

Review article

A conflict of paradigms

The East European Gypsies. Regime change, marginality, and ethnopolitics. *Zoltan Barany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2002. 408 pp. ISBN 0-521-00910-3.

We are the Romani people. Ame sam e Rromane džene. *Ian Hancock*. Hatfield: Centre de recherches tsiganes/ University of Hertfordshire Press. 2002. 180 pp. ISBN 1-902806-19-0.

Reviewed by Yaron Matras

The simultaneous appearance of these two works, both written by scholars from the University of Texas at Austin, provides an opportunity to evaluate two opposing trends in the study of Romani/Gypsy communities. Barany's book represents an attempt by a mainstream academic to incorporate the discussion of Romani communities into a methodological framework in political science, a discipline which has hitherto granted the Roma only minimal attention. Hancock's publication on the other hand is a call, by a writer of Romani origin, on his audience of readers to align their views and images of the Roma away from mainstream scholarship, and instead with the self-representation of Romani culture and history by the political movement of Romani intellectuals. Barany assumes the role of expert-consultant, closing his discussion with a series of recommendations to policymakers ('Suggestions for a long-term program of Romani integration for East European governments'; Barany, pp. 344-53). Hancock's role is that of an educator, and each of his chapters ends with a series of test-yourself questions (e.g. 'Antigypsyism is the cumulation of several different factors over time. What are they?'; Hancock, p. 63; or 'Where does the "gypsy image" come from?'; p. 69). In their separate ways, and pursuing different goals, both authors are scholarly authorities laying a claim to a descriptive analysis, while taking on the responsibility to provide guidance toward action and intervention.

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Barany sets out to examine two contradicting assumptions about the factors that shape state policy toward marginalised minorities. The first is that the form of regime will determine state policy, which in turn will be responsible for changes in the conditions of the marginal group. The second is that state policies are themselves a response to (changing) country-specific conditions. The two approaches are put to the test by comparing the conditions of the Romani minorities in eastern Europe under four different regime types, in different periods: The Imperial regime of the Ottoman and Habsburg empires (1500–1918), the Authoritarian states in the inter-war period (1918–45), the Socialist states (1945–89), and the Emerging Democracies (1989–2000). The yardstick for comparing the minority's 'conditions' is an assessment of Marginality and Ethnic Mobilisation.

Part I of the book (pp. 23–80) is devoted to a textbook-like narrative in which Barany first explains the notions and definitions of regimes (Empires, Authoritarian states, State-Socialist systems, Democracies), and then goes on to elaborate on the criteria for assessing Marginality and Mobilisation. The foregone conclusion is, not surprisingly, that the Roma are a marginal group: 'the quintessential strangers, who can be scarcely considered 'dominant' or 'central' in any context' (Barany, pp. 62–3). Note that Barany consistently speaks of 'marginal' and 'marginality', rather than 'marginalised' and 'marginalisation', but defines 'marginality' as 'the condition of being subordinated to or excluded by others' (Barany, p. 2). Although few would disagree with the overall impression of Romani marginality, the more specific definition offered by Barany—the absence of any central role—might well be challenged by social anthropologists who attribute to the Roma a dominant role at least in traditional mobile service economies, a factor which Barany does not seem to take into account at all.

As criteria for Ethnic Mobilisation, Barany discusses such factors as solidarity and social capital, leadership and organisations, symbols and communication. While challenging Stewart's (1997) view that Roma lack an ethnic identity, Barany focuses on the absence of awareness as a cohesive group and the identification instead with a tribe or subgroup, as factors impeding political unity. He rightly points out the absence of a tradition of organisations and mobilisation, and the absence until recently of national symbols, a written language, leadership and political opportunities. The argument is made from an historical perspective, of course, and contrasts with narratives like that of Hancock, who makes a point of emphasising the existence of symbols, a written language, and a leadership, but would nevertheless not

be able to deny that their emergence is recent, and their diffusion limited to a small number of intellectuals and not characteristic of Romani populations as a whole.

