were eradicated on racial grounds, in what has become known as the *Porrajmos*, or 'Great Devouring'<sup>36</sup>. The genocidal impulse of the nationalist, fascist imagination was (and remains) the ugliest aspect of the 'dark continent' – twentieth century Europe – and its impact upon Romani people is still being reflected in, and through Romani arts and cultures, following the attempted wholesale destruction of Europe's Roma and Sinti. Those that survived were cast off as liars and charlatans, seeking sympathy and reparations for something that did not happen, as far as post-war governments were concerned.



Fig.14: Ceija Stojka, 1990, *Forget Us Not*, Lovari artist and *Porrajmos* survivor, [BBC News](#)



Fig.15: Helios Gomez, 1937, *Evacuation (of the Gypsies)*, [Anarchists Encyclopedia](#)

The expression of this appalling event was portrayed by those caught up in the various events that made up the total tragedy, in the case of Ceija Stojka (1933 – 2013; Figure 14), and Helios Gomez (1905 – 1956; Figure 15), for example. It is also to be found in the modern works of Romani artists, such as Katarzyna Pollok ([Signs Journal](#)) *Holocaust (Porrajmos) Series* (2002; Figure 16), or young *Nawken* (Scottish Traveller) artist, Stacey Hilton's *The Devouring* series, produced as part of *Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month 2020* (Figure 17).

Following the Reconstruction after WWII, Romani artists, writers and performers, especially in the Soviet bloc communist regimes, were being

recognised by those in power keen to incorporate ‘naïve Gypsy’ arts and performance into the culture of the new workers’ states. Poetry, theatre, music, dance, and fine arts from Roma began to be presented in the public space, as examples of ‘Soviet Man and Woman’ redeemed. In 1975, in Communist Hungary, the first collective exhibition of Roma artists in the eastern bloc was organised and curated by a young Roma intellectual, Agnes Daroczi, in a major show that drew upon a wide range of styles and approaches. In 1991, the first *Museum of Roma Culture* was organised by a group of Roma intellectuals in what was then Brno, Czechoslovakia, becoming a state-supported and recognised cultural institution in 2005, led by Roma intellectual, Dr Jana Horvathova.



Fig.16: Katarzyna Pollok, 2002, *Holocaust Series No.9; 'Voices': the Porrajmos*

In 2002, in Greenwich (London), the [Second Site](#) exhibition of works by four leading Gypsy, Roma and Traveller artists – Daniel Baker, Delaine Le Bas, Damian Le Bas, Ferdinand Koci – was organised and curated by Thomas Acton and his daughter, Grace Acton, bringing Romani arts into the academy, as Acton was Professor of Romani Studies<sup>37</sup>, at the University of Greenwich. Museum exhibitions that contained not only artefacts but also arts and crafts pieces, but text from Romani historians<sup>38</sup>, were organised by Malmö Museer, Sweden (2003), *Beyond Romanticism and Racism*, and in Glömdahl Museer, Norway (2004). Both exhibitions were co-curated with members of the Romani communities and museum staff working together.



Fig.17: Stacey Hilton, 2020, *The Devouring 2, Scotland GRTHM*

Five years later, the Venice Biennale opened with a first special pavilion dedicated to European Romani arts and artists, called ‘Paradise Lost’ (curated by Timea Junhaus; [Paradise Lost](#)).

In addition, the RomArchive (Roma Digital Archive; [RomArchive](#)) has sought to catalogue and re-present Romani arts, artists through an online digital exhibition and archive ([Visual Arts](#)), whilst also providing space for dance ([Dance](#)), flamenco ([Flamenco](#)), and theatre ([Theatre & Drama](#)).

Launched in January 2019, the RomArchive undertook an extensive exercise in capturing

Romani arts, performance, culture, and heritage to present to a wider, largely non-Romani audience, in a way that had not been done before, and with an authenticity that had not been

present in most curated, digital exhibitions and archives previously. Robert Dawson's curated collection of Romani and Traveller imagery is also another expression of Romani re-representation, an act of *reclamation* of non-Romani artist's ownership of the imagery of the 'Gypsy' ([Robert Dawson Gallery](#)).

