Chapter III. Emancipation

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CHAPTER III

EMANCIPATION

1. THE GYPSIES IN THE ROMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the first part of the nineteenth century in the Romanian principalities, the Gypsies continued to have the same status and led the same lifestyle as they had done since the beginning of their presence on Romanian territory. The evolutions that Romanian society had undergone over the centuries, evolutions that were largely in line with general trends taking place across Central and Eastern Europe, had had very little effect on the category of Gypsy slaves. While the status of the peasantry and serfdom had undergone significant modifications, the institution of slavery remained practically unchanged until almost the middle of the nineteenth century.

Until late on, nobody in Romanian society took it upon themselves to take action to modify the social condition and legal status of the Gypsy population at large. Slavery was perceived as an integral part of the country’s social system. As a result of the circumstances of the time, and particularly their close relations with the Ottoman Empire, the policy of the Phanariot rulers of the principalities (whose rule began in 1711 in Moldavia and 1716 in Wallachia and lasted until 1821) was a long way from the reformism of the emperors of the House of Habsburg. After 1821, when the principalities obtained greater autonomy from the suzerain power, Romanian society made significant progress in all domains. Particularly in the 1830s, a process of institutional modernisation and socio-economic development was undertaken, which eliminated many of the components of the ancien régime and opened the way for an evolution towards a type of state and society that shared many of the characteristics of Central and West European countries. This evolution of society as a whole had precious little effect on the Gypsies.

The basic law of the two principalities, namely the Organic Regulations (a kind of constitution) adopted both in Wallachia and Moldavia in the year 1831, maintained the slavery of the Gypsies. In fact, the Organic Regulations represented the beginning of the process of institutional renewal in Romania. In that moment, however, slavery was not in any way challenged by political actors and was regarded as one of the social institutions of the country. During the period of the Regulations (1831–48), slavery was recognised as a social institution via the two founding acts. Until the laws of emancipation enacted in the 1840s and 50s, in the Romanian principalities slavery
continued to exist in its three established forms: princely slaves (slaves of the State), monastery slaves and boyars’ slaves.

There is a rich body of information about the situation of the Gypsies in the first part of the nineteenth century. Unlike in previous centuries, when information about the Gypsies was confined almost completely to official documents of legal or fiscal nature, in this period the sources became much more varied, providing us with a fairly detailed portrait of the situation of Gypsy slaves. With some circumspection, some of the data from this period can be extrapolated back to the previous era when documentary information was scarcer. In addition to this internal information, there is also the testimony of foreign visitors to the principalities. The diplomats, savants and artists from Western and Central Europe that travelled across the principalities at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century would invariably remark upon the picturesque realities of the Gypsy population living there. In an era when exoticism was in vogue, in the pages (sometimes the books) devoted to the principalities, writers would almost obligatorily stop to consider the Gypsies. They would observe the specific racial, linguistic and cultural features of the population. They describe the Gypsies’ nomadism and primitivism, their hovels, their superstitions, their laziness and the poverty in which they lived, the character of the Gypsy musician etc. They were struck by the mixture of the picturesque and the barbarous in the Gypsies, which gives one of the characteristic notes to the lands of the Danube and the Carpathians. Also, they always paused to consider the slavery of the Gypsies, which they regarded as a vestige of times long past.

Although slavery remained unchanged as an institution until the time of the laws of emancipation, over time, certain new elements appeared with regard to the slave population.

Firstly, the structure of the Gypsy population in terms of its various groups in the first part of the nineteenth century was significantly different from that of previous centuries, as a result of the social and professional evolutions experienced by the different groups of the Gypsies. Such evolutions had been determined by the decline of certain occupations and the appearance of others, as well as the transition to professions that were in high demand. This modified structure to the Gypsy population is important because together with certain other transformations that occurred over time, particularly after the mass sedentarisation during the era of emancipation, it remained in place until the Second World War, while basic characteristics have continued to exist within the modern-day Gypsy population. In the language of the day, the categories of the Gypsies were known as tagme (castes). The aurari (gold-washers), who belonged in their entirety to the State, underwent a radical change in occupation at this time. As a result of
the dwindling of gold deposits in riverbeds, they were almost all forced to abandon the collection of gold and devote themselves exclusively to woodworking. At this time the term aurar was replaced with that of rudar. The latter term also existed in previous centuries, but from this time became the only term in use for this category of the Gypsies. At the time of emancipation, they were already settled, living mostly in their own settlements in forest areas in the mountains in huts or houses. When beginning with the first half of the nineteenth century, the peasantry ceased to live in huts, building new dwellings out of brick, the rudari living in certain areas began to manufacture bricks and adobe, consequently giving rise to the term cărămidari (brick-makers) that became attributed to them. The lingurari, who manufactured basic wooden objects such as wooden nails, spoons, spindles, pots etc., had their dwellings (houses and huts) close to forests, as a rule far from peasant settlements. Some lingurari belonged to the State, others to private owners. The ursari, who in summer continued to practise bear-baiting in towns and villages, had as their basic occupation the rearing of mules and the manufacture of sieves or other small iron objects. They were all nomads and lived in tents. Also belonging to the caste of ursari were the zavragii. Few in numbers, the latter had ceased to be blacksmiths and instead worked as labourers. They were nomadic, too. The ursari, and especially the zavragii, were renowned for their petty thievery. They were state slaves. The țigani de laie or lăiesi (camp Gypsies) were specialised as blacksmiths or in the manufacture of copper tubs, hence the name of căldărari (boiler-makers), which became increasingly used to designate this category of the Gypsies. The majority of them lived on boyars’ estates and at the beginning of the nineteenth century they were mostly nomadic. Organised in bands led by juzi, in the summer months they would travel the country in their covered carts. They would set up their camp at the edge or in the vicinity of villages and towns and would make a living by providing the locals with the entire range of metal objects necessary for a peasant homestead. In winter they would withdraw to the forest, where they would build huts. Among the Gypsies who wandered the country they were the most numerous. Consequently, both for Romanians and for foreigners travelling through the principalities, the standard image of the Gypsy became confused with that of the lăies and the latter were considered to be the most authentic of all the Gypsies. Nonetheless, some of them were already settled in villages even before emancipation. During the period of emancipation virtually all of the Gypsies of this category became sedentarised. The majority of them settled on the edges of towns and villages and lived in houses and huts. They were the blacksmiths of Romanian settlements, and were skilled in all manner of things. A separate group of the Gypsies was that of the netoți (“idiots”), so called because of their way of life, which
was different to that of the other Gypsies. The netoți practised no craft, lived like animals, had no dwellings, tents or carts, and instead wandered the countryside on foot in groups of twenty to thirty families, living from the proceeds of theft and robbery, sometimes feeding themselves with dead animal carcasses. Contemporary sources are unanimous in their presentation of the netoți as savages, totally lawless etc. They had no master and had arrived in the eighteenth century from the Habsburg Empire. Even though they were few in numbers, the netoți represented a problem both for the authorities and for the population. To the aforementioned categories of the Gypsies, the țigani de vatră or vătrași (“hearth” or house of Gypsies), who were in fact the most numerous should be added. These were boyars’ or monastery slaves settled in villages or towns and tied to an agricultural occupation (either as ploughmen or craftsmen of agricultural nature). Slaves carried out domestic tasks in the boyars’ estates. The vătrași had lost many of their characteristics of Gypsy life and had already entered into a process of sedentarisation. From the ranks of the vătrași, came the lautari (musicians), who formed a separate group. For a long time the profession of musician was reserved for the Gypsies. The monasteries and the boyars also owned nomadic Gypsies, from the category of the lăieși, who wandered the country practising their crafts or gaining employment as seasonal workers for other private landowners. Provided that they paid their dues to the master, they had the right to travel the country in order to earn their existence, similar to freemen.

As can be seen from this brief summary of the categories of the Gypsies, a quite substantial part of them were already living a sedentary way of life prior to their emancipation. In 1837, Mihail Kogălniceanu observed that the vătrași had fixed dwellings, that they had completely forgotten their ancestral language and that they had lost the habits and customs of their nomadic brethen, to the extent that they could no longer be distinguished from Moldavians and Wallachians. It would appear that the second half of the eighteenth century and the first part of the nineteenth century was the time in which the sedentarisation of the Gypsies became a mass phenomenon. As the authorities in the Romanian principalities had put the Gypsies under no pressure to sedentarise prior to emancipation (unlike the situation in the Habsburg Empire), we can estimate that here the sedentarisation of the Gypsies was a natural process. Nevertheless, nomadism continued to be a significant phenomenon. As a rule, this was a seasonal nomadism, practised during the warm months of the year when the weather made it possible for the Gypsies to travel the country practising their crafts. On certain days during the year, and then again in winter, the Gypsies would return to their master in order to pay tax and to carry out any work obligations required of them. At this time they would also re-register themselves with the authorities.
and resolve various problems within the community. In Romanian society at the beginning of the nineteenth century, due to the sparseness of the population and the fact that agricultural land was in abundance, the nomadism of the Gypsies did not create a problem. Consequently, for a long time the idea of settling the Gypsies to a sedentary way of life did not occur to anyone. In the Romanian principalities, the colonisation of agricultural land was carried out always with peasants from mountainous areas or with people arrived from outside the borders of the country; therefore there was no need to make use of the nomadic Gypsies. Only from the 1830s, when in the new economic conditions certain major landowners began to engage in the mass exploitation of their estates and new lands became available for agriculture, boyars preoccupied with the need for fresh labour began to settle the laiși in their possession in villages and to tie them to the profession of ploughman. It was in these conditions that the idea of converting the nomadic Gypsies to a sedentary way of life appeared in the Romanian principalities.

During the period of the Organic Regulations, the exploitation of the Gypsies took place on larger scale than in the past. At this time, when the principalities were in the process of entering into a capitalist-type economy, some boyars set about the transformation of their slaves into profitable capital. They made use of slaves in agricultural labour proper to a greater extent than in the past, subjecting them to a regime of work to which they were not accustomed. Similarly, it became common practice for a boyar to employ Gypsies belonging to the State or other private owners as seasonal workers for grape-picking, scything, reaping and other tasks. Gypsies were also used as labourers on construction sites. Generally speaking, the range of tasks for which slaves were used had become more diverse. Some slave owners used their slaves in workshops and factories that they built on their estates. At the time, the view that the Gypsies were particularly suited to being factory workers was widely held. This view probably stemmed from the Gypsies’ skill as craftsmen and their well-known repulsion for working in the fields. The usefulness of the Gypsies was perceived in terms of this kind of future development of the country. Generally speaking, during this period, in which the development of manufacturing and new industry was largely linked to the utility of the subjugated workforce, the Gypsies appeared to be the group most suited to these kinds of activities. It is significant that projects and experiments of a socialist-utopian nature (after the model of Charles Fourier) that were floated at this time in the principalities were aimed precisely at the Gypsies. The phalanstery of Scâieni, organised by Teodor Diamant on the estate of the boyar Emanoil Bălăceanu, which functioned for a time in the years 1835–36, brought together Gypsies emancipated from the ownership of this boyar. The report that Diamant sent to the Administrative Council of Moldavia in 1841 proposed the organisation of
the Gypsies tied to state lands due to be emancipated into agricultural-industrial work colonies, according to Fourier’s model. As a first step, Diamant proposed the establishment for a ten-year period of an agro-industrial colony with 200–300 families of state Gypsies on a leased estate.9

Some private slave owners and monasteries were in the habit of leasing out Gypsies in their possession for a certain number of years in exchange for substantial sums of money. Even the State made use of this lucrative practice, as was the case in Moldavia at the beginning of the century.10 At this time, the Gypsies became a good in the full sense of the term. The patriarchal relationship of the past, in which the selling of slaves was carried out chiefly where necessary and via a direct relationship with the buyer, with a degree of care taken to avoid the splitting up of families, disappeared. In the decades that preceded emancipation, trade in slaves took place openly and on a large scale in the principalities. In towns, veritable auctions involving hundreds of slaves were organised, in which not one of the restrictions imposed by common law or even by the country’s laws were respected. Outrageous scenes took place, which scandalised public opinion and which certainly had a role in forming abolitionist attitudes in Romanian society. In his book of 1855, Elias Regnault mentions just such a slave auction which took place in Bucharest and which provoked a powerful response throughout the city.11 Public opinion both at home and abroad reacted to these barbaric spectacles. Even foreign political figures made representations to the Romanian authorities on this subject.

Nevertheless, the exploitation of the slaves should not be exaggerated. A large proportion of the Gypsies continued to live on the boyars’ estates, practising the crafts and way of life as they had done so in previous centuries. The most important boyars kept a multitude of Gypsies: servants, cooks, bakers, blacksmiths, coachmen, grooms, tailors, maids, washerwomen, seamstresses etc. Some boyars even had bands of Gypsy musicians. Contemporary sources are unanimous in agreeing that these slaves did not actually do a great deal, but the mentality of the period meant that the number of slaves one kept was a mark of one’s social status. The revenues generated by a slave (whether one employed at the boyar’s residence or one who wandered the country) for his master were usually small. The bounded peasant guaranteed far greater revenues for the master’s estate. Slaves were not always profitable from an economic point of view, and at this time it was one of the arguments used by abolitionists in their attempts to convince the main slave owners to give up their slaves. At the same time, the Gypsies belonging to the monasteries and to private owners were exempt from state obligations; their only obligations were those that they bore to their master. As for the state Gypsies, according to the Organic Regulation they were included among the taxpayers and were forced to pay capitation. The level of this tax was
higher than the sums that they had paid in the past and consequently it is fair to talk about a worsening of the situation of Gypsies from this category at this time. However, at the same time, their feudal obligations did not exist. Thus it can be seen that the first half of the nineteenth century meant the appearance of certain new elements with regard to slaves. The State intervened to an unprecedented extent in the regulations relating to slaves and even in relations between the Gypsies and their masters, but without the cornerstones of the institution being affected. In contrast with the dynamism within Romanian society at this time, slavery remained the same institution that it had been under the ancien régime. Slaves became isolated within society, thereby creating one of the major problems of the time. The political figures of the period would solve this problem by adopting a whole series of measures, which led to the release of the different categories of the Gypsies from their old social and legal situation, transforming them, from a legal point of view, into freemen.

Despite the relatively rich body of information about the Gypsies, an evaluation of their number at this time is not at all easy. Population censuses were not carried out at the time in the Romanian principalities, nor were thorough censuses of the kind carried out in Transylvania, making it difficult to establish the size of the population, particularly that of the Gypsy population. There are exact figures only for the number of Gypsies in the possession of the State. The censuses that were carried out every seven years and other tax records included figures for the aforementioned category of slaves, and only in exceptional circumstances did they carry figures for privately owned Gypsies, who were exempt from taxes. For the latter category, the statistics that are available are rather approximations made by certain authors. Only when privately owned Gypsies enter into the possession of the State (as a result of purchase) or enter, following the promulgation of the laws of emancipation, into the ranks of corvee-peasants (clăcași) or tax-paying craftsmen (patentari), do they figure in the tax records. However, even official statistics should be regarded with caution. This is because they operated with two sets of data with regard to the Gypsies: sometimes figures are recorded by family, thereby providing us with the number of families of Gypsies, but on other occasions the figures record those registered as being liable to pay tax. Unlike in the case of Romanian taxpayers, when the number of persons liable to pay tax coincides with the number of families, in the case of the Gypsies there are more taxpayers than families, as bachelors and single men were registered as separate fiscal entities. Not knowing that the authorities made use of such practices can create confusion when it comes to examining the demographics of this population.

