

#2. "THE MUSIC OF THE NEW PLACE"

2. GYPSIES IN HISTORY

The Gypsies (or Roma or Sinti) (see PHOTO below) were - and in some cases are still today - itinerant people. Although they do not have their own recorded history, the hypothesis of their Indian origin is verified through historical and genetic studies. More specifically they are observed to be closely related to the Rajput and Punjabi populations - populations located in the areas between India and Pakistan.



<https://archive.org/details/WeAreRoma>

How, when and exactly why the Gypsies moved is not historically fully documented. However, historical evidence proves the settlement of the Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire around the 10th to 11th century, ie a thousand years ago. The then vast and rich Byzantine Empire, which extended to the Near East, was obviously one of the most basic destinations of that time, for those seeking a better fortune. But what happened to the music of the Gypsies and how did they survive musically?

We have all probably heard of at least one music? species with the nickname gypsy which are located within Europe. The Gypsies moved from south-central Asia to the east and ultimately remain to this day an exclusive and at the same time very important part of European folk music history. In this map (see MAP 1) we see the spread of Romani dialects in Europe. If we think that there can be no movement of language without music?, but vice versa as well, then we can somehow define the region of the northern Balkans as the central point of the diaspora.



(A map of Romani dialects, adapted from Matras (2002 *Romani: A linguistic introduction*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), showing his three centers of linguistic innovation: Southeast, Sinti-Finnish or Northwestern Central, and Vlax.)

It is no coincidence that gypsy music has been largely associated or sometimes identified with balkan music or neighboring music. Countries such as Romania, Serbia and Hungary for historical, as well as social reasons (such as the slow integration into the Western social and technological model combined with the political situation of socialism, where they were isolated in a way from external cultural influences), have the gypsy music tradition as a key part of all the folk music traditions found in every country.

Another historical element, which strengthens the presence of gypsies in this area, is the phenomenon of Gypsy slavery in the autonomous Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia that lasted from the 16th century - with the prince offering Gypsy slaves to monasteries - until around the middle of the 19th century, that Gypsies were freed in Moldo-Wallachia. Under these conditions of slavery the cultural communication between the Gypsies and the locals was extremely superficial. The Gypsies lived on the margins, without being able to integrate or assimilate by the local population.

The phenomenon of the isolation of the Gypsies continues to exist even today as a historical fact. Social discrimination, humanitarian degradation and their timeless identification with something as "foreign" (who do not have the racial property right in a place) are elements that still govern the attitude of human society towards Gypsies around the world. But perhaps this isolation and marginalization was the cause and the driving force, in order to gradually create their own new musical expressive code. Combining the existing musical data of their new place of residence with the deep musical subconscious memory of their original place of origin.