Contradictory viewpoints are nonetheless apparent even within Barany's text. On the one hand he mentions the absence of national symbols, but on the other he adopts the term *porajmos* to denote the genocide against Roma in World War II; the term was invented by Hancock, it is used by only a handful of activists, many of them non-Roma, and it is unknown to most Roma, including relatives of victims and survivors. On the one hand Barany argues that 'all Roma to some extent share the same origins, language, culture' (Barany, p. 77) only to add half a page further down that 'There is no one Romani language but rather several major and dozens of minor dialects' (ibid.). What Barany means, presumably, is that there is no recognised written standard in Romani. Where he got the impression of 'major' versus 'minor' dialects is unclear, and it seems that he does not fully realise that the absence of a written standard is not an extraordinary feature of Romani, but that it is characteristic of the majority of the world's languages, including most minority and regional languages of Europe (such as Scottish Gaelic, Sardinian, Frisian, or Saami). This is unfortunately rather typical of the way Barany uses second-hand information throughout the book; I will return to more examples below.

Part II of the book (pp. 83–153) is an historical discussion of Gypsy marginality in 'non-democratic systems'. This part, which is supposed to be essential in lending the book its theoretical depth (for, without the examination of Roma in 'non-democratic systems' the impact of democracies on the Roma can hardly be assessed on a comparative basis), is based entirely on secondary sources, almost all of them published in the 1990s, and none at all that pre-date the 1960s. There is no use of original archive material such as official policy documents or legislation, from any period, not even from the communist era. Still, as a beginner's introduction to the history of four centuries of Gypsy-related government policy in Europe, Barany's Part II is a rather useful text. As for the theory aspect, the radical differences between the Ottoman empire's policy of tolerance, and the Habsburg policy of intrusion, lead Barany to dispel the notion that a certain type of regime will generate a predictable policy. This is not surprising. The differences between the two empires are not unknown, and Barany contributes little by way of discovery.

Somewhat more interesting, but again not particularly novel, is his observation that the policies of authoritarian states toward Roma were influenced

not primarily by the socio-economic status of the Roma, nor by popular attitudes toward the Roma, but by the states' own quest for self-preservation and control. While pre-communist Europe typically exercised its control over the Gypsies through exclusion, communist states introduced a policy of 'fundamental inclusion'. Here too, Barany reiterates some well-known observations, namely that assimilationist policies never helped the Roma leave their position of marginality, although the extent of their socio-economic marginality was reduced, and they did not have to fear for their physical safety. But without any original research into the behind-the-scenes of decision-making processes (for instance through interviews with participants, or an examination of conference minutes), it is of course impossible for Barany to shed new light on the roles of individuals and personal attitudes and agendas in the processes that shaped policy toward the Roma.

Part III, which is devoted to the 'Gypsies in emerging democracies' (pp. 157–331), is the most extensive, and, being of contemporary relevance, might be expected to convey the most authoritative message. However, in its first chapter, that on 'the socio-economic impact of regime change' (pp. 157–201), the reader is confronted with statements such as 'In Budapest Roma commit 80 per cent of all burglaries and 95 per cent of pocket pickings' (Barany, p. 181), or 'In Bulgaria, 88 per cent of group rapes in 1994 were committed by Roma' (Barany, p. 183). The sources are press reports, but shockingly (to this reader, at least) the citations are not presented in order to illustrate the attitudes and nature of press reports on Roma during the 1990s, but rather as a reliable statistic, which the political scientist uses as a basis for his assessment of Romani behaviour in eastern Europe post-1990.

Most essays on Romani history and political science have so far been written by activists, not by descriptive analysts. The past few years have seen the beginnings of a discussion context in political science and history that is de-coupled from an activist agenda. A significant portion of Barany's Part III deals with Romani mobilisation (pp. 202–40), the responses of state and international institutions to Romani lobbying, and the overall Romani situation in the emerging democracies (pp. 241–324). Here Barany finally draws on interviews with key players and observers of the Romani political movement. It is one of the first attempts to contribute to the transparency of Romani politics, with insights into the structure of organisations and their scope of activities, their sources of support, their successes and the issues which they have been debating since the early 1990s. Once again, it is a kind of beginner's guide to the who's and how's of Romani politics.