Since no study of the number of Gypsies living in the Romanian principalities during the period of emancipation has been carried out, we shall
quote from the most apt contemporary sources. In 1819, Dionisie Fotino indicated that in Wallachia there were 23,300 families of Gypsies, which amounts to almost 120,000 people. In his work on the Gypsies from 1837, Mihail Kogălniceanu estimated the Gypsy population in both principalities at 200,000 people. Félix Colson, a commentator with a good knowledge of Romanian realities, established on the basis of statistics from the census of 1838 and estimates of the numbers of privately owned Gypsies that in Moldavia there were 3551 families of state Gypsies and approximately 120,000 private Gypsies, while in Wallachia there were 5582 families of state Gypsies (therefore 29,910 people) and 18,000 families of privately owned Gypsies (90,000 people). This means that there were approximately 139,255 Gypsies in Moldavia and 119,910 in Wallachia. According to Colson, the total population of Moldavia was 1,419,105, while that of Wallachia was 2,402,027. This would mean that the Gypsies accounted for 9.81 per cent of the total population of Moldavia and 5 per cent of the total population of Wallachia. In 1849, Paul Bataillard estimated the number of Gypsies living in the principalities to be approximately 250,000. In 1857, J.-A. Vaillant calculated a population of 137,000 Gypsies in Moldavia and 125,000 in Wallachia, while A. Ubicini estimated their number at around 250,000: 150,000 in Wallachia and 100,000 in Moldavia. J. F. Neigebaur provides data for Wallachia only. On the basis of the census of 1844, he mentions 5,782 families of state Gypsies (in other words 28,910 people) and estimates the number of Gypsies belonging to boyars and the monasteries to be 150,000 (30,000 families).

These figures should be regarded with caution, since in the case of privately owned Gypsies they are based on estimations made in the absence of tax records. Only with the emancipation of this category of Gypsies (which was the most numerous category) do official statistics reproduce the total number of Gypsies living in the country.

In Wallachia, the statistics compiled by the Ministry of Finance in 1857 record all freed Gypsies in categories according to their origin. The figures show 33,267 families of emancipated slaves, of which 12,081 originated from the monasteries and 14,945 from private owners. If we relate this figure to the 466,152 families (in other words, 2,330,760 people) who, according to the same set of statistics, were living in the country, we find that emancipated slaves represented 7.13 per cent of the population of the country. In the tax records of Wallachia from the beginning of the year of 1859, compiled according to fiscal categories, there were 30,181 families of emancipated taxpayers, 1851 emancipated bachelors and 1819 emancipated tax-paying tradesmen, giving a total of 33,851 families of emancipated slaves. The total number of families living at the time in Wallachia, whether taxpayers or benefiting from privileged status (not including inhabitants
under foreign jurisdiction) was 426,120. Emancipated slaves therefore represented 7.94 per cent of the population of the country. If we multiply the number of families of emancipated slaves from the two sets of statistics, we obtain figures for the total number of emancipated slaves of 166,335 and 169,255 respectively. Ordinarily the figures should be somewhat smaller, since in the case of emancipated slaves the older practice of recording bachelors as a separate tax entity was maintained. The proportion of emancipated slaves living within the population of the country was in fact somewhat less than the figures calculated above, but still around 7 per cents.

In Moldavia, Gypsies were no longer recorded in official statistics, whether tax records or ethnic data, after 1856 when privately owned slaves were emancipated. After this time, the Gypsies were included among the Romanian inhabitants of the principality. Statistics were not published in the period prior to emancipation for all categories of Gypsies, meaning that we do not know how many they were at this time. If we take contemporary estimates into account (estimates which in the case of Wallachia were confirmed by the official statistics), we can presuppose that out of a population of 1,463,927 according to the 1859 census of Moldavia,23 approximately 100,000 were emancipated Gypsies. We estimate the proportion of Gypsies within the total population of Moldavia to also be around 7 per cent.

On the basis of all the above information, we can deduce that during the period of emancipation, i.e. in the years 1830–60, the total number of Gypsies living in Wallachia and Moldavia was between 200,000 and 250,000. The first figure relates to the beginning of this period, while the second figure to the 1850s. Gypsies accounted for approximately 7 per cent of the total population of the country.

The Romanian principalities were the country with the largest number of Gypsies. According to Mihail Kogălniceanu, 200,000 of the 600,000 Gypsies in Europe at the time were living in Moldavia and Wallachia.24 Generally speaking, in all the estimations of the number of Gypsies living in Europe made in the middle and the second half of the nineteenth century, it was reckoned that around a third of them lived in Romania.25

2. ABOLITIONIST TREND

Together with the change of political regime in 1821, when as a result of the withdrawal of the Phanariot rulers by the Ottoman Empire, Moldavia and Wallachia reverted to the rule of local princes and simultaneously acquired greater autonomy from the suzerain, the Romanian principalities entered a new era in their history. The introduction of reforms that would bring about
the modernisation of the State and Romanian society, thereby bringing it into line with Europe, were a pressing concern at this time.

During this period, especially during the decade that preceded the 1848 revolution, a large number of reform programmes and projects originating from different groups and political movements or individual personalities were circulating in Romanian society. The chief preoccupations were the problem of the autonomy and independence of the principalities, the search for a means of affecting the unification of the principalities into a single Romanian state, access to power for a broader range of social categories, the establishment of a liberal political regime, economic freedom, measures to support the peasantry, the transformation of landed property into capitalist-type property and the formation of a modern national culture. The position of the Gypsies was of little concern to this reformist movement. It is not even mentioned in the majority of the reform programmes that appeared during the period, demonstrating that in general the abolition of slavery was not considered to be one of the priorities of the modernisation of society. If we consider that the reform movement was relatively moderate in nature and that its promoters were generally representatives of the minor and middle-ranking boyar class, which from a political point of view was dissatisfied with its exclusion from the government and interested in preserving its social privileges including the right to own slaves, it is easy to understand why the legal and social condition of a relatively important part of the country’s population was of so little interest to it. The constitutional project of the Moldavian “Carbonarists” (Cărăunari) from 1822, a document that is representative for the way of thinking of the petit boyar class, does mention the Gypsies, but limits itself to proposing their settlement. Later on, however, the idea of the emancipation of the Gypsies does find its place within the reform movement. The programme of the confederative conspiracy, organised by Leonte Radu in Moldavia in 1839, made provision for the emancipation of the Gypsies belonging to the State and the monasteries; these Gypsies were to be regarded as “new Romanians” and settled amongst the rest of the inhabitants of the country, benefiting from the same rights as the latter. With regard to the Gypsies that belonged to the boyars, special measures were to be taken to ensure that their situation improved. In Wallachia, among the social and economic reforms included in a memorandum drafted in 1841 by Dimitrie (Mitică) Filipescu, one of the ideologues of the reform movement, was the elimination of the “social leprosy” that was slavery. According to the memorandum, the problem was to be solved by allowing the Gypsies the right to buy their freedom. The emancipation of the Gypsies featured as one of the main social demands of the revolutionary programmes of 1848.
The idea of the emancipation of the Gypsies had a hard time establishing itself. Romanian society was deeply marked by its past. The political power was in the hands of the conservative leading boyars, who were also owners of Gypsies. As for the Church, at least of the level of the high clergy, attitudes towards slavery had not undergone any change. From the end of the eighteenth century some enlightened prelates took extra care to baptise and tend to the religious needs of the different groups of nomadic Gypsies who at that time had not been integrated into the Church, but the Church had never contested slavery as an institution. It is, however, true that one of the first voices to speak out against slavery came from among its ranks. As early as 1827, Eufrosin Poteca, one of the intellectuals of the period with democratic views, in an address delivered on Easter Day before Prince Grigore Ghica, called for the liberation of the slaves, using arguments from the Bible and the history of the Church. In a work from 1842, he refers to slavery as “a harmful and barbarous thing”. The Church’s position as a major slave owner meant that it constantly sought to limit the losses imposed on it by the laws ordering the emancipation of the Gypsies. The monasteries continued to ensure a labour force for their estates via the use of former slaves, often in conditions that were quite favourable to the monasteries. When the State intervened, limiting the advantages they were reaping from the former slaves, the monasteries protested.

In the 1830s, a generation of intellectuals that had carried out their studies in the West, particularly in France, entered public life. The majority of them originated from the ranks of the boyars. They had been won over by the liberal ideals of the West, which they attempted to cultivate back home. They played an important role in the institutional, cultural etc. modernisation of the principalities as well as in the political developments that led to the realisation of a national Romanian state through the unification of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1859. They also contributed substantially to the creation of a public spirit that made the transformations within Romanian society possible. To this category can be added the revolutionary exiles from France and other countries that settled in the principalities and who served to bring the ideas of the French Revolution to a wider audience in Romanian society. These foreign intellectuals who settled in Romania were creators of public opinion, including attitudes towards slavery. The Swiss intellectual Emile Kohly de Guggsberg, who spent a long time in Moldavia and who was well acquainted with realities in the principalities, pointed to the necessity of abolishing slavery in a work published in 1841 and entitled Le Philodace. Aperçu sur l’éducation chez les Roumains, suivi de quelques remarques relatives à la prospérité des principautés. According to Kohly de Guggsberg, “slavery is the country’s greatest shame, a black stain in front of foreigners”. Reforms in the principalities needed to start with the aboli-
tion of slavery. He puts a question to his readers: “Will you dare to count yourselves among the civilised peoples as long as it is possible to read in your newspapers ‘for sale: a young Gypsy woman’?” The work made a powerful impression at the time. The Frenchman Félix Colson in 1839 proposed that a law should be passed freeing all Gypsies, with the sum of ten to twelve ducats to be paid as compensation to their owners. This measure was introduced sixteen years later.

At this time, the Romanians were receptive to the problem of slavery in the colonies and in other countries. Information about measures taken to abolish slavery in English and French colonies, about the situation of slaves in the southern United States and about the American abolitionist movement were quickly picked up by the Romanian press. Slavery was a subject that interested the intellectuals who wrote these newspapers. There is no doubt that this kind of information played a role in creating anti-slavery attitudes among the Romanian readership. This is perhaps the first indication of the start of an abolitionist current in Romanian society. A future study of such journalistic material would make it possible to determine to what extent similar, much larger movements in the West influenced Romanian abolitionism. In this respect, it is significant that Harriet Beecher-Stowe’s masterpiece Uncle Tom’s Cabin was the first American novel to be translated into Romanian. It was published in Romanian in 1853 in Iași in a translation by Theodor Codrescu, under the title Coliba lui Moșu Toma sau Viața negrilor în sudul Statelor Unite din America (Uncle Tom’s Cabin or The Life of Blacks in the South of the United States of America). The book was very widely read, with subscribers including boyars, soldiers, priests, and ladies and even emancipated Gypsies. In his preface to the book, Mihail Kogălniceanu published an unfinished study of slavery throughout the ages, another indicator of the preoccupations of the time. In conditions where the West had rid itself of the slavery of black people, the Romanian principalities remained one of the few countries that wished to count themselves among the “civilised world” where slavery continued to exist. Yet the process of social and institutional modernisation underway in the principalities was supposed to be in emulation the model of the West, particularly France. Among the Romanian intelligentsia of the generation of 1848, there was a feeling of shame for what was regarded as an outmoded and barbaric social reality. This sentiment comes through in the writings of the time. The abolition of slavery in the West unquestionably played a role in the creation of abolitionist feeling in Romania and in the adoption of the laws of emancipation. In the preamble to these laws, it is recalled that slavery has already been abolished in the civilised countries, remaining in the principalities as a vestige of the past and of a barbaric society. In this sense, we can even speak of
external “pressure” in favour of the laws of emancipation. Romanian intellectuals felt themselves duty bound to take a step towards Europe.

To begin with, in the 1830s, the idea of emancipation was embraced by a small number of people. Mihail Kogălniceanu mentioned this fact in his book on the Gypsies that appeared in 1837, expressing the hope that the book “will for the moment serve those voices who have risen up on behalf of the Gypsies, although sadly this interest will be passing in nature, because that is how Europeans are”.

It is indicative that when in 1834 Ion Câmpineanu decided to free from slavery the Gypsies he had inherited from his parents, his gesture was hardly understood by his contemporaries and for many years was not followed by any similar gestures. In time, however, the idea of the emancipation of the Gypsies acquired a larger audience. All the major names of the liberal intelligentsia became involved in the effort to force the prince and the political classes of conservative boyars to abolish slavery.

The greatest effort on the part of the intellectuals involved in the abolitionist movement was aimed at bringing private slave owners to free their slaves. Propaganda, both written and spoken, was particularly intense after the introduction of the laws of 1843, 1844 and 1847, which left in existence only one category of slaves, namely the slaves of the boyars. In 1844, Cezar Bolliac published in the journal *Foajele pentru minte, inima și literatură* (Newspaper for Mind, Heart and Literature) an appeal to intellectuals to fight for the cause of the emancipation of the Gypsies: “Found societies, proclaim, write, praise, satirise, put all your intellectual and moral reserves to work and slavery shall fall, for already it has fallen in part and you shall be hailed by future generations as true apostles of this holy mission, apostles of brotherhood and liberty […]. Come sirs, come all of you who have taken up your pens, driven by noble sentiment, teachers, journalists and poets, let all of us fight for their freedom: religion, the interest of the State and the spirit of the progress of peoples shall help us in this cause. The Gypsy reaches out his hand and in your name demands the moral rights that you demand in society and adjures you in the name of the duty that imposes these rights.”

The Iași-based magazine *Propăsierea* (Progress) played an active role in the struggle for the emancipation of the Gypsies. Between the law emancipating the Gypsies of the monasteries and the law that would emancipate state Gypsies, issue no. 5 of *Propăsierea* from 6 February 1844 was published with a special supplement, printed on green paper (the symbol of hope) with the exultant headline “The Great Reform”. In the supplement, Kogălniceanu published an article entitled “The Emancipation of the Gypsies”, in which he hails the decision of the prince of Moldavia, pointing out that the deed “raises the country to the same level as the most civilised states with regard to the principles of morality and justice” and that “all Romanians, all lovers of humanity and all the partisans of new ideas have
united their voices to praise a law that gives freedom to an entire people.”

The author expresses patriotic pride at the fact that “by emancipating the Gypsies, our fatherland sanctifies the principle that all men are born free, at a time when in the colonies of France and many of the states of North America millions of blacks are suffering under the yoke of oppression and when slavery still can count many advocates in the legislative assemblies of those countries!”

The supplement also contained four poems dedicated to the date of 31 January 1844, when the law was promulgated.