### Romani and Traveller artists in Wales: Romani Re-representation

With the *Second Site* exhibition of Romani and Traveller artists, the public and creative space opened up for Gypsy arts in the U.K., in a way that had not happened before at any time. [Writing later](#), Thomas Acton would call the exhibition "...an act of affirmation, not one of defence" (2006), arguing that the image of Romani people had, for centuries, been viewed as "...one of a problem...", in need of resolving "...until Hitler tried the final solution." Bringing Romani and Traveller arts into the academe also brought a legitimacy that had been lacking, though not for want of talent or trying, previously. Romani arts and representation by Romani artists and craftspeople was finally becoming a genre that was moving out of the 'folk-arts' or 'naïve' category in the arts and aesthetics. With the graduation of one of those artists represented in the *Second Site* exhibition, Dr Daniel Baker (2011, Royal College of Art, London) delivered a resounding critique of *gorgio* representation, making the argument for a complex understanding and appreciation of a unique Gypsy aesthetic ([Gypsy Visuality](#)), and the public space expanded for Romani arts and artists<sup>39</sup>.

In 2007 Baker and Paul Ryan, a non-Romani artist, co-curated an exhibition in London entitled, *No Gorgios*<sup>40</sup> (Figure 18). In articulating "Gypsy social agency", the *commercial* arts and crafts are also recognised

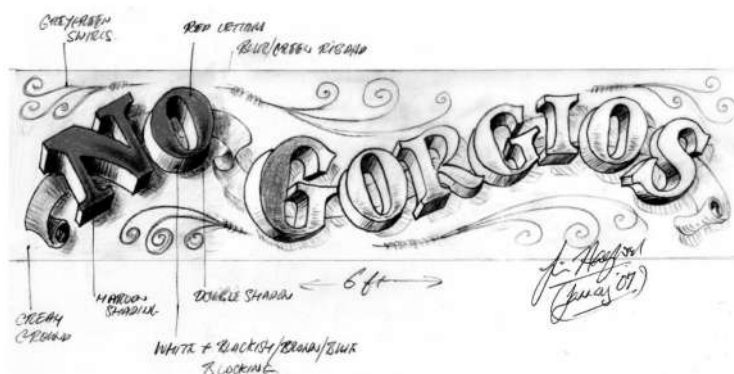


Fig.18: Jim Hayward, *No Gorgios* sign design, 2006. © Jim Hayward

as part of the visuality of Gypsy culture, a hitherto ignored aspect of the *economic* relationship that underlies Romani and non-Romani interactions, and has done for centuries. Romani and non-Romani social relations are, inevitably, an aspect of Romani economics that are predicated by their position as *commercial nomads*, fulfilling small economic niches that are<sup>41</sup>, otherwise uneconomic for organised capital in the settled community to engage with, *i.e.*, horse-trading, knife-grinding, basket-making, carpet and bed-beating, watch-mending, paper-flower-making, peddling small items of haberdashery, waggon painting and sign-painting, music, dance, entertainment, *etc.* Baker and others, such as the *Romer* and *Tattare* curators of the Scandinavian exhibitions of 2003 and 2004, also sought to identify this commercial nexus of Romani arts and

artefacts. Baker has made that explicit in his *Shift-Work* show of 2018, part of the series of commissioned *Gypsy Maker* exhibitions by Romani and Traveller artists<sup>42</sup>.



Fig.19: *Black Tent / Black Sarah*, 2022 © Imogen Bright Moon. Photo: Alun Callender, [Romani Cultural & Arts Co.](#)

Imogen Bright Moon has also drawn explicit connections with the economic nexus of Romani arts and the non-Romani ‘gaze’. Bright Moon’s *Black Tent/Black Sarah* 2018 (Figure 19), not only references *Kali Sara*, a significant figure in Romani mythography, but her tent as a site of production – spinning by hand, with a distaff<sup>43</sup>. The labour of Romani women in producing woven textiles for clothing worn by the ‘Egyptians’ through the centuries (1050CE to 1650CE), long after Byzantium and Byzantine cloth manufacture had ceased, is little recognised.

Cass Holmes has taken the production of textiles further, with her *Stitch Stories* (2015) and *Textile Landscape: Painting with Cloth* (2018) recapitulating a relationship with the natural environment to explore and *re-present* her own Romani and non-Romani heritage, through her creative gaze. As a person of mixed background, Holmes examines the *entanglement* of these two identities, where one appears phantom-like, bleeding through the other (Figure 20), a stitch in time as it were.