Although the overall picture might be interpreted as one of a thriving political scene, with numerous attempts at political participation at local and regional levels, Barany's overall assessment is critical. He regards solidarity as weak, leadership as poor, resources as absent, accountability as lacking, and organisations as too strongly proliferated. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that through their organisations, the Roma have gained a political presence in eastern Europe which is now accepted as legitimate. The US-government sponsored Project on Ethnic Relations (PER) emerges in Barany's narrative as one of the most serious players. Its elitist, carefully choreographed moves amid the official scenery, and its lack of any grassroots baggage, make PER seem like your cooked-to-order Romani diplomatic corps. The role that PER plays in the agenda of US foreign policy in post-communist Europe, a political scientist's potential scoop, seems to have entirely escaped the author's attention.

An even greater gap is the issue of post-1990 westwards migration of Roma. Barany cites a number of newspaper reports on the subject, but completely misses the impact of processes such as the pro-asylum mobilisation on the one hand, and the anti-Roma press and violent attacks targeting Romani migrants on the other, on western European policymaking. The section on international organisations (Barany, p. 267–73) lists key activities, but says nothing about the motivations of, or the pressures on, organisations such as the Council of Europe or OSCE to get involved. Barany seems to have no intimate familiarity with, and little interest in, the tactics and strategies of the key players.

The list of inaccuracies is also long, and just a few examples follow. Barany (p. 243) writes that 'In 1991 alone, thousands of Roma left Macedonia for the German state of Nord-Rhein-Westphalia'. No source for the statement is provided. The reason for singling out Upper-Rhine-Westphalia (the proper English name; alternatively, German: Nordrhein-Westfalen) is presumably the fact that in early 1990 (with just a gentle spillover into 1991) it was the scene of demonstrations, led by Rudko Kawczynski's Rom & Cinti Union (later re-named Roma National Congress), by thousands of Roma from Macedonia who had arrived in Germany in previous years and were facing expulsion; but there was no Romani exodus from Macedonia specifically targeting NRW at this time. Barany was either misled, or misinterpreted his source. On p. 250 Barany discusses right-wing extremism in Germany in the early and mid-1990s, and government action in response to it. In this connection, he writes that 'as a gesture of goodwill to the Roma the Bonn

government opened a Gypsy cultural center in Heidelberg in 1997' (*ibid.*). In fact, the Heidelberg-based Documentation and Culture Centre of German Sinti and Roma, as it is called officially, was established formally in 1989 as part of a compensation package for the Nazi genocide on Roma and Sinti. In 1997, the centre merely inaugurated its new exhibition building, which had been under construction since the early 1990s.

On pp. 262–3 Barany praises the successes of Kawczynski's Roma National Congress, saying among other things that 'it also successfully campaigned for the establishment of the European Roma Rights Center'. In fact, the establishment of the ERRC had nothing to do with the Roma National Congress, except for the fact that Kawczynski was invited to join the ERRC board. (The RNC did however campaign for a 'European Roma Rights Charter', a treaty that would be signed by governments, granting Roma international protection in Europe—unsuccessfully.) Since language and communication were named by the author as factors in ethnic mobilisation, Barany returns to the issue, on p. 266. We are told that

the Romani language has undergone extensive mutations into dialects so different from each other that they are no longer mutually comprehensible. Spanish Gypsies, for instance, can no longer communicate with their brethren in Macedonia.' (*ibid.*)

In fact, Spanish Gypsies abandoned Romani in the late eighteenth century. They do not speak Romani, but Spanish.