From just a handful of isolated voices in the 1830s, abolitionist views were embraced in the 1840s by an entire generation of educated Romanians, before becoming generalised in Romanian public opinion after the revolution of 1848, with the exception of certain representatives of the conservative boyar class. In the 1850s, we can actually speak of the existence of an abolitionist movement in the Romanian principalities. At this time, there was public debate on the subject of slavery. The newspapers of the time featured often highly contrasting opinions in connection with the situation of privately owned Gypsies and methods of emancipating them. Over time, the abolitionist discourse evolved: initially, the arguments utilised by the abolitionists referred mainly to the material and spiritual poverty endured by the slaves, which was a source of shame for the country; later on in the 1850s the discourse became modern in content, bearing the stamp of humanistic thinking, the philosophy of liberalism and natural law. The abolitionists also made use of arguments of economic nature in order to better make the case for the necessity of abolishing slavery. In his paper of 1841 supporting calls for the abolition of slavery, Dimitrie Filipescu made reference to the works of Henri Storch, who in his economic writings, which were widely read at the time, had taken a stand against slavery. In an article published in 1855 that refers to the bill for the emancipation of the Gypsies in Moldavia, Alecu Russo states that slavery is not profitable from an economic point of view. Slaves represented a form of capital that did not produce gain. They were unproductive and often were unable to feed and take care of themselves. The way the law conceived their liberation, which was to be carried out on the basis of compensation, meant that emancipation would be a profitable business for their owners. The compensation was greater than the price at which the Gypsies were normally traded. The author proposed that the compensation be transformed into an allowance of 6, 7 or 8 per cent. This transformation gives expression to the leap in the direction of modernisation that Romanian society had made during the period.

At this time, in the context of militant abolitionism and the full flourishing of Romanticism, the theme of the good Gypsy makes its appearance in Romanian literature. Writings of this type expressed compassion for the unhappy lot of these native sons of Romania. In 1843, Cezar Bolliac pub-
lished the poems “Fata de boier și fata de țigan” (“The Boyar’s Daughter and the Gypsy’s Daughter”) and “Țiganul vândut” (“The Gypsy Sold”). In 1848, on the occasion of the freeing of the Gypsies by the revolutionary government in Bucharest, he wrote the poem “O țigană cu prințul său la statuia Libertății” (“A Gypsy Woman and Her Child at the Statue of Liberty”). In 1844, Ion Heliade Rădulescu published “Jupân Ion” (“Master John”), the moving story of a Gypsy slave who works as a labourer to support both his family and his young masters, a pair of orphaned boyar’s children. The text is a plea both for the human dignity of slaves to be recognised and against slavery itself: “My modern-minded poets, Master John may be a greater inspiration to you than a king; his deeds should free all of his brethren from slavery; try to look upon them as the dawning of that great and blessed day when no slave shall remain on Romanian territories, if there is a God up in the sky.”41

In 1844, Vasile Alecsandri’s Ștoria unui galbân (Tale of a Ducat) appeared, evoking the life of Gypsy slaves and which was in fact a satire against the institution of slavery. Such literary creations, written by major personalities of the period, had a strong impact on public opinion. Also highly influential was the play Țiganii (The Gypsies), written by Gheorghe Asaki, which was performed at the National Theatre in Iași on 24 January 1856 after the adoption of the final law of emancipation.

In time, virtually the whole Romanian society embraced the idea that it was necessary to liberate the Gypsies. On the eve of the adoption of the final laws of emancipation, even the leading slave owners declared themselves to be in favour of emancipation. After the State had freed its own slaves as well as the slaves of the monasteries, it became especially clear that the emancipation of all the Gypsies was just a matter of time. What distinguished the leading boyars from the liberally-minded intellectuals was the practical manner in which emancipation was to take place. Unlike the young liberals, who wanted the emancipation of the Gypsies to take place immediately, the boyars considered that the process should take place gradually and that attention needed to be given to the future of this population. The landed aristocracy was in favour of moderate reform that would not undermine the structure of society. In their view, the emancipation of the Gypsies should be preceded by a period in which they were prepared for life in freedom so that they would be capable of earning a living and of integrating into rural communities. For this reason, many boyars sent their Gypsies to learn a trade with which they could earn a living and be of use to the rural population.42 Some slave owners made the gesture (which was widely popularised by the press of the time) of freeing their slaves without any condition even before the laws of 1855–56. On the other hand, after the adoption of the laws, many boyars gave up on the compensation to which they were entitled by law. Militants of the abolitionist movement demanded
this on the grounds that it was immoral to receive compensation for giving up one’s slaves.

The abolitionist current in the Romanian principalities did not restrict itself to the moral aspect of the problem of slavery and to the attainment of emancipation by law of the Gypsies. The arguments of abolitionists were also characterised by concern for the future of this mass of new citizens, in other words, for the social and economic future of the emancipated slaves. In an article published in Zimbrul (The Aurochs), the author called upon the State “to take a decision as soon as possible with regard to the organisation of this great body of people [the freed Gypsies—note V.A.] suddenly thrown from a position of servitude and despair into the free world; a means of organisation is required that will transform them, under strict supervision and even by force, from a state of demoralisation and other failings to a position of love for work, until such time that the newly emancipated slave understands that by work he can improve his knowledge and material position.”43 We shall see that when the emancipation of the Gypsies actually took place, the social and economic dimension of the reform was left to the responsibility of the landowners and the local authorities, if not neglected altogether. As a result of all manner of interests and the by no means negligible fact that reforms implemented at this time in Romanian society were limited in nature, the social integration of the Gypsies imagined by the militants of the abolitionist movement (in other words, their social and ethnic assimilation by the Romanian peasantry) took place only for a part of the Gypsy population. Many of them were effectively left outside of the new social organisation, whose foundations were laid from the 1830s to the 1860s.

The emancipation of the Gypsies was one of the components of the social modernisation in the Romanian principalities. Chronologically speaking, it was the first major social reform to take place there. The abolition of the corvee labour and the transformation of the corvee-peasant into a small-holder became law only in 1864, almost a decade after the final emancipation laws. The opinion at the time was that the emancipation of the Gypsies could and should be carried out before the resolution of the more important and more complicated problem of rural property. Certain radical voices viewed the emancipation of the Gypsies as the forerunner of the abolition of the corvee. In an article published in România literară (Literary Romania) in the issue of 3 December 1855, after pointing out that the “dark-skinned serf” and the “Romanian pleb” “have linked arms and borne together the burden of this land”, he author hails the emancipation law and the beginning of a new era of freedom: “Today marks the fall of the slavery of the dark-skinned people: tomorrow we hope will mark the end of the serfdom of the white people [...]”.44
3. THE LAWS OF EMANCIPATION

The emancipation of the Gypsies in the principalities was a process that lasted approximately two decades. In the context of the entire range of problems involved in the modernisation of Romanian society after 1821 as perceived by the political forces of the time, the Gypsy question was of minor importance. The problem of the peasantry, of the guilds etc., was infinitely more important and was granted attention accordingly by the authorities. Even for the promoters of abolition, the elimination of slavery was to be just one part of the social reforms they were demanding for the country as a whole. Only at a late stage, once the authorities had already taken certain decisive steps in this direction did the abolition of slavery become a goal in its own right. The slow speed at which society and the political powers came around to the idea that the abolition of the slavery of the Gypsies was necessary is perhaps indicative of the overall evolution of the Romanian principalities during this period: that is to say, an evolution in the direction of a modernisation that was becoming ever more evident, while still deeply marked by the past; the transformations in Romanian society were characterised by a process of moderate reformism. An increasingly pronounced opening towards the West on the part of the Romanians together with the entry into public life of the generation of 1848 gave fresh impetus to the process of internal modernisation. It was then that the question of slavery became one of national interest and was accordingly dealt with on a legislative and administrative level.

The process of institutional modernisation of the principalities began in fact with the Organic Regulations, founding documents with a virtually identical content in both of the principalities adopted by the Extraordinary Public Assemblies of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1831 during the Russian military occupation. They were the work of the leading boyars and the Russian general Pavel Kisselev, who was the administrative head of the occupation during those years. However, the abolition of slavery did not appear among the numerous innovations and elements contributing to the forging of a new society that were introduced by the Regulations. The Organic Regulations maintained slavery as a part of the country’s social regime. The status of slaves did not alter from that which they had endured since ancient times. The boyars and the monasteries continued to own slaves without any restrictions being imposed upon them by the State. The regulations introduced with regard to slaves only affected state-owned Gypsies. According to articles 67 and 95 of the Organic Regulation of Wallachia and article 79 of the Organic Regulation of Moldavia, state-owned Gypsies were required to fulfil the same tax obligations as freemen. They paid capitation, which was fixed at thirty lei per family. Gold-washing Gypsies (aurari) from Wal-
lachia were required to pay fifty lei. State Gypsies living in towns and mar-
ket towns who practised a craft or trade were required to join guilds (bresle)
and to pay patenta (tradesmen’s tax) together with other craftsmen. Gypsies
belonging to monasteries or boyars continued to be exempt from any obli-
gations to the State. At the same time, within the Organic Regulations we
find the expression of an interest in the sedentarisation of this population.
The authorities were entrusted with the task of finding the most appropriate
methods of settling state Gypsies, eliminating nomadism and binding these
Gypsies to an agricultural occupation or a craft (article 95 in Wallachia and
article 86 in Moldavia).46

The two areas in which the Organic Regulations expressed an interest
in the Gypsies—namely their tax regime and sedentarisation—were to
return to the attention of the lawmakers and the authorities on a number of
occasions during the 1830s. The State was interested in transforming slaves
into taxpayers and to bring them to an occupational status that was similar
to that of the vast majority of the population of the country. At this time
there was no question of abolishing slavery.

The major preoccupation of the Gypsies was naturally the elimination
of nomadism and the transformation of nomadic Gypsies into agricultural
workers and craftsmen. In Wallachia, the Extraordinary Public Assembly,
the body that drew up the Organic Regulation, adopted the “Regulations for
the improvement of the conditions of state Gypsies” in 1831. The aim of
the regulations was to eliminate nomadism, to settle the Gypsies and to
train them in the tilling of the land. Plans of action suited to each Gypsy
caste were proposed. Gypsies from certain categories (lingurari and aurari)
already had fixed dwellings and lived in their own settlements located usu-
ally on the edge of a village. Consequently, it was proposed that these cate-
gories be trained in the tilling of the land and that they be provided with the
same regime of obligations to the master of the estate where they resided as
the peasants. In the case of Gypsies who caused problems for the authori-
ties, it was proposed that such groups be dispersed and resettled in groups
of five to six families per village. Restrictions were to be placed on the free-
dom of movement of these groups, who were allowed to leave the village
only with written permission from the authorities. As for the netoți, “being
a public hazard and of little use to the State, they shall be driven out of the
principality and sent back whence they came”. Likewise, the regulament
called on the monasteries and the boyars to take similar measures with regard
to the nomadic Gypsies under their possession.47

In accordance with the model of the Wallachian regulations, the Mol-
davian Assembly adopted a set of “Regulations for the settlement of the
Gypsies”, which became an annex to the Organic Regulation.48 The regula-
tions contained measures that were designed to stimulate the settlement of
state Gypsies on private estates. Landowners wishing to use state Gypsies in the tilling of the land, in woodworking or as industrial labourers could obtain them under contract from the Ministry of Interior on the condition that they settled them on their estates, providing them with a parcel of land and garden and to facilitate their building of houses. In order to encourage their settlement in this fashion, the affected Gypsies could obtain a series of tax breaks, including exemption from the payment of tax for a year. They were not permitted to leave the estate where they were settled and could travel on a provisional basis outside the region only on the basis of written permission from the local authorities. In order to restrict their movement, with the exception of Gypsies engaged in the rearing and trading of asses, mules and horses, Gypsies were not allowed to keep such livestock. At the same time, even the boyars were required to take care of the settlement of the nomadic Gypsies (lăiesi and lingurari) in their possession, either on their own estate or if they did not have an estate, on that of another boyar.

These measures were taken at a time when nomadism was practised by only a relatively small part of the Gypsy population. Sedentarisation had begun to occur naturally and in the absence of a specific state policy some time before this period. In the 1830s, nomads could still be found among the ranks of state Gypsies in particular. The efforts made to sedentarise state Gypsies bore fruit: censuses and other official statistical documents of the time reflect the phenomenon of sedentarisation. When in Wallachia in 1839 a fresh census of state Gypsies was held, it was found that this category of Gypsies had settled in villages and was living in houses, having been assimilated in many respects among the local ploughmen of the country.49

Also at this time in Wallachia the State began to buy Gypsies from private owners, with the Gypsies entering the category of state Gypsies. This process took place on the basis of the 1832 law “for the correction of the organisation of state Gypsies”. The law regulated the tax obligations of state Gypsies. The aurari were to pay fifty lei per year plus a tithe, in other words a total of fifty-five lei, whilst all the other Gypsies were to pay thirty lei plus a tithe, i.e. thirty-three lei. As was the case for other taxpayers, state Gypsies could practise any profession apart from that of aurar. The aurari needed official authorization in order to practise their profession. They were exempt from all other obligations to the State. Gypsy craftsmen settled in towns and belonging to a guild were required to respect the rules of their respective guild. The tithe collected from the Gypsies (five lei from the aurari, three lei from the rest) was kept by the Prison Authority. One leu per year from the tithe of each tax-paying Gypsy was used to pay the Gypsies’ vătaf (who was responsible for the actual collection of the head tax). The money left over after the payment of the vătafi (i.e., four lei per aurar and two lei from the rest) was to be used “solely for the purchase of Gypsies, in
order to achieve a gradual increase in the number of Gypsies in the service of the State” (Article 12). The head of the prison authorities was responsible for the purchase of Gypsies from private owners and the courts were instructed to notify this official of all cases in which Gypsies were put on sale (Article 13). Gypsies who were bought in this way would then enter the ranks of those paying tax to the State.50

Buying Gypsies in this way effectively meant their removal from the possession of private owners, where they benefited from exemption from all tax obligations. We saw earlier that the Organic Regulation did not alter the tax status of privately owned Gypsies, which in fact amounted to a privilege for slave owners. The transfer of a slave from private property to the property of the State was equivalent to the acquisition of a new taxpayer. It is in this light that we should understand the State’s preoccupation with increasing the number of state slaves by purchasing them from private owners. At the same time, the law satisfied the desire of some boyars to get rid of their slaves, in conditions in which keeping slaves was not profitable and the sale of them to other private owners was not always possible. The price that slave owners received from the State for their slaves was sizeable. Consequently, the 1832 law was not promulgated out of humanitarian motives or out of concern for the fate of privately owned Gypsies. Such concerns appeared later on, when abolitionist feeling began to make its presence felt in Romanian society. At that time the buying of privately owned Gypsies by the State was presented as an improvement of their situation. The law of 1832 is important in the history of the process of emancipation in the sense that it laid down the conditions by which slaves could be extracted from the possession of a private slave owner. This was achieved via the payment of compensation at market price (in practice a sum in excess of market price was paid), so that property rights were not violated in any way. The later laws of emancipation were to follow this principle in spite of the voices calling for freeing slaves without any compensation. On the basis of the 1832 law, the head of the prison authority was able to buy Gypsies from private slave owners with the money collected from the tithe charged to state Gypsies. From 1833 until 1 July 1839, 185 Gypsies were bought from private owners in this way, at a cost of 86,328 lei. These Gypsies all became state Gypsies.51