Dan Turner, a Romani sculptor and artist, captures the notion of ‘home’ or *Tan* (in *Rromani-chib*, Romani language; Figure 21), extended over the map of Britain made from mixed bricks, wood and painted tiles. Small, silver Romani caravans or *vardo* are peppered across the rough-and-ready outline of the British Isles, locating stopping places or *aitchin tan* for Gypsies and Travellers as an integral aspect of this imagined home. The traditional metal of transactions between *gorgios* and Romani people, crossing the



Fig.20: Cass Holmes, *Pani Kekkavva (Kettle)*, *Wagtail* 2019 (detail). © Cass Holmes, [Romani Cultural & Arts Co.](#)



Fig.21: Dan Turner *Patteran 1* 2019. 91 cm x 60 cm x 50 cm. Mixed media. © Dan Turner [Romani Cultural & Arts Co](#)

into the surface behind her, fixed and solid, almost buttressing the old stone wall and her Romani identity. History of Romani migration and mobility is contrasted with the immobility and long-standing (literally) structure she *connects* with; strung between two solids she hangs at a tipping point, balanced but not falling. For Romani people, it is the space between where identity is constructed and contested, a complex suspension that is also in motion, through *stasis*, the same force that keeps tight-rope walkers (a Romani traditional occupation since Byzantine times) on the wire. Cisneros looks back to this tradition, described in the sources of mediaeval Constantinople, c. 1320CE. Her *LifeStrings* stretch back in time and space, across thousands of miles and many centuries to describe the journey of the Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, the 'Egyptians' from Byzantium to Britain.

That mobility is 'pinned' for a moment in time by Daniel Baker's *Shift-Work* piece (Figure 24) *Encounter Triptych*, informing us

palm with silver as the saying goes, is implicit in the caravans, which are also 'charms', harking back to the notion of *baxt* or 'luck' in relation to Gypsies and Travellers, which appears in the title of this work. There is a certain irony too in this; are Gypsies and Travellers "lucky people" travelling the highways and byways of Britain? Turner's awareness of restrictive legislation that will eradicate this very aspect of Romani tradition is where Romani arts meets Romani politics.

Performance and arts come together in Rosa Kostic Cisneros' *LifeStrings* work (Figure 22), part of the most recent edition of the *Gypsy Maker* project. Inverting the usual trope of the *flamenco* dancer reaching up and out, in a performative space, Cisneros falls back and



Fig.22: *LifeStrings* (still image), 2022 © Rosamaria Kostic Cisneros. Photo Maria Polodean [Romani Cultural & Arts Co](#)

that *we are here*, without making it clear where exactly *here* is. Like points on the modern maps from big-tech companies, Baker's references are to the present and future, but are also reversed to look back to when Gypsies and



Fig.23: Daniel Baker, *Encounter Triptych*, 2018, 110 cm x 90 cm each. © Daniel Baker [Romani Cultural & Arts co.](#)

Travellers used *patrin* or *patteran* to 'map' the Romani world for other Romani and Traveller people on the road, small packets of flowers and plants that had a secret language giving direction and distance. These would be hung on hedges and fences as way markers for those following, to indicate where to gather, essential for communities that had become atomised by persecution and genocide. Baker's reflection of this, in his choice of surface, asks us to reconsider where (and when) we are.



Fig.24: Billy Kerry, *All Fur Coat*, [Romani Cultural & Arts Co.](#)

Romani artists in Wales, Scotland, and England are not the only ones 'pushing back' against the *gorgio* gaze, re-representing Romani and Traveller identities and imagery through their own eyes; across Europe, Roma, Sinti and others are too, particularly in exhibitions and initiatives mounted or supported by the *European Roma Institute for Arts & Culture*, but the *Gypsy Maker* project from the *Romani Cultural & Arts Co.* and funded through the *Arts Council Wales*, is unique in *commissioning* new work from these artists, on the basis of *being* Gypsy, Roma, Traveller creatives. Wales has become the iris in what was a *camera obscura*. The non-Romani gaze is no longer a unequivocal examination – when the

*gorgios* look into us, we are there now, looking back into the *gorgios*... (Billy Kerry, 2018, *All Fur Coat*, Figure 24).