Apart from the inaccuracies and contradictions, the most irritating aspect of Barany's book is, paradoxically, also its principal strength: It seems almost as though the author is working with lists, ticking off boxes as he sweeps through his coverage of types, tokens, criteria, and factors. The surface-level impression is that of an exhaustive survey of Romani political and social status—in different periods, in different regime types, and in different countries, all assessed according to a transparent set of criteria. The problem is that political processes do not quite work like that. They depend on the identities, visions, and agendas of players in positions of influence, on a series of circumstances and individual key events (about which Barany tells us little, and seems to have found out little), and, in the case of the Roma, on a complex set of social, cultural and socio-psychological factors that have shaped European societies' images of Roma, an issue to which Barany devotes a minimal amount of space.

European images of Roma are precisely the issue that preoccupies Hancock. His book is presented as an introductory textbook on Roma, written

from an insider perspective, giving the reader the (politically) correct and authentic view of Romani history, culture, and politics. From the onset, the narrator voice appears in the form of 'we', 'us', 'our'—establishing the collective of insiders, and the demarcation between insiders and outsiders. This is applied even in relation to the Romani language, which Hancock calls 'our language' (Hancock, pp. xxii and ff.; also ch. 14, pp. 139–49), although he is not a native speaker of Romani, but learned it as an adult, after being trained in linguistics. Nonetheless, the 'we'-narrative is there to emphasise authenticity and authority, both factual and moral. Hancock's text does not only aim at informing the reader about Romani life. It also sets out to diminish the reader's confidence in both popular images of Gypsies, and in mainstream scholarship on Gypsies (the authors of which are referred to in the book as 'western scholars'), which Hancock portrays in numerous places in the text as potentially or overtly racist or otherwise hostile to the Roma. In some ways, Hancock seems to be imitating, in spirit at least, Said's (1979) *Orientalism*. The latter opens like this:

Unlike the Americans, the French and British—less so the Germans, Russians, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, and Swiss—have had a long tradition of what I shall be calling Orientalism, a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western Experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also . . . one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. (Said 1979: 3)

Hancock introduces his book like this:

Although we Romanies have lived in Europe for hundreds of years, almost all popular knowledge about us comes not from socializing with our people at first hand, for we generally live apart from the rest of the population, but from the way we are depicted in stories and songs and in the media. (Hancock, p. xvii)

Unlike Said's *Orientalism*, though, Hancock's book is written for readers with just an average level of education, in an entirely non-technical, easily accessible style, and with plenty of illustrations. The first four chapters deal with Romani history. Hancock explains the Indian origin and westward migration, the period of slavery in the Romanian principalities (referred to simply as the 'Balkans'), migrations and persecutions within Europe, and the Holocaust. The key events tend to carry a Romani title—thus 'O *Teljaripe*: The move out of India', 'O *Aresipe*: Arrival in Byzantium', or *O Baro Porrajmos*: The Holocaust'—leaving the impression with the reader that these are established Romani terms, and hence, by implication, that there is an established

Romani historiography. In fact, it is in this book itself that Hancock introduces most of these terms, and establishes the historiography. Thus the text functions both as a normative, moral–intellectual road map, and at the same time as a descriptive account of that very norm; it is, in many parts, a construction, to use the cultural theorist's term, presented as an analysis.

The next two chapters deal with the roots of antigypsyism and images of the Roma. They are followed by descriptions of various aspects of Romani culture, including religious beliefs, cuisine (including recipes), health and traditional medicine, and a chapter on language. Unlike classic ethnographic or linguistic discussions, which are based on a set of context-bound observations, Hancock's narrative is general, not related to any specific community, and although it is quite possibly illuminating to the target audience, it is remarkably undifferentiated. Ironically, most of the customs discussed (including the description of language, followed by an appendix on 'Romani grammar'), are typical primarily of (some) (northern) Vlax Romani communities. Hancock himself however is not of Vlax Romani origin, and his observations in these chapters, which contain the most specific and intimate details of Romani culture, are not an insider's perspective at all. In a 'we'-narrative one might have expected the author to share with us an account of his own life, or that of his relatives, or the family and community in which he was raised, but those are conspicuously missing.