Also in Wallachia, in 1838 the head of the prison authorities, colonel Herăscu, proceeded with the settlement of a number of Gypsies belonging to the State in villages and fixed dwellings. In this way, the Gypsies de facto entered the ranks of the peasantry. At the same time, measures were taken that led to their complete assimilation into the Romanian population via mixed marriages.52 This measure was perceived as a first step towards the emancipation of state Gypsies, although this was in fact just an arrange-
ment. As noted by an observer of Romanian politics during this period, the liberated Gypsies were not settled on state lands but were instead given by the prince either to political supporters or to those he was interested in winning over to his side. The Gypsies would fulfil towards the owners of the estates where they settled the same obligations as a peasant, which amounted to a much larger sum than the thirty-five to fifty lei that they previously paid to the Treasury. Consequently, it can be seen that the prince’s gesture was motivated not by humanitarian feelings but by political interest. Boyars close to the prince in this way gained a new workforce.53

With time, the regulation of the obligations of state Gypsies was extended to the rest of the Gypsies. In Wallachia in 1840, the Public Assembly established new regulations for monastery Gypsies, who were subject to abuses both from their leaseholders and the monasteries themselves. During this period, the monasteries leased out the Gypsies under their possession. As the obligations of the Gypsies were not regulated by law, the obligations were left up to the discretion of their owners and leaseholders. The State intervened to curb abuses of this system and to improve the fate of the Gypsies. By law, their obligations to the monastery that owned them were limited to the head tax paid by Romanians, namely the sum of thirty lei per year plus the tithe (in other words, a further three lei) used to pay the zapcii and vătăfi who collected the taxes. This sum was fixed for six years, until 1846. After this time, they were each to pay forty lei, including the tithe. Leasing contracts for these estates were required to respect this law. The Gypsies were also required to fulfil “duties to the owner” for the master of the estate where they were living.54

In Moldavia, the State did not attempt to acquire privately owned slaves during the 1830s. However, measures were taken to limit abuses perpetrated by slave owners. In 1839, privately owned Gypsies were granted the right of pre-emption over themselves in cases where their owner wished to sell them. Instead of selling the slave to a third party, the slave owner was required to emancipate the slave for the sale price, if offered to him. In the same year, a deed from the prince established that in cases where they were to be sold, the respective Gypsies should be consulted and that the transaction could only go ahead if the Gypsies made a written statement that they did not wish to buy their freedom.55 At the same time, modifications were made to the Sobornicescul hrisor issued in 1785 by Alexandru Mavrocordat. The law was still in force and had been republished in 1835. In the spirit of the Organic Regulation and the evolutions that had taken place in society, certain of the segregationist provisions of the law were abolished, although official marriages between freemen and slaves remained forbidden in principle. In 1839, the prohibition of marriages of Romanian men and women to Gypsies released from slavery by their masters was abolished.56 In 1844,
it was forbidden for a marriage between a Gypsy and a Romanian to be sundered. In such cases, the slave became a freeman and was obliged to redeem his freedom, by means of payment to his master; if the slave did not possess sufficient funds, the money would be lent from the revenues of the Church. Children born to marriages between freemen and slaves were declared to be free.  

The first law to abolish slavery for one of the categories of the Gypsies was adopted in Wallachia in 1843. This was the law “for the withdrawal of taxpayers from the control of the prison authority and their transfer to the control of the county authorities”, which was voted in by the Public Assembly on 16 March and promulgated by the prince on 22 March 1843. The abolition of the slave status of these Gypsies was carried out via their removal from the tax records of the prison authority and transfer to the civil authorities. The head tax that they had previously paid to the prison authority was now to be collected by the local authorities. For a time, when it was hoped that the complete sedentarisation of the Gypsies would be possible, the level of the head tax remained as it had been in the past, including the tithe. The tithe was intended for the redeeming of the Gypsies from private owners. Through this law, a further 23,800 lei were added to the fund intended for the redeeming of the Gypsies, representing half of the sum of 47,600 lei that the State had saved from the abolition of the financial office of the prison authority. The other half of this sum went to the State Treasury. After these people had been fully integrated from a fiscal point of view into the ranks of village ploughmen, their tithe was to go to the village coffers, while the Treasury was to pay the sum of 47,600 lei only into the redemption fund. It is clear that the State did not lose anything as a result of this law. The head tax remained the same, while the sums intended for the redeeming of the Gypsies required no additional financial effort on the part of the State Treasury.

On 28 August 1843, the Department of Internal Affairs of Wallachia issued an order that all owners of Gypsies were required within a period of eighteen months to make provision for the settlement of nomadic Gypsies in their possession in fixed settlements and houses, either on their own estates or on the estate of others. Any Gypsies found wandering the countryside after the end of this period would be settled on State land by the authorities.

In Moldavia on 31 January 1844, at the suggestion of Prince Mihai Sturdza, a law was adopted “for the particular regulation of the situation of the Gypsies of the Metropolitanate, the bishoprics and the monasteries.” On the basis of this law, Gypsies belonging to the Church and the monastic establishments became freemen. Vărași Gypsies (those who were living on the estates) entered the ranks of taxpayers, thus having the same rights and
obligations to their master as the peasants, while breslași Gypsies (those who were members of a guild) were integrated into the category of tax-paying tradesmen. At the same time, they acquired the right to marry with Romanians. The tax collected from these Gypsies was placed in a special fund destined for the redemption of Gypsy slaves put up for sale by private owners.60

Also in Moldavia, on 14 February 1844, the law was voted in that granted both nomadic and settled Gypsies their freedom, thereby acquiring the same rights as the other inhabitants of the country. In order to encourage the settlement in villages of nomadic Gypsies, the law made provision for certain exemptions for this category of Gypsies: they were exempt from the payment of tax for a year, while from all other state obligations of tax-paying inhabitants they were exempt for three years from the time of settlement. The exemptions were also valid for Gypsies that were already settled, being applicable from the moment of their settlement.61

A few months later, the Administrative Council of Moldavia specified that emancipated slaves settled in villages whose tax exemption had expired were to pay their tax to the Treasury, with the aforementioned being registered in the same tax records as the other inhabitants of the country, while former monastery slaves were registered in a separate tax record, with their tax intended for the redemption of the Gypsies.62

The Wallachian emancipation law of 1843 applied to state Gypsies only. On 11 February 1847, at the suggestion of Prince Gheorghe Bibescu, the Assembly voted in a law freeing all slaves belonging to the Metropolitanate, bishoprics, monasteries and succursal monasteries, churches and any other public institutions. The law made no provision for compensation. In the explanatory text accompanying the bill, the prince points out that this measure was necessary since on the one hand the sums fixed by the laws of 1832 and 1844 for the redemption of the Gypsies were too small, while on the other hand the incomes of the Metropolitanate, the bishoprics and the monasteries were in excess of their needs to a considerable extent. The head tax that the Treasury would charge this category of emancipated slaves incorporated into the ranks of taxpayers was to be used for the redemption of slaves put on sale by private slave owners. The head tax accruing from privately owned Gypsies freed in this way was to be used for the same purpose.63 The law would provide, without any additional expenditure on the part of the State, the necessary monies for the Reserve Fund founded in 1832 and thus for the continuation of the process of emancipation of privately owned Gypsies without the rights of private owners being affected.

In the 1848 revolution, which included among its leaders in Wallachia and Moldavia declared abolitionist radicals, the complete abolition of slavery was included among social priorities together with the emancipation...
of corvee-peasants. Item 4 of the proclamation and programme of the revolution in Wallachia on 9/21 June 1848 ordered “the emancipation of the Gypsies by means of compensation”. On 26 June, the provisional government issued a decree declaring that privately owned Gypsies were free and founding a Commission for the liberation of slaves. The Commission, which comprised three members (Ioasaf Znagoveanu, Cezar Bolliac and Petraceh Poenaru), set about the implementation of the decree. Emancipated Gypsies received notice of liberation, while their former owners were to be compensated by the State. In this context some boyars freed their slaves without asking for any compensation, but there were also a substantial amount of opposition; some boyars dragged their feet over the implementation of the law. The stifling of the revolution in the autumn of 1848 put an end to these social transformations; with all Gypsies being returned to the status they held prior to the revolution. The abolition of slavery was included among the “Wishes of the National Party in Moldavia”, the programme of the Moldavian revolutionaries published in August 1848 in Czernowitz.

Nonetheless, the process of emancipation of Romanian society had reached a stage where slavery was regarded by almost everyone as a vestige of the past that needed to disappear. From the Organic Regulation until the 1848 revolution, in other words in less than a generation, Romanians had gone from the acceptance of the slavery of the Gypsies as a natural given to the identification of slavery as a barbaric institution.

Barbu Ştirbei, the new prince of Wallachia after the revolution, who reigned from 1849 to 1856, was a promoter of modernisation and was preoccupied by the Gypsy problem. On 22 November 1850 a princely decree was issued, forbidding the splitting up of Gypsy families by means of donation or sale. Similarly, the sale of Gypsies among private slave owners was forbidden in cases involving between one and three families; a slave owner wishing to sell slaves was required to make a request to the Treasury, which bought them and immediately set them free. The following year, it was ordered that the State would buy back Gypsies who were mistreated or suffered as a result of other forms of negligence on the part of their masters. Barbu Ştirbei prepared at an early stage the liberation of the last category of slaves, namely privately owned slaves. In a report compiled in June 1855, among measures recommended for the reorganisation of the country, he included the abolition of slavery, which he regarded as an outrage.

“The law for the emancipation of all Gypsies in the Principality of Wallachia” was promulgated on 8/20 February 1856. The law enacted the abolition of slavery for privately owned slaves. Slave owners were to receive compensation of ten ducats for each individual slave. The money was to be paid in stages over a number of years from the Compensation Fund. The tax that was to be collected on behalf of the State from the freed slaves was
paid into the Compensation Fund. All taxpaying Gypsies contributed to the fund, as well as the tax collected from former monastery and state Gypsies. At the same time, the law made it obligatory for the Gypsies to settle. Gypsies already settled in villages were to remain where they were and would be incorporated into the tax records for the respective locality. Those Gypsies who did not have a fixed dwelling, in other words, the nomads who wandered the country, were required to settle in villages wherever they desired as long as they established fixed dwellings there. Gypsies living on the boyars’ residences were to be settled by the administration in the towns or villages of their choosing. After all Gypsies had been settled, they would be forbidden from moving from their new places of residence for the period of two censuses, according to the law of 1851.

In Moldavia, where following the application of the law of 1844, as in Wallachia, only privately owned Gypsies were still living under conditions of slavery, Prince Grigore Alexandru Ghica (1849–56) undertook a similar measure. On 28 November 1855, he addressed the Administrative Council on the subject of the necessity of abolishing the slavery of the Gypsies and proposed the drawing up of a bill to this end. Petre Mavrogheni and Mihail Kogâlniceanu drafted the bill. On 10/22 December 1855 the Public Divan voted in the “legislation for the abolition of slavery, the settlement of compensation and the transfer of emancipated slaves to the status of taxpayers”.

Under the terms of this law, the Gypsies belonging to private owners were declared free. The slave owners would receive compensation of 8 ducats for linguari and vâtrași and 4 ducats for lăiesi; however, no compensation was offered for invalids and babies. The money intended for compensation payments was to be provided partly by the tax paid by emancipated state and monastery slaves, as well as privately owned Gypsies emancipated at an earlier stage, and partly by additional funds from the Treasury, as well as certain sums collected from the treasury of the clergy. Due to the fact that the State’s finances had been exhausted, slave owners were given state bonds with annual returns of 10 per cent. Slave owners who gave up the compensation to which they were entitled by law were offered exemption from the payment of tax and other state obligations for their former slaves for a period of ten years. This arrangement was beneficial both to the State and to slave owners, since it made it easier to settle emancipated slaves on the estates.

Once the two laws had been voted, some boyars gave up their slaves freely, claiming no compensation from the State. In the newspapers of the time, declarations by slave owners announcing the waiving of their entitlement to compensation appeared on an almost daily basis; lists of these slave owners were published, resulting in the popularisation of gestures of this kind made by certain slave owners. Wallachian boyars proved less generous
than their Moldavian counterparts, where there were a large number of owners waiving their right to compensation. In a report of the Moldavian Department of Finance from June 1856, it emerges that 334 slave owners claimed compensation for their former slaves, while 264 gave up their entitlement. The number of Gypsies for whom the State had to pay compensation was 16,023 vătrași and 4566 lăiesi; the total sum to be paid out was 4,613,112 lei. Entitlement to compensation was waived for 10,424 persons. The statistics in the report are nonetheless partial, as they do not include the situation in several districts which had not sent the results of censuses of emancipated slaves.74

Thus it can be seen that the abolition of slavery in the Romanian principalities was carried out via a whole series of laws. Slaves were not freed en masse; instead, emancipation took place category by category through a process that lasted two and a half decades. Practically speaking, it began with the Organic Regulation and closed with the laws of 1855–56. The legislative measures enacted were also linked to the social evolutions that Romanian society underwent during the period and the change in the sense of civic spirit that took place, as illustrated by our outline of abolitionist feeling in the principalities and the actions undertaken in its name. The result of the emancipation laws, a population of approximately 250,000 people was freed from slavery and integrated, from a legal point of view, into the ranks of the citizens of the country.

4. SOCIAL EVOLUTIONS AFTER EMANCIPATION

The laws that enacted the emancipation of the enslaved Gypsies secured the legal status of freemen for their beneficiaries and settled the issue of the compensation that their erstwhile owners were to receive from the State Treasury. In terms of their tax status, the Gypsies were assimilated into the ranks of taxpayers. They were recorded in the tax register of the village where they were living at the time of emancipation and were to perform the same state obligations as the peasantry. However, these laws dealt only partially and in a general sense with the economic and social facets of the future of this population. The laws speak of establishing the emancipated Gypsies in a village or on an estate; in some cases, until their complete entry into the ranks of corvee peasants, their tax obligations were reduced by half. However, there is no mention whatever of obliging private landowners or monasteries to provide their former slaves or former state slaves settled on their lands with parcels of land, livestock or tools, which would have been the only means of guaranteeing conditions similar to those of corvee peasants for emancipated slaves.
The main goal of the law was in fact to settle (sedentarise) this category of population. The policy of settling Gypsies in villages and houses actually preceded the legislation abolishing slavery. In the 1840s and '50s, the governments of the two principalities and the county and district authorities adopted a series of measures to this end. In this way, there was particular interest in the settlement in villages of Gypsy blacksmiths. When in 1847 the authorities in Wallachia carried out a rigorous registration of blacksmiths by village, district and county, it was found that there were blacksmiths virtually in every village, one in most villages.\(^7\) The deeds issued and measures adopted by the central and local administration in connection with the implementation of the emancipation laws of 1855–56 were intended exclusively to promote the sedentarisation of the Gypsies. In Moldavia on 6 April 1856, the Department of the Interior put forward a set of regulations designed to assure the settlement of the newly emancipated slaves. It was established that the settlement of the Gypsies was to take place within a period of three months, in principle of the estate of their former master. If the latter no longer wished to keep Gypsies on his estate or if the Gypsies no longer wished to remain on the estate of their former master, the ministry was responsible for the settlement of the Gypsies in another location, where their owner was prepared to receive them. If the settlement of emancipated slaves was not achieved by this method, as a last resort the Gypsies were to be settled on the monastic estates. At the same time, the \(\text{lăieşi}\) were forbidden from establishing their own hamlets or villages or to settle in forests, at the side of major roads or in isolated locations. They were similarly forbidden from wandering the country in bands and living in tents. The district authorities were responsible for monitoring the way in which the settlement of the Gypsies was proceeding.\(^7\)

The legislation left the actual process of sedentarisation of emancipated Gypsies and, generally speaking, the living conditions of these communities up to the estate owners themselves. There were frequent cases of boyars continuing to use a substantial number of Gypsies for agricultural labour and especially for domestic labour (cooks, servants, coachmen) even after 1855–56.\(^7\) There was no enthusiasm for the loss of this workforce, as demonstrated by the obstinacy with which some boyars opposed the idea of emancipation right up until the adoption of the final law and the protests mounted by some of them with regard to the law.