- <sup>1</sup> Together with his co-empresses, Zoe and Theodora *Porphyrogenita*, meaning “born in the purple”, *i.e.*, born in the royal palace with its purple coloured, marble interior walls.
- <sup>2</sup> The Samaritan or Samaritan magician, from the Acts of the Apostles, who had tried to buy the powers of the followers of Christ, and thus gave rise to the term, simony
- <sup>3</sup> See Alaina Lemon, 2000, *Between Two Fires: Gypsy Performance and Romani Memory from Pushkin to Post-Socialism*, Durham: Duke University Press; Carol Silverman, 2012, *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; Sonia T Seeman, 2019, *Sounding Roman: Representation and Performing Identity in Western Turkey*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- <sup>4</sup> The enamel and gold panels of the Crown of Monomachos, with the Emperor Constantine IX (centre), his wife, the Empress Zöe, ‘most pious Augusta’ (left), here sister, the Empress Theodora, ‘most pious Augusta’ (right), dancers with veils, and personifications of virtues: ἡ ἀλήθεια – Sincerity (right, end), and ἡ ταπείνωσις – Humility (left, end), between two cypress trees on each panel, signifying the Garden of Eden. Depiction of dancing in Byzantine artefacts is extremely rare.
- <sup>5</sup> Nicol, Donald M., 1999, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261 to 1453*, Cambs.: Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed., pp.1-2
- <sup>6</sup> Kaldelis, Anthony, 2019, *Romanland: Ethnicity & Empire in Byzantium*, Cambs. Mass.: Belknap Press
- <sup>7</sup> See Gibbon, 1776 – 1788, *The History of the Decline & Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols. London
- <sup>8</sup> Traditionally Spartans, but at this point, the *Maniots*, ΜΑΝΙΩΤΕΣ, *Maniátes*, Gk.
- <sup>9</sup> The Paleologoi dynasty as Despots of Morea, an autonomous region in the Byzantine Empire, ruled by a cadet branch of the imperial family.
- <sup>10</sup> *barbarophonos i.e.*, not Greek-speaking
- <sup>11</sup> See Barry Baldwin, 1993, “The Mazaris: Reflections and Reappraisal”, *Illinois Classical Studies*, no.18, pp.345-358; Lynda Garland, 2007, “Mazaris’s Journey to Hades: Further Reflections and Reappraisal”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, no.61, pp.183-214; Seminar Series – Classics 600 at SUNY Buffalo, 1975, *Mazaris’ Journey to Hades; or Interviews with Dead Men about Certain Officials of the Imperial Court*, [Greek text with translation, notes, introduction and index], Buffalo: Arethusa; Florin Leonte, 2017, “Dramatisation and narrative in late Byzantine dialogues: Manuel II Palaiologos’s On Marriage and Mazaris’ Journey to Hades”, *in*, Averil Cameron and Niels Gaul [eds.], *Dialogues and Debates from Late Antiquity to Late Byzantium*, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Ch. 16, pp.220-236
- <sup>12</sup> See Henry Maguire [ed.], 1995, *Byzantine Magic*, Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, for the the reactions of Byzantine intellectuals to the theory and practice of magic, and the changing attitudes toward magic between the late antique and high medieval periods, as revealed by imperial legislation and canon law
- <sup>13</sup> See Moses Gaster, 1923, “Gypsy Slavery”, *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 3rd Series, vol.2, Pt.2; Sam Beck, 1989, “The Origins of Gypsy Slavery in Romania”, *Dialectical Anthropology*, vol.14, no.1, March, pp.53-61; Elena Marushiakova, Veselin Popov, 2009, “Gypsy Slavery in Wallachia and Moldavia”, *in*, Kamusella, Tomasz and Krzysztof Jaskulowski [eds.], *Nationalisms Today*, Frankfurt-am-Mein: Peter Lang, pp.89-124
- <sup>14</sup> Roma slavery in the region likely begins much earlier, c.1241CE, well before Ottoman conquest, or even emergence of the ghazi Osmanlı beylik c.1300, in western Anatolian frontier region
- <sup>15</sup> See Hans Zinsser, 1935, *Rats, Lice & History: Being a Study in Biography, which, after twelve preliminary chapters indispensable for the preparation of the lay reader, deals with the life history of Typhus fever*, New York: Little Brown and Co; William H McNeill, 1975, *Plagues & Peoples*, Garden City, New York: Anchor Books; Jared Diamond, 1997, *Guns, Germs, & Steel*, New York: W W Norton
- <sup>16</sup> Published in 1839, with other pictures from his tour of Moldavia and Wallachia, the Rumanian principalities
- <sup>17</sup> A comparison might be made with the ‘blues’ and ‘spiritual’ or ‘gospel’ music of African-American enslaved people for ‘domestic’ consumption, whilst the racist ‘minstrel’ music was for White, slave-owners’ consumption
- <sup>18</sup> See Michael Dummett, 1981, *The Game of Tarot*, New Jersey: Duckworth
- <sup>19</sup> See Dee’s scrying mirror, made from obsidian, in the British Museum, Dr John Dee