A short chapter devoted to the question 'How European are Romanies?' (pp. 77–9) appears to hint at tensions between the line employed by European Romani activists, who tend to emphasise Romani identity as 'true European'—not only in the sense of belonging, but, more often, in the sense of belonging to Europe as a whole rather than to an individual country or region—and Hancock's narrative, which is strongly influenced by American minority discourse, where 'European' is associated with the dominant culture, whereas the 'underdogs' are non-European. (The argument which Hancock actually cites explicitly against overemphasis of a European identity, is the dispersal of Roma beyond Europe.)

Further chapters include 'How to interact with Romanies' (in part an exposure of stereotypes on Gypsies, in part a list of concrete suggestions); 'The emergence of Romani organizations' searches for the roots of Romani nationalism in the showcase-coronations of the Romani 'kings' from the Kwiek family in Poland of the 1930s. It continues to the formation of the International Romani Union and other political groups. The chapter on 'Contributions, accomplishments and persons of note' consists mainly of a list of

prominent persons of Romani origin. Among the names that might surprise the reader are Charlie Chaplin (who is reported to have filmed 'The Great Dictator' in protest against the treatment of Gypsies in Germany; p. 129), David Essex, Rita Hayworth, and—Bill Clinton.

Although the book lays a claim to scholarly authority, it is clear that it is not a research work, and should not be judged as such. Hancock contributes little that is unknown to the research community. Rather, it is the way in which he sets out to break what he regards as the mainstream ('western scholarly') monopoly on knowledge about Roma—the anti-Orientalist spirit of the book—that is of interest. The alternative image of the Roma, which Hancock tries to convey, has two principal components. The first is the emphasis on Indian nationhood. Beyond its sheer informative value in relation to language and origins, the Indian identity also provides a slot in the cultural mosaic into which Gypsies can be accommodated. Technically speaking, in the textbook it serves as a kind of lifeline to the reader, a substitute to traditional images of Gypsies. In fact, it conveys the much deeper significance that knowledge of the Indian origin has for Romani intellectuals: It allows them to free themselves of the pitfalls of adopting the Gaje view of Roma as merely a socially-deprived, marginal caste that emerged from nowhere and has nowhere to go. The Indian origin makes nationhood plausible, and so to Romani intellectuals it is a key to their self-awareness, self-confidence, and assertiveness.

The second component is the victim narrative. This too is an alternative to the traditional image, but it goes beyond that, assigning direct and exclusive responsibility for the marginal status of Roma to the majority, Gaje society. The victim narrative is therefore a principal mobilising momentum in the text. It calls upon Roma to pursue their own agenda with pride, rather than feel ashamed of their origin, or inferior to the Gaje; it calls upon Gaje to show sympathy, solidarity, and loyalty; and it calls upon the reader to reject scholarship that does not portray the Roma in a way that is approvable to Hancock.

The best example for the application of the victim narrative is Hancock's discussion of Romani origins. Against the mainstream view that the Roma descend from migrant castes of commercial nomads or peripatetics from India, and that the name 'rom' is cognate with 'dom', 'lom', and the Indian caste-name 'ḍom', Hancock suggests that the Roma descend from a caste of warriors, the Rajputs, who were brought to Europe against their will, and were forced into the type of service occupations—metalwork, for example—

for which they are known in Europe. The suggestion has its origins already in Pischel's (1883) comment that the Roma may have left India to escape war and civil unrest, and in De Goeje's (1903) theory of a population of camp-followers, who were taken prisoner by the Byzantines at Ain-Zarba. The idea was later picked up by Kochanowski (1968) and Rishi (1983), who had turned the earlier speculations into an even much looser fantasy about the exact percentages of Brahmin priests and Kshatriya warriors among the Roma's ancestors, and about the times and places, more or less to the day and the kilometre, through which they passed.