Generally speaking, however, the slave owners complied with the law. At a time when there was an excess of available agricultural land and labour was scarce, many slave owners were happy to provide emancipated slaves with strips of land that by law had to be provided to each taxpayer. According to the system in place at the time, possession of a strip of land required its holder to provide a payment in goods and to perform *corvee* to the land-
owner. Some boyars attempted to introduce such an arrangement even before the emancipation laws of 1855–56. It was believed that this process would effect the transformation of the Gypsies into peasants. Some emancipated slaves acquired exactly the same status as peasants on a boyar’s estate. They entered into possession of a portion of agricultural land, which they cultivated under the same regime of obligations to the landowner as the peasants. Nevertheless, as becomes clear from contemporary documents, many newly emancipated Gypsies obstinately refused to accept the portion of land offered to them or to cultivate it. They did not attempt to adopt the profession of ploughman or the other forms of labour typical to the peasant economy, instead continuing to work as blacksmiths, spoon-makers, brick-makers etc. With regard to formerly nomadic Gypsies, such attempts as those mentioned above resulted in almost complete failure. Even if the majority of the Gypsies settled in fixed settlements, they did not become ploughmen. Not even the *vătrași*, who in some cases had lived in the villages and at the boyar’s residence for generations all adapted to agricultural labour. Some of them continued to practise their former occupations.

It is true that some owners applied special conditions to the Gypsies: there were many cases of Gypsies being allocated land that had not been cleared of scrub as well as parcels of lands that were smaller than those allocated to Romanian taxpayers. On the other hand, the Gypsies were obliged to carry out the same quantity of work as the Romanians, with the quantity of work far outstripping the benefits they might receive from the cultivation of the portion of land they received. However, the principal cause of the refusal of a large part of the Gypsies to embrace the agricultural work designated to them by law was the economic and tax burden that came with their new social status. Becoming freemen meant joining the ranks of taxpayers, while receiving a portion of land on the estate of a landowner meant the imposition of *corvee*. In comparison with earlier times, when the Gypsies were *de facto* a privileged section of the population because the obligations they owed to their master and the State were limited, they then had to pay tax and carry out corvee together with the peasants. Paradoxically, from the point of view of their obligations, emancipation made their situation worse, even if the level of the obligation to which they were bound were reduced for a time. They perceived their new social and legal status as a worsening of their exploitation. Their refusal to become ploughmen and their flight from the estates where they were settled actually amounted to a flight from the payment of tax and the carrying out of corvee labour.

There were differences between the two principalities with regard to the integration of the Gypsies into agriculture. In Moldavia, even though the regime to which the estate owners subjected emancipated Gypsies was harsh, the proportion of those who became integrated into agriculture was
greater than in Wallachia. In both principalities there were large numbers of Gypsies who did not integrate into agricultural life immediately after the acquisition of their freedom, as required by the emancipation laws. Consequently, these emancipated Gypsies remained on the estate of an owner, but not as peasants. They signed contracts for houses, but they discharged their corvee obligations in cash.79

The attempt to sedentarise the Gypsies took place at a time in which there were a whole series of factors with the potential to disrupt the process. Thus, not all landowners were interested in the settlement of Gypsies (including their former slaves) on their estates. It was in the 1850s and the first part of the following decade, up until the agrarian reform of 1864, that the transformation of feudal-type property, based on the obligations of boyars and corvee-peasants, into modern-style capitalist property took place. The rural population became much more mobile as a consequence of the implementation in the two principalities of the agrarian settlements of 1851, according to which the estates were to be divided up between lands that became the exclusive property of the landowner and lands allocated to the corvee-peasants, and the tendency of some landowners to deprive peasants of the good lands on their estates. In the latter case, some landowners allocated to the peasants lands that were infertile or even lands that had not been cleared of scrub, even seeking to rid themselves of the peasants in order to obtain a larger surface area of land that belonged exclusively to them. In the context of the aforementioned abuses perpetrated by landowners and at the same time the often sizeable incentives offered to colonists by landowners interested in the valorisation of sparsely populated estates, a significant proportion of the rural population was on the move during this period. The refusal of many Gypsies to actually settle in villages to which they were bound by law, their tendency to move away and the rejection of sedentarisation should also be considered in this wider social context.

Equally, the policy with regard to the Gypsies lacked consistency. Sometimes the authorities acted in hesitant fashion, thereby encouraging emancipated slaves to abandon the villages and estates where they had been settled by law. The agrarian law of 1851 in Wallachia restricted the movement of former state and monastery Gypsies settled at the time on different estates. The final emancipation law of 1856 did the same with regard to the former slaves of the boyars. They had the right to move to another estate or to the town only after the completion of two five-year tax periods from the time of the promulgation of the law. In 1857, however, the Ministry of Interior mistakenly ordered that they be given the right to move after the completion of two tax periods from the time of their emancipation (which took place as a result of the laws of 1843 and 1847) not from the appearance of the law in question.80 The result was that almost all of the Gypsies requested permis-
sion to move away from the estates where they were living. Following the intervention of the landowners, Wallachia’s ruling council (Căimăcănia) specified that the two tax periods were to be calculated from 1851 and refused all the requests to move made by the Gypsies. In consequence, the only way for the Gypsies to escape the corvee and tax was to flee. In 1858 and the years that immediately followed, many Gypsies abandoned the estates where they had been settled in the 1840s, causing a great deal of inconvenience to landowners and the central and local authorities. There were only relatively few cases in which they were returned to their former places of settlement, the authorities eventually being forced to register them in the places where they settled.

Unlike in Wallachia, in Moldavia the law of December 1855 did not tie the Gypsies to the place where they had been living at the moment of emancipation, instead tolerating their movement to other estates. On the other hand, the Moldavian authorities showed more consistency in their policy to sedentarise the Gypsies and tie them to agriculture. The authorities undertook measures designed to disperse Gypsy communities among the rural Romanian population. The outcome was that in Moldavia the Gypsies actually moved over more quickly to a sedentary way of life and in a greater proportion than in Wallachia. Even the process of ethnic and linguistic assimilation was more substantial.

In the conditions of the territorial resettlement of the emancipated slaves that took place in the years following the adoption of the final emancipation law, the Gypsies began to establish themselves in Wallachian and Moldavian towns. It appears that the authorities approved of this phenomenon and actually encouraged the settlement of a number of Gypsies in towns. This was a means of reducing the pressure created by the presence of the Gypsies in rural areas, at a time when the reorganisation of rural property, of village communities and of the tax system in the villages was one of the main priorities of political actors. From this point of view, the movement of many Gypsies to the towns seemed like a solution. In 1858 in Wallachia the authorities approved requests to settle in the towns on a large scale. Gypsies who began to own property through the purchase of parcels of land in the towns and who were also craftsmen did not fall under the law of 1851, which forbade the movement of Gypsies within the two five-year periods. Consequently, from that very year there appeared a wave of Gypsies who settled on the margins of towns, the majority of them being craftsmen. In Moldavia a similar phenomenon took place, though on a much smaller scale. Muntenia has remained until the present day the region of the country with the largest urban Gypsy population. At that time, i.e. at the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the 1860s, Gypsies became inhabitants of
Romanian towns. The suburbs of Bucharest and of the larger towns received this influx of new town-dwellers.

The Gypsies who settled in the villages earned a living through their traditional crafts. Tradesmen adapted relatively quickly to the new conditions. They were registered as craftsmen, paying tax accordingly. However, not all of them were craftsmen. Gypsies who had no profession gained employment as servants, usually in villages other than the one in which they were registered as taxpayers. Gypsies belonging to this category were led by a vătaf, who dealt with the landowner or leaseholder, undertaking to ensure that the Gypsies under his authority presented themselves for work, in exchange for certain sums of money and the upkeep of his men. When an estate no longer required their services, the Gypsies moved on to another place.

Some categories of Gypsies continued to lead an itinerant way of life. Formally speaking, according to the laws of emancipation, they were settled in villages. They acquitted themselves of corvee obligations by the payment of a sum of money (between thirty and sixty lei per family per year), without having a single furrow of cultivated land. The land they did have was used for pasture during the time they spent there. They continued to lead a nomadic way of life, living in tents and moving from place to place in summer, before withdrawing to the mountains during winter, where they erected huts. At the first sign of spring, they would return to the villages where they were registered in order to pay tax and corvee, before setting off again to wander the land.

For many years, emancipated slaves constituted a serious problem for the authorities, the police and the population, due to their vagrancy and the thefts and crimes that they committed. The police took action against many individuals and some groups of Gypsies. As these problems were created mostly by large groups of Gypsies who lived in certain areas, attempts were made to disperse them. As soon as the Ministry of Interior left the solution of these problems up the county authorities, the measures taken against the Gypsies took on a much more local character. In some places, systematic measures were taken with regard to the groups of Gypsies causing the problems. The prefecture in the county of Neamț, for example, dispersed the groups of lăieși Gypsies living in the county. In a report compiled by the sub-prefect of Piatra Neamț, dating from 30 May 1863, we find a justification of these measures, as well as a plan to disperse the Gypsies among the villages of the county: “as long as these individuals, who are beyond any sense of morality and band together in groups, do not disappear from the villages, or will not be distributed one or two [Gypsies] per village in order to split them up, public order will not be re-established”. The prefect went on to propose the dispersal of the Gypsies among the villages, with one eman-
icipated Gypsy being allocated for every twenty houses of Romanians. The Ministry of Interior approved these measures. In some areas, Gypsies were settled in villages in small numbers and placed under the supervision of the local police. The Gypsies’ former practice of seasonal migration was stopped and the movement of individuals from place to place in order to practise their crafts was strictly regulated, being carried out on the basis of a permit to travel valid for a fixed period of time.

The rural law of 1864, which brought about the establishment of capitalist-type property in Romania, was introduced at a time when only a part of the emancipated slaves had adopted de facto the condition of corvee-peasant. The law transformed the latter category into landowners, either of the parcels of land that they were using at the time or, in the case of those who had moved, on State land (in fact, estates that had belonged to the monasteries dedicated to the Holy Places, which had been secularised in 1863). The text of the law made no reference to the Gypsies. The special situation in which the majority of emancipated slaves were living (i.e., living on private estates on the basis of an understanding with the owner, without working the land) was not regulated by law. Consequently, the resolution of their situation was left up to the discretion of the local authorities and the estate owners. Some landowners refused to accept emancipated slaves who did not perform corvee within the category of corvee-peasants. The government intervened via a journal of the Cabinet, which ordered that Gypsies settled on estates in a house but without any agricultural land were to be granted ownership of just the land where their house was located and its garden. If the Gypsies wished to receive agricultural land, they would have to settle on State land. On the other hand, those Gypsies who were working a portion of land of fifty prăjini (one square prăjina = 17.70 square metres) or more, and who were therefore living as corvee-peasants, would benefit from the property law.

As a result of the implementation of the rural law, some emancipated slaves became peasant smallholders. The category most affected in this respect were the vătrași, namely former slaves who had long since become accustomed to agricultural labour, but other categories of Gypsies who had embraced this way of life in the years between emancipation and 1864, also benefited in this way. In the years that immediately followed 1864, a part of the Gypsies were moved onto State lands, where they became smallholders. On the former monastic estates, as well as on certain underpopulated private estates, villages were established inhabited chiefly, and sometimes exclusively, by Gypsies.

The agrarian reform of 1864 was important for the Gypsies, not only as a result of the new social condition that it ensured for many of them, but also because it put an end to the population movements that had characterised
the previous decade. In this way, life in rural areas stabilised. For a long time, most former slaves would continue to live in settlements established for them during the era of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza.

Thus, a process that had lasted between ten and twenty years depending on the moment of emancipation of the different categories of Gypsies came to an end. By this time, there was virtually not a single settlement in Romania, either rural or urban, that was not home to at least one or more families of Gypsies. The Gypsies were almost always settled at the edge of a village or, in cases where there were larger numbers of them, on a separate street or in a separate neighbourhood. There were also villages inhabited entirely by former Gypsy slaves, especially in the vicinity of monasteries.

This is only one aspect of the way in which the problem of emancipated slaves was solved in the social conditions of the time. The 1840s–60s were a time of transition for the Gypsy population as a whole. By the end of the period, a part of the Gypsies had become peasants, integrating themselves into the Romanian society in the process of modernisation. Another part of the population, however, even if it had settled in one place, was still living by its traditional occupations. The Romanian village, backward and with limited material possibilities, continued to call upon the Gypsy craftsmen and their goods. However, in respect of their social position, this category of Gypsies had a different status compared to that of the slave craftsmen had had on the estate of their feudal master. If under the ancien régime the Gypsies were considered part of an economic and social system, with a specific function and status, in the new system the Gypsies and their traditional professions became a completely marginal element in Romanian society, which had already begun on the path to capitalist-style modernisation. Practically speaking, the position of the Gypsy craftsmen in the country’s economy was insignificant, while their social position was peripheral. The fact that the Gypsies lived at the edge of the village, and that they buried their dead at the edge of the cemetery is indicative of the position they occupied in the respective community and in society as a whole. It was at this time that the marginalisation of the Gypsies in Romania from a social point of view took place. Romania entered the modern era with this social component present as a relic of its past.

The manner in which the problem of the Gypsies was solved in the Romanian principalities in the mid-nineteenth century was of a nature to influence the future development of this population. The dispersal of most Gypsy communities led to the rapid assimilation in the case of isolated families into the Romanian rural population. The adoption of an agricultural occupation led to the disappearance of Gypsies’ distinctiveness in comparison to Romanian peasants. The former slaves assimilated into the Romanian masses, considering themselves to be Romanians and being registered as
such in statistics and censuses. Even some former monastic villages inhabited exclusively or largely by Gypsies, granted land under the agrarian reform of 1864, lost their ethnic character over the course of two to three generations. Generally speaking, however, large communities of Gypsies maintained their linguistic and cultural specificity independent of the social and occupation transformations that the members of such communities underwent. We can estimate the process of linguistic and cultural assimilation experienced by the Gypsy population in Romania to have taken place on a large scale, with substantial regional and local differences. Assimilation was most intense in Moldavia. The consequence of this process was that the number of Gypsies in the Old Kingdom of Romania grew at an extremely modest rate, while their proportion of the total population of the country was in continual decline. If at the time of the emancipation laws approximately 200,000 to 250,000 Gypsies were recorded in Romania, by 1876 (in other words, twenty years after the emancipation of the last group of the Gypsies) their number was estimated at 200,000.\textsuperscript{89} In the final decade of the nineteenth century, Guido Cora estimated the number of Gypsies in Romania at between 250,000 and 300,000,\textsuperscript{90} while a Romanian author estimated their number to be around 300,000.\textsuperscript{91} If we compare these figures to Romania’s total population of 6 million at that time, we find that the Gypsies accounted for 4–5 per cent of the total population, compared to approximately 7 per cent during the period of emancipation.