- <sup>20</sup> Egypt's rulers until the Ottomans conquered them, under Sultan Selim 'Yavuz' - the 'Grim' - in 1517CE
- <sup>21</sup> see Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia Universelle*, of 1522CE for a series of images of 'Egyptians'
- <sup>22</sup> See Michael Psellos, 1979, *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers: the Chronographia of Michael Psellos*, [trans.] E. R. A. Sewter, Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics; additionally drawing upon the work of Saxo Grammaticus' legend of 'Ahelm, William Hansen [ed.], *Saxo Grammaticus and the Life of Hamlet, a Translation, History, and Commentary*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press
- <sup>23</sup> One of Jonson's most popular and successful, with music by Nicolas Lanier, alternatively titled *The Metamorphosed Gypsies*, *The Gypsies' Metamorphosis*, or *The Masque of Gypsies*
- <sup>24</sup> In all likelihood, similar to the stage make-up that Shakespeare used in *Othello*, or other productions with *orientals*
- <sup>25</sup> Hence the racist term, *pikey* for Gypsies and Travellers
- <sup>26</sup> Actually the same woman replicated in differing poses and facial expressions
- <sup>27</sup> See Münster's woodblock illustration, c..1552;
- <sup>28</sup> 'Egyptians' had been hired by the Venetians as 'companies' to fight the Ottomans, whilst the Ottomans had conscripted large numbers of *Romanlar* into their armies as military musicians, auxiliary troops (usually led by Crimean *Tartar* commanders), and craftspeople.
- <sup>29</sup> The text in the engravings reads: "The only things these poor fortune-telling beggars carry with them are things yet to come; Are these not fine messengers, straying through foreign lands? You who take pleasure in their words, watch out for your blancs, *testons* and *pitolles* (coins); When all is said and done, they find that their fate is to have come from Egypt to this feast . . .", Jacques Callot, c.1621
- <sup>30</sup> Austen, Jane, 1815 (1816 on the title page), *Emma*, John Murray: London
- <sup>31</sup> Said, Edward, 1978, *Orientalism*, New York: Pantheon; Macfie, A.L., 2002, *Orientalism*, London: Longman
- <sup>32</sup> Also allegedly part-faerie, and from Liverpool, which at the time, as a city with a past deeply connected to slavery, sugar-production, and immigration from Ireland (brought into the Union in 1801, but always of unclear status, as Austen satirises in *Emma*). In this sense, Heathcliff is an embodiment of a number of ethnicities, imagined and both attractive and fearful, in his complexity.
- <sup>33</sup> See Groom, Nick, 2012, *the Gothic: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- <sup>34</sup> See Hobsbawm, Eric, 1983, *The Invention of Tradition, Ranger*, T. O. [ed.], Cambs.: Past & Present Publications
- <sup>35</sup> And similarly illustrated by Gustav Doré's 1877 extraordinary engravings, in its early sections of the poem
- <sup>36</sup> Some Roma communities, particularly in Scandinavia, prefer to use the term 'sa o mudarípen', the mass murdering, as they object to the sexual connotations of the term, *porrajmos*.
- <sup>37</sup> And the first such in the U.K. higher education system
- <sup>38</sup> Dr Adrian Marsh, Researcher in Romani Studies; all views and opinions expressed in the text are the author's own and not necessarily representative of the Romani Cultural & Arts Company
- <sup>39</sup> "This new understanding of Gypsy visuality offers a new [sic] understanding of the social relations that surround Gypsy culture. Gypsy visuality both reflects and informs the behaviour of Gypsy communities and in so doing articulates a set of relations that characterise Gypsy social agency." (Baker, 2011)
- <sup>40</sup> Or NO GORGIOS, according to the catalogue cover illustration by Jim Hayward, of classic, sign-writer capitals, scroll and finials, honouring the earlier Gypsy sign-writer and artist, Jimmy Berry
- <sup>41</sup> Or have been until the advent of cheap, exploitable colonial labour in the empires of the European powers
- <sup>42</sup> Romani Cultural & Arts Company, now in its fifth edition; see <http://www.romaniarts.co.uk/arts-council-of-wales-funds-exciting-gypsy-maker-5-project/>
- <sup>43</sup> Hence, 'distaff side' meaning female ancestry