Against the historical background of Muslim invasions of India, Hancock suggests that the Romani warriors left India in pursuit of their military opponents. There is of course no documentary evidence to link the Romani exodus from India either with this particular, or with any other specific chain of historical events. Hancock turns instead to linguistic data. There are two reasons for this. First, the connection between the Roma and India had been made originally on the basis of linguistic analyses. Linguistic 'proof' of the Rajput theory might therefore seem just as plausible. Second, Hancock is a linguist by profession, and although he has never published his arguments for a Rajput origin in any linguistic periodical or even presented them in any professional forum of specialists in this field, his authority and reputation as a linguist provide the necessary credentials—at least in a popular forum such as the book under review. Since the linguistic argument is central to the claim, and since the claim to a Rajput origin is central to the thrust and message of the book, I will review the argument more closely.

Hancock writes:

almost all of the words [in Romani] having to do with metalwork are Greek, and this leads us to believe that blacksmithing was not a particular skill brought from India, because the basic vocabulary would otherwise be Indian; and so it also tells us that metalworking as a profession was acquired in the Byzantine Empire or in Greece. (Hancock, p. 10)

What Hancock is doing here is taking a rather well-established methodological argument from comparative linguistics, and turning it on its head. Since the beginnings of the comparative study of Indo-European languages it has been accepted that the presence of a word in a language means that speakers are familiar with the concept that it represents. If several related languages share a cognate word—in form and meaning, even with slight phonological and/or semantic modifications—then it can be assumed that the word

was present in the ancestral or 'proto-' language from which these idioms all descend; and therefore, that the concept denoted by the word was familiar to the ancestral or 'proto-' population. By compiling an inventory of such words and the concepts that they represent, historical linguists claim to be able to reconstruct a so-called 'ecological space' that contains those features of geography, flora, or fauna that were expressed in the ancient vocabulary, and so are likely to have been present in the ancient habitat (see e.g. Peiros 1997).

However, the method does not work in reverse: The *absence* of a word traceable to the proto-language does not necessarily mean that the concept was unknown to the ancient population, for there are various reasons why the label used for a particular concept might have been renewed, and the old word abandoned. The borrowing of a word from a neighbouring language is one such reason. Thus, English lacks 'native' Germanic terms for the kin concept 'uncle' or for the verb 'to depart', though it would seem inconceivable that the concepts were unknown to Anglo-Saxon settlers in the fifth century, or throughout early medieval times, until the Norman conquest. In fact, we know from written attestation that the Old English word for 'uncle' was *eam* (cognate with Dutch *oom*), and the Old English word for 'depart' was *afaran* (cognate with German *abfahren*). Neither survives however in present-day English, as the words were simply replaced in Middle English by French loanwords. The adoption of a word from a neighbouring language to replace a native word ('lexical borrowing') may affect various domains of the lexicon, and it does not necessarily mean that the concept denoted by the borrowed word was unfamiliar to the borrowing language and the population that spoke it.

We have no written attestation of proto-Romani as it was spoken in India, or indeed anytime before the sixteenth century. But even if Hancock were right in his claim that the Romani words for metalwork are all Greek (in fact, the Romani words for 'silver', 'gold', and 'iron'—*rup*, *sumnakaj*, and *saster*—are all Indic), then that would only prove that Romani replaced earlier items in these domains by Greek loans. Romani also adopted the numerals 'seven', 'eight', and 'nine' from Greek—this does not suggest that the concepts were unfamiliar to the Rom prior to their contact with Greeks.

Moroever, the comparative method is normally applied to derive conclusions about pre-history, in the absence of any other source of knowledge about the location and material culture of a population. Thus, we do not know whether the proto-Australian language (if there was one, rather than several) was spoken in the desert, and we do not know whether proto-Indo-

European might have been spoken in a mountainous area with lions. But we do know that metals were a familiar part of the everyday material culture of any population in tenth-century India (hunter-gatherers aside), whether they specialised in metalwork, farming, or warfare. Indeed, the fact that Romani adopted so many Greek items in this domain would suggest that metalwork was an activity domain around which Roma interacted frequently with their Greek-speaking neighbours, which could just as well confirm a Romani service economy.