However, the emigration of a large number of Romanian Gypsies in the 1850s and '60s, which was one of the main consequences of emancipation, also contributed to this state of affairs.


The emancipation laws of the mid-nineteenth century gave rise to great mobility among the Gypsies. We have already seen that the objectives set by the country’s political forces, namely to settle this mass of 200,000 to 250,000 people and transform them into peasants by tying them to a parcel of land, were only partially successful. At least to begin with, for the majority of the former slaves, the liberty they had obtained meant the possibility to abandon their former master. In the period following their emancipation, a large part of the Gypsies entered into a territorial movement that far exceeded the seasonal peregrinations that had previously been characteristic of the lăiesi and the other groups of nomadic Gypsies. In former times, those groups
had traveled the country in the practice of their traditional crafts, returning at certain specific dates to their master’s estate, where they would spend the winter. Now almost all former state slaves and a part of former monastery and boyars’ slaves set off on a territorial movement that no longer followed the traditional routes and the ancient calendar. Formally speaking, the Gypsies were legally tied them to a particular place, registered among the taxpayers of the village and obliged to pay tax in that place. Such measures, coupled with the prohibition of “vagrancy”, were not, however, sufficient to prevent this large-scale movement of the Gypsies, which constituted one of the most serious problems faced by the authorities. The years that followed immediately after 1858 constituted the period when the territorial mobility of the Gypsies was at its height. In this period, most of the Gypsies involved in the population movement abandoned the settlements established as their fixed abode and moved to other settlements on other estates, settled in towns or resumed a nomadic existence. Old groups of Gypsies, as well as new groups constituted on an ad hoc basis, wandered the country practising their traditional crafts or the marginal and seasonal occupations practised by the rudari, lingurari etc. Police documents recorded this phenomenon, especially from the point of view of the criminal offences committed under its aegis.

We have seen how at the end of this period of great territorial mobility for the Gypsies, the key reference point being the year 1864, many of them were already established on the edges of villages and towns, where they constituted a separate social and professional category (craftsmen in the case of some Gypsies and day labourers of others). There they had entered into a gradual process of linguistic, cultural and also ethnic assimilation, particularly in the case of small groups of Gypsies, especially those living in a rural environment. Other Gypsies, who had not adapted to a sedentary way of life, the majority of whom were former state slaves, continued to lead a nomadic existence. They caused a great deal of trouble to the authorities and the population. This category of the population was also subject to a continuing tendency towards sedentarisation. Still another group of Gypsies went into exile outside Romania.

Documentary archives of the period from the 1830s to the 1860s record instances of individual and groups of Gypsies crossing the borders of the country. Of course, in such cases we are not dealing with a new phenomenon: this population was always very mobile. We have seen that for centuries there was a migratory tendency from Wallachia and Moldavia into Transylvania and Hungary. This can be seen in the eighteenth century, when the Habsburg authorities took measures to stop the Gypsies from entering the Empire through the strict control of their borders and when they proceeded with the expulsion of groups of Gypsies from the Empire. Similarly,
there were significant numbers of Gypsies who crossed to the south of the Danube. Indicative of this demographic phenomenon is the fact that a large number of the Gypsies living today in Hungary and Slovakia are known as “Vlach Gypsies” (oláh cigányok, valašški Cigáni). The groups of Gypsies from this category (lovări, căldărari, ciurari) speak a language with numerous Romanian elements.\(^93\) In addition to these groups, in southern Hungary there are groups of Romanian-speaking Gypsies known as beás, a term derived from the Romanian baăieşi, meaning gold-washers. This group, as demonstrated by the language that they speak, came from the Banat and western Transylvania.\(^94\) The settlement of Gypsies from these two categories in Hungary took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The flight of the Gypsies over the border was not, however, a widespread phenomenon. The Gypsies from the principalities were the possession of their masters and they were of value to them. As soon as their absence was discovered, they were tracked down and brought back to the master as quickly as possible. Consequently, at no time were there any border crossings by Gypsies en masse. To a certain extent, the mobility of the Gypsies reflected the demographic movements of the time, when for political and military reasons it would happen that people came to settle in neighbouring countries.

After emancipation, with the Gypsies no longer the property of a master, there was no one to pursue them over the state border. Even the movements of the Gypsies within the country were normally supposed to be restricted and controlled by the practice of issuing permits to travel. Without these permits, which also specified the destination of the journey and its duration, the Gypsies were not allowed to leave the locality where they were registered as taxpayers. However, the Gypsies paid no attention to this measure. They would also cross the border without any official documents. When border crossings of this type are recorded, they appear to be regarded as something quite usual. The possibility that the Romanian authorities actually encouraged this state of affairs cannot be ruled out. At a time when tens of thousands of emancipated Gypsies who refused to settle in villages and become ploughmen were creating a serious social problem for the authorities, we may suppose that the emigration of these Gypsies was not regarded as a loss for the country.

We can observe how even during the period of emancipation, Gypsies originating from Romania pass into neighbouring countries, with the latter sometimes taking measures to expel these illegal immigrants. In Transylvania (which at the time was part of the Habsburg Empire), border guards were given express orders to act in this manner, demonstrating that the phenomenon was relatively large in scale.\(^95\) In Bukovina, a large number of the Gypsies, who still practised a nomadic way of life following the measures
taken to sedentarise the population at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, originated from Romania. Gypsies from Moldavia crossed into Bessarabia, which was then under Tsarist occupation, and from there journeyed on into Ukraine and Russia. In Galicia and on the territory that today forms part of southern Poland, a wave of Gypsies arrived in the 1860s that was made up of individuals who differed in many respects from the Gypsies who had been living in these areas for several centuries. The new arrivals came in small groups and belonged to the clan of căldărași, who originated from Romania and Hungary, as well as the clan of lovari from Transylvania. Many of these groups stayed only for a short period of time in Poland before moving on. Other groups stayed longer, only heading west decades later. During the period of emancipation, groups of Gypsies originating from Romania arrived in Hungary, the Balkan Peninsula and the Russian Empire. Documents from Serbian archives dating from the first half of the nineteenth century record numerous cases of Gypsies from Wallachia settling in Serbia. These newcomers, who were different from Serbian Gypsies, were known as “Romanian Gypsies” or karavlaški; some of them spoke Romanian only. In Bulgaria, in the northern foothills of the Balkans, we find villages where alongside the Bulgarians lived rudari, Gypsies whose native language was Romanian. Gypsies originating from Romania were also to be found in other parts of the Balkan Peninsula. In Bosnia they were known as Karavlaši (Black Romanians), while in Slavonia Koritari. These were Romanian-speaking Gypsies who had come from Wallachia during the period of emancipation or perhaps even earlier.

The departure of Gypsies from Romania was a demographic process of an indeterminate period of time, spontaneous in nature, involving relatively small groups of people acting independently. Contemporary sources noted this phenomenon, without, however, paying any particular attention. Archive material is inevitably scarce, while no study of the phenomenon has ever been carried out in Romanian historiography.

The emigration of countless groups of Gypsies from Romania during the period of emancipation is one part of a large-scale demographic process. In the countries of Central and Western Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, groups of Gypsies came to settle who bore different linguistic, cultural etc. characteristics from those Gypsies whose ancestors had settled there centuries earlier. These new arrivals referred to themselves as Rom (plural: Roma). The dialects that they spoke were different from those of the local Gypsies, being characterised by a strong influence from Romanian. The most important groups among these Gypsies were those who belonged to the clans of the căldărași, lovari and ciurari. During the same period, Gypsies who no
longer spoke their ancestral language, speaking instead only Romanian, arrived in Central and Western Europe. These were *rudari*, *ursari* and *Boyás* (*băiesi* or *aurari*).103 This migration was relatively large in scale, with the newcomers overwhelming in terms of numbers the indigenous Gypsies.104 At this time, the tableau of the Gypsy population in Western Europe, as well as in North and Latin America, underwent important changes. In Romology, it is considered that the second great Gypsy migration took place at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The first great migration took place in the Middle Ages, when the Gypsies reached the entire European continent. At the start of the twentieth century, in the conditions of this important transformation in the tableau of the Gypsy population, scholars produced a new classification of the population, a classification that remains valid today. According to whether Romanian elements are present or absent from the Gypsy dialects, we are dealing with Gypsies speaking so-called Vlax dialects or Gypsies speaking non-Vlax dialects. The *lovari* (*Lovara*), *căldăraşi* (*Kalderasˇ*) and *ciurari* (*Cˇurara*) among others all belong to the first group.105 Today, the vast majority of the Gypsies from Western Europe, North and Latin America, Australia, South Africa etc. speak Vlax dialects.

Thus, between the middle of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, a substantial migration of Gypsies took place from Eastern Europe towards Central and Western Europe and onwards to America. This second migration meant an exclusively urban form of nomadism in which the Gypsies settled on the edges of large towns, where they formed communities sometimes permanent in nature and sometimes ephemeral. The stability of these communities was, however, relative, as the families that made up the community were in perpetual renewal.106

The most active Gypsies in this migration were the *Kalderasˇ*. In all countries, they were the richest and most prestigious group of Gypsies. They did not mix with other Gypsies and managed to preserve their specificity. When they arrived in Central and Western Europe, they wore their hair long and travelled in primitive carts. They had a distinctive costume, richly ornamented and in strident colours, which were different from that of other groups of Gypsies. At the beginning of the 1860s, the *Kalderasˇ* were recorded in Poland. From Poland they travelled into Russia and Scandinavia. In Germany, the first bands of the so-called “Hungarian” Gypsies (from their description, it is clear that these were *Kalderasˇ*) appeared in 1865, 1866 and 1867. Some bands totalled a hundred people. In 1866 in France appeared a band made up of 150 people, carrying Austrian passports. Smaller groups arrived in 1868, 1870, 1872 and 1874, coming from Germany and Italy. In 1868, some of these *Kalderasˇ* made an incursion onto English soil. In 1886 “Greek” Gypsies (i.e., from Greece and European Turkey), as well as Serbia,
Bulgaria and Romania, arrived in England. The first mention of the presence of ursari in the West is contemporaneous with that of the Kalderas: the ursari are recorded in Germany in 1867 and in the Netherlands in 1868. In 1872, the ursari arrived in France. The first to arrive came from Serbia and Bosnia and carried Turkish passports. In 1884, Paul Bataillard noted the presence of bands of Kalderas and ursari in Spain and Algeria.

The migration took place in stages, with the groups of Gypsies following different routes and stopping off for longer or shorter periods along the way. In some cases, the migration was resumed after the group had remained in one place for an entire generation.

The second major stage in the migration of the Gypsies to the West was the migration of the Kalderas to France, England and America in the years 1905–13. In 1906 the migration reached particularly feverish levels. In 1911 they arrived in England, where the groups of Kalderas came to the attention of journalists and scholars. The destinies of some of the individuals taking part in these migrations are indicative of the routes followed by the Kalderas. There is data pertaining to families, with names such as Tsoron, Kirpats, Todor, Demeter and Maximoff, who arrived in the West together with this migratory wave. Milos Tsoron declared that he was born in 1858 in Krakow and that he left the city around 1890. He travelled for two years in Russia, through the major cities, before returning to Krakow. He did not remain there for long, instead setting off through Silesia to Prague, Vienna and Budapest. He also visited Transylvania and Croatia. Three of his sons married Hungarian Gypsy women, while the fourth one married an Italian Gypsy woman. Years later, after passing through Austria, Italy, France and Germany, he arrived in England. The migration of the Tsoron family is typical for the Kalderas. The generation of these Kalderas living at the beginning of the twentieth century was born in Poland, the Russian Empire (in Bessarabia or in the vicinity of this province) and Germany.

Starting in the 1880s and continuing until the First World War, Gypsies from this clan arrived in the United States. The majority of them came from Austria–Hungary, Russia and Serbia, as well as from Italy, Greece, Romania and Turkey. The arrival of the Kalderas, rudari and the other groups of Gypsies at this time more or less wiped out the Gypsies who had arrived there in the colonial period. Their arrival in America coincided with the major wave of immigration from Eastern Europe. The Gypsies who left Eastern Europe also arrived in Latin America at this time.

In the countries of Western Europe, these immigrants were as a rule known as “Hungarian”, “Serbian”, “Russian” or “Greek” Gypsies according to their country or origin and their nationality (passport). Indicative of the place from where they set off for the West in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century are the elements
of Hungarian, Serbian, Russian etc. that can be found in their dialects. The dialects spoken by the Kalderasă and Lovara, for example, are very similar, although not identical. The latter use many Hungarian words, demonstrating that they stayed for some time in Hungary prior to their arrival in Poland or Germany (and onwards from there). However, the influence from Romanian is much more pronounced and is characteristic of all the groups of Gypsies who took part in this migration, demonstrating that their sojourn in Romanian-speaking lands was much longer in duration.

An important question is: what is the place of Wallachia and Moldavia in this demographic process? In other words, to what extent were the Romanian principalities the point of departure for the second wave of Gypsy migration? Clearly, until such time as this topic of study receives special attention, any answer to this question will largely be an approximation. It has been stated that there is no connection between the emancipation of the Gypsies in the Romanian principalities and the migration of the Gypsies. The Romanian elements present in Romany dialects have been explained by the fact that the Gypsies set off from the Romanian linguistic space, although not necessarily from Wallachia and Moldavia. It is true that the Gypsies who took part in the migration originated from an area much larger than that of the two Romanian principalities. The Romanian linguistic space at that time meant in addition to Wallachia and Moldavia (after 1859, Romania), Transylvania, the Banat, Bukovina, Bessarabia, as well as other territories in the Balkan Peninsula and Hungary. It should be recognised that groups of Gypsies from other Romanian speaking lands and territories took part in the migration. The difficult economic conditions and in particular the crisis in the traditional Gypsy crafts, as well as the implementation of sedentarisation policies throughout the region, were of a nature to determine the emigration of some Gypsies.

It is our belief that most of the Gypsies who set off for the West did so from the Romanian principalities during the period of emancipation. The principalities were the countries with the largest number of Gypsies, while the legal and social transformations that took place there were unique in their scale. The Gypsies living in the principalities therefore went through an experience that was unparalleled elsewhere at the time. As a result of the way in which emancipation was conceived, the actual form that it took and the restrictions it placed on the former slaves meant that a large number of Gypsies did not fit into the social structures put in place by the emancipation laws; therefore they preferred to go into exile. Of course, in the period of emancipation only the emigration of Gypsies into neighbouring countries was documented. The arrival of Gypsies speaking Vlax dialects in Western countries took place somewhat later, several decades after the emancipation of the Gypsies in the principalities. Between the time of their departure
from the principalities and their arrival in the West, one to two generations had passed. During this period, the groups of migrating Gypsies sojourned in neighbouring countries. This sojourn explains the elements of Hungarian, Serbo-Croat and others in their respective dialects. The movement of the groups of Gypsies from the east to the west of the continent took place at a slow pace, sometimes over the course of several generations. We find it plausible that Romania was the place from which the majority of these Gypsies originated. Thus, the first major stage in the second Gypsy migration was the departure of groups of Gypsies from the Romanian principalities actually during the period of their emancipation and their settling in neighbouring countries.

Romania in the mid-nineteenth century was a point of departure for migratory waves comparable in terms of scale and importance with what it had been at the beginning of the fifteenth century and the impact it had was lasting. It is true that the migratory trend towards the West in the nineteenth century included not only Gypsies from Romania freshly released from slavery, but also Gypsies from Transylvania and Hungary, from Poland and from the Balkans. In these places also, the failure of some Gypsies to adapt to a sedentary way of life triggered their flight. However, the vast majority of the Gypsies involved in this migratory wave were liberated Gypsy slaves from the Romanian principalities. A legal and social process that took place on Romanian territory formed the basis of an important demographical and ethnic process.

This migratory tide continued after the First World War. In Germany, especially in Bavaria, we come across groups of Gypsies carrying Romanian passports. These groups hailed chiefly from Transylvania, where they had learned German. They were engaged in small-scale peddling (in carpets etc.). This category of Gypsies could also be found at the time in France, Austria, Czechia and Serbia. 113

6. THE GYPSIES IN BUKOVINA UNDER AUSTRIAN RULE (1775–1918)

In Bukovina, the northern portion of the medieval Moldavian state, which in 1775 following a territorial arrangement between Austria and Turkey with regard to Moldavia was incorporated into the Habsburg Empire, the new Austrian rulers inherited the social reality of the Gypsy slavery. 114 All three categories of slaves in the Romanian principalities could be found there. The number of slaves was large, particularly as a result of the numerous monasteries located in this part of the country. In 1775 Moldovița monastery alone had 80 families of slaves, amounting to 294 people. 115 It is
estimated that the number of sedentary Gypsies present in 1775 totalled at least 500 families, while the total number of Gypsies was 800 families, equivalent to 4.6 per cent of the total population of the province (which at the time stood at 17,000 families). In 1780, 242 families of nomadic Gypsies were recorded and 534 families of sedentary Gypsies, giving a total of 776 families of Gypsies. In the census of 1800 there were 627 families of sedentary Gypsies in Bukovina, a total of 2500 people. They accounted for 1.26 per cent of the province’s total population of 198,000 people.

During the first years of Austrian rule in Bukovina, the Gypsies continued to live as slaves. The new authorities’ intervention in the situation was initially limited to the settlement of the tax status of the slaves. The abolition of the tax exemptions from which they benefited was necessary also because the monasteries sometimes declared as “Gypsies” some peasants who ordinarily were required to pay tax. The Gypsies were also forced to pay tax and to fulfil the other customary obligations to the State.

Within the framework of the reforms introduced in Bukovina in the 1780s during the reign of Emperor Joseph II, reforms that provided the province with a social and administrative system that was largely identical to that of the other provinces of the Empire, the slavery of the Gypsies was abolished. On 19 June 1783 in Czernowitz, Emperor Joseph II issued an order abolishing slavery. The implementation of this order was, however, extremely weak, due to the opposition of the Moldavian boyars and the monasteries. The opposition of the monasteries could be defeated more easily, in an era when measures were being taken throughout the Empire against institutions of this kind. The opposition of the Moldavian boyars was, however, quite fierce. Over a number of years, they sent protests and reports to the civilian and military authorities of Bukovina and Galicia (to which Bukovina belonged after 1786), in which they presented the imperial order as a violation of the autonomy and the tradition of the country, “arguing” the necessity of maintaining the institution of slavery on the grounds that it was the most appropriate state for the Gypsies. According to the boyars, this form of dependency was also to the advantage of the Gypsies. The application of the order was dragged out, while concessions were made to the boyars so that they did not lose the workforce that the slaves provided them with. Only at the end of the decade can it be said that slavery had actually disappeared in Bukovina. The personal dependence of the monastery and boyars’ slaves was abolished. Formally, they entered the ranks of the peasantry, being required to pay the same taxes and fulfil the same obligations to the State as the latter. Most of them remained on the estate where they had lived as slaves. However, they were landless peasants, meaning that their economic position and their way of life did not change a great deal. These “new peasants”, as they were sometimes named in contemporary docu-
ments, received their new status as a worsening of their situation. Some of them joined the ranks of the nomadic Gypsies.

Nomadic Gypsies in Bukovina (lingurari, ursari, aurari or rudari) were forced by the authorities to pay certain special taxes. Each family of nomadic Gypsies paid taxes equivalent to three florins and fifty-seven kreuizers on an annual basis, to which were added other obligations to the village as well as two days of labour for the “capitain of the Gypsies”. The latter’s obligation was to collect taxes from the Gypsies, and through the intermediary of the Gypsy families’ heads, he exercised his authority over the Gypsies living in the country. He was himself a Gypsy. Already in 1780s, repeated measures were taken to sedentarise the nomadic Gypsies and turn them into agricultural workers and craftsmen. In 1802, via a gubernatorial order, foreign Gypsies were forbidden from entering the country, while families of Gypsies living in Bukovina were given a deadline in which they were required to settle in one place. After the expiration of the deadline, families still practising a nomadic way of life would be expelled from the country. In 1803, the position of the captain of the Gypsies was abolished, along with the special taxes for Gypsies. From that time onwards, the Gypsies were required to pay taxes together with the other inhabitants of the country. The Gypsies were completely assimilated into the peasantry.

Measures to sedentarise nomadic Gypsies were taken still later by the province of Galicia, to which Bukovina belonged. This problem became acute for the authorities once again around the year 1850. At this time, the judiciary, the police and the gendarmerie took energetic measures against nomadic Gypsies. In the 1870s, the Ministry of Interior in Vienna attempted to find a means of eradicating this social phenomenon and of regulating the situation of the Gypsies in general. In this context, in the summer of 1878, a locality-by-locality investigation was launched into the situation of the Gypsies in Bukovina. The total number of sedentary Gypsies living at that time in Bukovina was 5295, equivalent to 1.32 per cent of the population of the province. The distribution of the Gypsy population was, however, extremely uneven. In some districts, the Gypsies accounted for 2–3 per cent of the population (in Gura Humorului 3.68 per cent, Solca 2.23 per cent, Storojinet 2.18 per cent), while in others the number of Gypsies was insignificant (for example, in the district of Sadagura Gypsies accounted for just 0.20 per cent of the population). The Gypsies were concentrated in the southern part of the province, where they made up 1.9 per cent of the population. A total of 3900 Gypsies lived in completely Romanian localities, 740 in completely Ruthenian or Russian localities and 600 in mixed Romanian-Ruthenian localities. Four-fifths of the Gypsies of Bukovina lived among the Romanians, where they accounted for 2.12 per cent, while Gypsies living among the Ruthenians represented just 0.57 per cent of the respective
population. (At that time, there were approximately equal numbers of Romanians and Ruthenians or Ukrainians living in Bukovina). The majority of the Gypsies of Bukovina spoke Romanian as their mother tongue.\textsuperscript{123}

In the census of 1878, no nomadic Gypsies were recorded. At that time, the Gypsies of Bukovina had all been sedentarised. The handful of nomadic Gypsies present in the province at the end of the nineteenth century had come mostly from northern Transylvania, with passports issued by the Hungarian authorities, while a few came from Romania. They appeared sporadically and wandered only in the south-east of the province, in the districts of Rădăuți, Storojineț and Vînița.\textsuperscript{124}

7. THE GYPSIES IN BESSARABIA UNDER TSARIST RULE (1812–1918)

When the Russian Empire in 1812 annexed the half of Moldavia located between the Prut and Dniester rivers as a result of the Russian–Ottoman peace treaty of Bucharest, the Gypsies had the social and legal status of slaves in this new province, which from then on would be known as Bessarabia.\textsuperscript{125} This situation was maintained under Tsarist rule. The Gypsies there constituted a separate social category. In the “Establishment of the organisation of the province of Bessarabia” of 1818, which divided the population of the province into nine categories, the Gypsies made up the eighth category, with the ninth being made up by the Jews.\textsuperscript{126} Within this division, the Gypsies were themselves divided into two categories: those “under the direct rule of the Treasury and who are ruled by the provincial authorities themselves”—in other words, state slaves—and others who “are slaves of the clergy, of boyars, of country squires, of minor boyars and of merchants and who depend completely upon the aforementioned”—in other words, privately owned slaves. The state Gypsies paid tax known as the \textit{dajdie} after the former regime, while privately owned Gypsies were exempt from any obligation to the State.\textsuperscript{127}

In Tsarist Bessarabia, the Gypsies continued their old way of life for several decades. Most of them were nomadic. Organised in bands, they wandered the country practising their traditional crafts, working particularly as blacksmiths, coppersmiths and woodworkers.

The authorities were preoccupied with the situation of the state Gypsies, who were also known as Gypsies of the Crown. In 1812, when under the governorship of Scarlat Sturdza the first census of the Gypsies was held, there were found to be 340 families of Gypsies in this category. State Gypsies were divided into three classes, paying the authorities an annual tax of forty and twenty lei respectively for the first and second classes, with Gyp-
sies from the third class (the elderly, widows and orphans) being exempt from any obligation.\textsuperscript{128} For many years the authorities attempted via different methods to put a stop to the “vagrancy” of the Gypsies and to convert them to a sedentary way of life.\textsuperscript{129} From 1829, they were forcibly settled in the counties of Bender and Akkerman, where they were provided with parcels of land, a cash loan and wheat for sowing and were exempt from the payment of taxes for four years. The aim was to transform them into peasants, state-owned serfs. Ultimately, this method failed due to the resistance of the Gypsies. Nonetheless, in the county of Akkerman, two villages populated with Gypsies were founded, Cair and Faraonovca. In these villages, 752 families were settled, who were allocated 9202 desetina of land (one desetina = 1.09 ha). However, the state of these villages sank to deplorable levels, while the new state serfs created problems for the authorities by refusing to pay their taxes and to fulfil their obligatory service.\textsuperscript{130} Later on, in 1839, when the Danube Cossack army was established, the Russian government attempted to incorporate the Gypsies of the Crown living in southern Bessarabia into the ranks of the Cossacks. However, a small number of Gypsies remained under the aegis of the Cossack army.\textsuperscript{131}

For all the measures taken by the authorities, the majority of the Gypsies of the Crown continued to lead their traditional way of life, travelling with their tents through Bessarabia and the neighbouring provinces in Ukraine. The number of Gypsies of the Crown rose from 221 families in 1813 to 1135 families in 1839. To their number were added Gypsies liberated by private owners, as well as Gypsies who had fled from the half of Moldavia lying to the west of the river Prut and who were unclaimed by anyone. In the census of 1858 in Bessarabia, there were recorded 5615 state Gypsies and 5459 boyars’ Gypsies; from the latter category, 2978 were household Gypsies and 2481 were nomads.\textsuperscript{132}

The authorities intervened in respect of the situation of the boyars’ Gypsies only in 1861, when the slavery of boyars’ Gypsies in Bessarabia was abolished together with the law that abolished serfdom and accorded the peasantry their personal freedom throughout the Russian Empire. In fact, many of these slaves had already been liberated. Slave owners who had learned in advance of the plan for emancipation freed their slaves out of their own volition and chased them from their estates so that they would not be obliged to provide them with land. Some of the former slaves of the boyars were given property as a result of the direct intervention of the gubernatorial authorities, particularly on the lands around the monasteries. In this way, they became peasants. Others continued to work as domestic servants to their former masters. Another group, unable to adapt to agricultural work, joined the ranks of nomadic Gypsies, craftsmen and musicians.\textsuperscript{133}

The number of Gypsies in Bessarabia fell continuously as a result of
the Romanianisation of the sedentary Gypsies and the migration of Bessarabian nomadic Gypsies (or of those who had come from the west bank of the river Prut) into Ukraine and Russia. The proportion of the Gypsies in the total population reached insignificant levels. If in 1835 the 13,000 Gypsies living in Bessarabia represented 1.8 per cent of the population of the province, by 1859, 11,000 Gypsies meant 1.0 per cent of the population. According to official statistics of 1897, in Bessarabia there were 8636 Gypsies, representing 0.5 per cent of the province’s population of 1,935,412.\textsuperscript{134} In the Russian Empire taken as a whole (in 1897 a total of 45,000 Gypsies were recorded in the entire Empire), Bessarabia was the province with the highest concentration of Gypsies. However, after its entry into Greater Romania in 1918, Bessarabia was the province with the fewest Gypsies.

8. THE GYPSIES IN TRANSYLVANIA IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the nineteenth century, the vast majority of the Gypsies in Transylvania (in the broader sense of the term) had settled into a sedentary way of life. They had settled in rural and urban localities, living alongside Romanians, Hungarians, Szeklers and Saxons. The process of sedentarisation was, on the one hand, the result of a natural evolution: in the Transylvanian society engaged in a vigorous process of modernisation, there was less and less space to lead a nomadic way of life. On the other hand, sedentarisation was the result of the policy adopted by the Habsburg authorities to “civilise” the Gypsies. In Transylvania, the sedentarisation of the Gypsies had a controlled character. The government of the principality had a clear concept of how the settlement of the Gypsies should take place. The imposition of a fixed dwelling was to be followed by the tying of the Gypsies to an agricultural occupation, the acquisition of a lifestyle identical to the population of the locality in which they were settled, the acquisition of the language of the local population, the abandonment of Romanes as a language and finally the elimination of their Gypsy identity and their complete assimilation.

The report compiled in 1794 by the commission charged with studying the situation of the Gypsies and discovering the most suitable means of securing their integration proposed that the provincial government prevent the Gypsies from settling in a large number in one place, isolated and distant from the rest of the population. The Gypsies should mix with the other inhabitants, as living in proximity to the population would result in the Gypsies’ adoption of the costume, customs and language of the respective population. There were also other reasons that led the authorities to forbid the settlement of Gypsies together in one place. The 1794 report points out that
Gypsy blacksmiths and farriers, and Gypsy craftsmen in general, tended to gather together in one place, making it difficult for them to earn a living, while in other places there was a shortage of these kinds of craftsmen. Hence, the concentration of Gypsies in one place was forbidden, and, where necessary, orders were given for them to be moved elsewhere. However, it was proposed that Gypsies dispersed in this manner in the villages in small groups should be settled on the very edge of the villages, due to the villagers’ dissatisfaction at the presence of the Gypsies which in turn was due to the thefts and fires caused by them.\textsuperscript{135}

Beginning at the end of the eighteenth century and especially in the first decades of the nineteenth century, formerly nomadic Gypsies settled in the villages and towns of Transylvania, the Banat, Crișana and Maramureș. Prior to this period, the Gypsies were settled in relatively few settlements. At this time, however, they became a component of the human tableau of Transylvanian settlements. The Gypsies became distributed throughout the entire country, in every region and in virtually every locality, regardless of the predominating ethnic group. The number of Gypsies living in each village was small, as a rule around two to three families. The Gypsies worked as the blacksmiths and farriers of the village, although some Gypsies were engaged in other occupations.