Hancock continues:

Romani does have a set of words having to do with warfare, and those *are* of Indian origin. The words for 'fight', and 'soldier', and 'sword', and 'spear', and 'plunder' and 'battle-cry' as well as several others have been a part of the language from the very beginning. (ibid.)

Hancock does not share with us which Romani words he means, and that seriously impedes any attempt to confirm (or challenge) his argument. In fact, in several recent articles, in all of which Hancock repeats this argument, he consistently avoids any exposition of the Romani data on which he bases his assumption (see his internet website at <http://radoc.net:8088/>). Some clues however appear in a less recent, unpublished manuscript version (Hancock 1998). Glossed as 'battle-cry' we find the word *čingaripe*, which simply means 'shout'; glossed as 'sword' we find *čuri*, which means 'knife'; glossed as 'plunder' we find *čor-*, 'to steal'. Needless to say, the mere presence of these words in Romani, even if they did denote warfare-related concepts, as Hancock wants us to believe, is no indication that the ancient Roma were a caste of warriors. By the same token, the presence of Indic words in Romani such as *mang-* 'to beg', *drabar-* 'to tell fortunes', *čor-* 'to steal', *bašav-* 'to play music', *khel-* 'to dance', or *giljav-* 'to sing' are by themselves no proof that ancient Romani culture consisted of begging, stealing, fortune-telling or playing music. Familiarity with everyday concepts, even if proven linguistically, does not mean specialisation in a particular domain of activity.

The final 'linguistic' argument for a warrior origin comes from the domain of Romani onomastics:

The different words too, which we use to refer to someone who is not Romani, such as *gadžo* or *das* or *goro* or *gomi* meant such things as 'civilian', or 'prisoner of war', or 'captive' in their original Indian forms. (ibid.)

Once again, Hancock is not precise as to which word is supposed to have meant what, but none of the words he lists has so far been found to be attest-

ed in any ancient Indian language in the meanings he suggests. Words that are cognate with *gadžo*—such as *kadža*—are attested in the dialects of numerous contemporary service-providing castes in India, as the term for ‘outsider’. They also appear in Lomavren, the Indic-based vocabulary of the Armenian Boshia peripatetics (*kadža*), and in Domari, the Indic language of the Middle Eastern Dom (*kaddža*). There is no solid etymology for the word, though Pischel (1900) derived it from the Old Indo-Aryan word *garhya* ‘domestic’. Hancock equates ‘domestic’ with ‘civilian’, in order to get from the depiction of outsiders to the counterpart insider identity of ‘warrior’.

As for *das*, it means ‘slave’ in Indo-Aryan languages, and presumably it meant that in Early Romani too, but there is no evidence that it ever meant ‘prisoner of war’. Only the Balkan Rom use *das* as a term for foreigners or non-Rom, though not just for any foreigner, but specifically for the *Slavs* (as opposed to the Turks/Muslims of the Balkans, who are called *koraxane*, from the Central Asian Turkic tribe name *karakhan*, and the Greeks, who are called *balame*). The origin is in a word-play, modelled on the similarity between Greek *sklavos* for ‘slave’, and *slavos* for ‘Slav’. It has nothing to do with viewing all outsiders as ‘prisoners of war’, ‘captives’, or even ‘slaves’, and so it provides no evidence that the Rom regarded themselves as warriors, as Hancock suggests.