In the first part of the nineteenth century, the Gypsy policy in Transylvania and Hungary was no longer followed with the same rigour that had previously been the case. The sedentarisation of a large number of Gypsies took place in the absence of the measures that had been taken during the reigns of Maria Theresa and Joseph II. In the Transylvanian principality, only in the first part of the 1840s did the problem of (nomadic) Gypsies return to the agenda. In the years 1841–44, the Diet dealt on a number of occasions with the question of the Gypsies and attempted to find a solution to their situation. At this time, a new project of this kind was launched which in many respects was in fact a revival of the measures proposed by the 1794 commission.\textsuperscript{136} Between 1850 and 1860, during the period of centralised rule from Vienna, certain police powers introduced under the reigns of Maria Theresa and Joseph II against nomadic Gypsies were revived in Transylvania and Hungary. At the same time, private and local initiatives linked to the “civilisation” of the Gypsies were launched. János Hám, the Bishop of Satu Mare, opened in 1857 in Satu Mare a school for Gypsy children in a house built by himself, which he entrusted to Franciscan friars. The school, however, functioned only for a very short period of time.\textsuperscript{137}

During the period of Austro-Hungarian dualism (1867–1918), the authorities in Budapest introduced a series of legislative measures and police powers that affected the Gypsies, whether directly or indirectly: measures against vagrancy and the restriction of the movements of Gypsy bands, the forcible
return of Gypsies who abandoned their place of residence, the prohibition of begging and the upholding of public order in respect of the various offences committed in general by the Gypsies etc. The Hungarian parliament returned to the question of the Gypsy population on a number of occasions. The period 1906–14 was particularly active in this respect, with the introduction of measures reminiscent of the decrees of the reigns of Maria Theresa and Joseph II. The policy in respect of the Gypsies was one of repression, both at county and national level the Gypsies being regarded as a “plague”. The measures were introduced at a time when in the final decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century the socio-economic situation of the Gypsies was worsening. Competition from industrial goods in particular had a serious effect on the Gypsies’ market position, restricting and in some cases eliminating the use of their traditional crafts, resulting in the pauperisation of the vast majority of this population.

In the census of 1851, in the Kingdom of Hungary there were a total of 30,304 Gypsies, of which 11,440 were living in the Voivodina and the Banat (which at the time comprised a single province) and 18,864 in Hungary proper (which at the time included the western part of the present-day Romania). In the Transylvanian principality, there were 52,665 Gypsies. Another 800 Gypsies were at the time enrolled in the Austrian army. According to statistics from Elek Fényes from 1867, after the creation of Austrian–Hungarian Empire, in the whole of Hungary there were 95,000 Gypsies, of which 33,000 lived in Hungary proper, 58,000 in Transylvania and 4500 in Croatia, Slavonia and the military frontier zone (which included part of the Banat). In the census of the population from 1880, in Hungary and Transylvania were recorded 75,911 Gypsies, in Croatia–Dalmatia 1499 and in the military border 1983, giving a total of 79,393. In Transylvania proper there were 56,006 Gypsies. The statistics are, however, partial in nature, as only those persons who spoke Romanes as their native language were recorded as Gypsies. Even so, numerically speaking, the Gypsies constituted the fourth largest community in Transylvania after Romanians, Hungarians and Germans.

The census of 1893 provides us with an exact picture of the Gypsies in Hungary during the period of the Austrian–Hungarian Monarchy. The census was carried out by the Ministry of Interior, and unlike the general population census, recorded all persons considered by public opinion to be Gypsies. The declared aim of the census was to achieve a precise and detailed knowledge of this population, in order to regulate the vagrancy and sedentarisation of nomadic Gypsies, a preoccupation of the Hungarian political powers. The census recorded a particularly complex set of data with regard to this population: the categories of Gypsies, the type of dwelling in which
they lived, their age, civil status, religion, native language, occupation, literacy etc.\textsuperscript{143}

In the Kingdom of Hungary as a whole, there were 274,940 Gypsies, representing 1.80 per cent of the population, according to the census of 1890. Gypsies were recorded as living in 7962 out of the 12,693 communes that existed in Hungary at the time. The largest concentration was in Transylvania proper: 105,034 Gypsies, representing 4.67 per cent of the total population. The largest proportions were to be found in the counties of Târnava Mare (9.97 per cent) and Târnava Mică (6.74 per cent), while the smallest proportions were to be found in the counties of Solnocrâ-Dâbâca (2.37 per cent) and Ciuc (2.05 per cent). The towns with the largest proportions of Gypsies were Vințu de Sus (12.7 per cent), Hațeg (10.5 per cent) and Dumbrăveni (10.3 per cent)\textsuperscript{144}. In the territories that in 1918 would join with Romania taken as a whole, there were 151,711 Gypsies in 1893. They were settled everywhere, regardless of the predominant ethnic group in the respective locality or area.

Out of the total number of Gypsies recorded in 1893, 243,432 were sedentary (stable), 22,570 were semi-sedentary (i.e., living for varying parts of the year in a single locality, to which they would return after their seasonal movements) and 8938 were nomads or tent-dwellers. The latter category travelled the country living in tents. In total, 1026 tents of Gypsies were recorded, giving an average of eight persons per tent. The highest numbers of nomadic Gypsies were recorded in the counties of Caraș-Severin (1969 persons, or 22.0 per cent of the total number of Gypsies living in the county), Hunedoara (428 persons) and Timiș (426 persons).\textsuperscript{145} Indicative of the way in which the sedentarisation of the Gypsies was carried out is the fact that in almost 52 per cent of the 7220 communes in which sedentary Gypsies were registered, the Gypsies lived separately from the rest of the population in their own neighbourhoods; in almost 40 per cent of the communes, the Gypsies were mixed with the rest of the population; while in 8 per cent of communes, there were Gypsies living both among and separately from the local population. In Transylvania proper, the situation was markedly different. Here, in 1095 localities (55.9 per cent of the total number containing Gypsies), Gypsies lived alongside the other villagers, while in 218 settlements (11.1 per cent), the houses of the Gypsies were located both on the edge of the settlement and among the dwellings of the majority population. The settlement of Gypsies in the interior of villages took place in most cases only during the second half of the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{146}

With regard to their mother tongue, 104,750 Gypsies (38.1 per cent of the total) spoke Hungarian, 82,405 (29.97 per cent) spoke Romani, 67,046 (24.39 per cent) spoke Romanian, 9857 (3.59 per cent) Slovak, 5861 (2.13 per cent) Serbian, 2396 (0.87 per cent) German, 2008 (0.73 per cent) Ruthe-
nian, 306 (0.11 per cent) Croat and 311 (0.11 per cent) other languages. In Transylvania, 40.58 per cent of Gypsies spoke Romanes as their mother tongue, 39.6 per cent spoke Romanian, 19.58 per cent spoke Hungarian and 0.2 per cent spoke German. (According to the official census, Romanians made up 56.72 per cent of the population of the province, Hungarians 31.0 per cent, Germans 9.67 per cent and others 2.6 per cent.) In the Kingdom of Hungary taken as a whole, 52.16 per cent of Gypsies no longer spoke Romanes, more specifically 53.82 per cent of sedentary Gypsies, 51.06 per cent of semi-sedentary Gypsies and 13.01 per cent of nomadic Gypsies.\textsuperscript{147}

With regard to the Gypsies’ religion, 39.26 per cent were Roman Catholic, 26.81 per cent were Orthodox, 20.28 per cent were Greek Catholic, 11.82 per cent were Protestant, 0.93 per cent were Unitarians and 0.76 per cent were Lutherans.\textsuperscript{148}

Although the Gypsies were preponderantly a rural population, the number of those actually engaged in agriculture was extremely low. The majority of the Gypsies worked as craftsmen for the agricultural population. 50,506 people had this as their profession (33,930 men and 16,576 women). The most widespread categories of craftsmen were blacksmiths—who totalled 12,749 people (meaning that 25 per cent of Gypsy craftsmen were blacksmiths). At that time, 22.5 per cent of the country’s blacksmiths were Gypsies. Also, there were 2077 coppersmiths, 1660 nail-makers, 1976 spoon-makers, 2968 manufacturers of wooden vessels, 3948 brick-makers, 5667 makers of unfired bricks, 1998 string-makers, 1720 brush-makers etc. Some 16,784 Gypsies were musicians.\textsuperscript{149} Among Gypsy children over the age of six, 92.39 per cent were illiterate, and among those of school age, 69.15 per cent did not go to school at all, compared with 19.35 per cent of the population of school age in the country as a whole.\textsuperscript{150} (In the entire country the rate of illiteracy was 37.89 per cent among men and 46.89 per cent among women.) The range of data comprised within the 1893 census was, however, much broader than the one we have presented here.

From the statistics of the 1893 census, we can see the scale of the process of sedentarisation of the Gypsies in Transylvania in the second half of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. The nomadic Gypsies ended up a minority of virtually insignificant proportions. The vast majority of the Gypsies settled in rural and urban localities and adopted an occupation that was able to support them. A few Gypsies (in fact, a very small number) became minor property owners. The 1893 statistics demonstrate that at that time in the province the process of the integration of the Gypsies into the way of life of the majority population was in full swing. It is true that the social position of most of the Gypsies was of marginal nature. However, it is clear that at the end of the nineteenth century more than at any time in the past, the Gypsies moved closer to the social con-
dition and occupation of the majority population. The Gypsies had lost much of their socio-occupational and cultural specificity.

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that the linguistic and cultural assimilation of the Gypsies, as intended by the policies of the Austrian–Hungarian authorities, had taken place. If we consider the case of Transylvania in isolation, there is no doubt that in some localities the Gypsies had become fully assimilated in rural communities of Romanians, Hungarians, Szeklers and even Saxons. However, generally speaking, even in localities where contacts between the Gypsies and the other inhabitants appear closer—as shown by the topographical distribution of the dwellings of the Gypsies—the ethnic distinction continued to exist. In Transylvania, the preservation of the ethnic identity of the Gypsies was more evident than in Hungary. In this province, where ethnic distinctions and the ethnic awareness of Romanians, Hungarians and Saxons was quite strong, especially during the “century of nationalities”, the Gypsies settled on the margins of settlements, even if they adopted the language of the local people and abandoned their own ancestral language, continued to constitute a separate community throughout the century. The process of “denationalisation” of the Gypsies in Transylvania took place on a smaller scale than in Hungary or in the Old Kingdom of Romania.

NOTES


2 For this subject see G. Potra, Contribuții, pp. 96–106.

In Wallachia, for example, in the statistics of 1848 that record taxpayers who have paid their taxes to the State are recorded by categories, with numbers that differ from one quarter to another: 5760–5820 families of taxpayers which have been under the administration of the Prison Authority (in other words, former state slaves), 10,243–10,377 families of emancipated monastery slaves who paid capitation, and 630–651 families of emancipated monastery slaves who paid tradesmen’s tax (Analele parlamentare ale României, XV/1, pp. 206–209, 2026–2041).

Thus, statistics for Wallachia for the year 1837 record 8,288 state Gypsies, 23,589 monastery Gypsies and 33,746 boyars’ slaves (ibid., IX/1, pp. 1164–1165). In the census of state Gypsies carried out in the same year by the prison authorities are recorded 5,672 families (ibid., IX/1, pp. 1143–1144). Clearly, the population in question is the same, but recorded using different parameters.

For this subject see in particular V. Ţotrop, Proiectele de constituţie, programele de reforme şi petiţiile de drepturi din ţările române în secolul al XVIII-lea şi prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea, Bucharest, 1976.

For legislation pertaining to the emancipation of the Gypsies we shall refer to the collection Analele parlamentare ale României, 25 vols., Bucharest, 1890–1915 (hereafter APR) and in the case of measures not included in this collection, to the official publications of the principalities and collections of documents.
See *Regulamentele Organice ale Valahiei și Moldovei*, Bucharest, 1944, especially pp. 19, 26, 191, 194.

APR, I/1, pp. 511–516.


APR, IX/1, pp. 1143–1144.

APR, III/1, pp. 126–132.

APR, IX/1, pp. 645–647.


APR, IX/1, pp. 654–656.


APR, IX/2, pp. 475–479.

APR, XII/2, pp. 419–424.


APR, XII/2, pp. 424–426.

APR, XII/2, pp. 521–523.

*Manualul administrativ*, II, pp. 53–54, nos. 542 and 543.


See the decree of 28 September/10 October 1848 (*Anul 1848*, IV, p. 572).


*Buletin oficial al Printărilui Tării Românești*, no. 102, 27 November 1850, p. 405.


*Buletinul oficial*, no. 13, 13 February 1856, p. 49.

*Buletin*, no. 95, 1 December 1855, p. 377.


*Buletin*, suppl., no. 49, 14 June 1856, p. 97.


*Buletin*, no. 37, 6 May 1856, p. 145.


*Buletinul oficial*, no. 98, 9 December 1857, p. 389.


I. Corfus, *L'Agriculture*, p. 95; *idem, Agricultura*, p. 179.


*Colectie de toate instrucțiile și deslegările ce s-au dat în aplicația novei legi rurale*, Bucharest, 1864, pp. 30–33.


G. Cora, *op. cit.*, pp. 93, 97.


An example can be found in Arhivele Statului București, fond Diviziunea rurală-comunală, dossier 28/1866.


B. Mezey et al., *op. cit.*, p. 110.


A pertinent treatment of this Gypsy migration can be found in A. Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp. 226–238.


107 For figures pertaining to the routes followed by these groups of Gypsies see H. Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 85; A. Fraser, *op. cit.*, pp. 229–230.


110 A. Fraser, *op. cit.*, p. 236.


118 For a list of measures taken by the Austrian authorities in Bukovina with regard to the Gypsies, see R. Fr. Kaindl, *op. cit.*, pp. 36–44; J. Polek, *op. cit.*, p. 47ff.

119 J. Polek, *op. cit.*, p. 49. For the problem of the implementation of emancipation measures, see *ibid.*, pp. 49–60.


123 For this census see *ibid.*, pp. 251–257.


For the policy of the Tsarist authorities in Bessarabia with regard to the Gypsies, see V. S. Zelenčuk, *loc. cit.*


A. Gebora, *op. cit.*, pp. 57, 60.

These documents of the Transylvanian Diet published by A. H[errmann], “A cigányok megtelepítéséről”, *Ethnographia*, 1893, nos. 1–3, pp. 94–107; reproduced in B. Mezey et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 111–118.

I. H. Schwicker, *op. cit.*, p. 73.


See *ibid.*, pp. 75–89 (with countless pieces of statistical data, including separate figures for the different administrative units).

The results of the public census has been published in *A Magyarorszában 1893. január 31-én végrehajtott cigányösszeírás eredményei*, Budapest, 1895. The figures of the census have been synthesised and totaled up in Gy. Szabó, *op. cit.*, pp. 99–118. The figures from the census that affected the former principality of Transylvania only have been synthesised in I. Bolovan, “Considerațiuni demografi ce asupra țiganilor din Transilvania la sfârșitul veacului XIX”, *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Cluj-Napoca*, XXXII (1993), pp. 187–193.


*A Magyarorszában*, p. 34.


*A Magyarorszában*, p. 51.

See *ibid.*, tables on pp. 82ff.