Finally, the linguistic argument concludes:

... the presence of native Indian words in Romani for such concepts as ‘king’, ‘house’, ‘door’, ‘sheep’, ‘pig’, ‘chicken’, ‘landowner’ (*thagar*, *kher*, *vudar*, *bakro*, *balo*, *khaxni*, *raj*) and so on point to settled, rather than nomadic, peoples. (Hancock, p. 14)

Surely, such concepts were familiar to the ancestors of the Rom. But this does not contradict a peripatetic culture, as can be seen from the fact that even the artificial secret vocabularies created by peripatetic communities, such as Cant, Shelta, Rotwelsch, or Jenisch, tend to have cryptolalic formations (camouflage words) for these important, everyday agricultural–domestic resources. To name but one example, the in-group secret vocabulary of the present-day Jenisch itinerants in Unterdeufstetten in southwest Germany has *kroniggel* ‘sow’, *horebocher* ‘cow’, *lachabatsche* ‘duck’, *gachne* ‘chicken’, *bolle* ‘potatoes’, and many more. We know from our present-day contacts with these people, and from their recent history, which is documented back to the mid-eighteenth century, that they specialised in mobile services, and not in farming, and that the purpose of their in-group vocabulary was to enable secret communication when on the road.

Ultimately, however, Hancock the scholar appears to care less about maintaining his scholarly reputation, and draws instead, through the 'we'-narrative, on his authority as an 'insider'. Thus, in one of his recent website publications (Hancock 2004), he writes

Surely if groups of individuals who identify themselves as Romanies seek to assert their ethnicity, and to ally themselves with other such groups similarly motivated, then this is entirely their own business, and the non-Romani anthropologists, linguists, sociologists, folklorists and others who have taken upon themselves the role of ethnic police are interfering and presumptuous at best, and are perpetuating paternalistic attitudes. I call for a new respect and a new cooperation between Romanies and gadje, and an end to the 19th century cultural colonialism that lives on in only slightly modified guise. (<http://radoc.net:8088/RADOC-9-IDENT-1.htm>)

This is very much the spirit of the book under review, as well. Here too, albeit in a milder form, the agenda is more about conquering territory from mainstream scholarship, than about using solid scholarship for new insights or discoveries.

Hancock's book is about the construction of Romani identity, a document that, more than anything, tells us how an intellectual Rom would like his people to be perceived. With its assertively academic discourse, however, it invites the reader to take the image at face value, and accept it as a scientifically proven fact. By contrast, Barany tends to take at least contemporary image representations—both by Romani activists, and by governments and international organisations—at face value, without asking for the less overt motivations, interests and processes behind them. Viewed together, the two books represent a juxtaposition of two paradigms of analysis of the Romani situation and experience.

The first is what we might call the 'integrationist' paradigm. It prides itself in taking a conciliatory and indeed almost forgiving attitude toward the sheer existence of Roma in Europe. Thus Barany opens his discussion by citing the Hungarian activist András Biró, saying: '[Biró] expressed the view I entirely concur with when he told an interviewer that "Personally I don't especially like Gypsies. . . Neither do I hate them"' (Barany, p.19). With these credentials—let us call them a self-proclaimed, subdued, and reluctant tolerance of Gypsies—the integrationist view seeks to make cohabitation between Roma and non-Roma only just as bearable and endurable as necessary. Barany emphasises that he finds assimilation 'inconceivable given Gypsy traditions, culture and history' (*ibid.*). Note that the reason is one of feasibility, and not of morality or principle. He calls instead for integration,

inviting policymakers to promote it, though not without demanding radical change from the Roma: 'Romani communities themselves must make a greater effort to reduce their marginality—an effort that in some instances may involve a reappraisal of long-standing traditions' (ibid.). The integrationist view is that both Roma and majority society should drop demarcation lines. Being Roma should be just an origin, immaterial to occupation, schooling, or political participation. Integration means no discrimination, but also no autonomous space. For Barany, the degree of integration is a test case for the democracy of a regime, but also for the realism of Gypsy leadership. This is quite similar to the political line propagated by PER, and of course by activists such as Biró.

The second paradigm is what we might call 'separatist'. It emphasises difference, uniqueness, and separateness as core values. Separateness and distinctness are certainly core values in traditional Romani communities. It is well-known that Roma are often protective of their language and cultural values, and are reluctant to share them with outsiders, or to codify them in a way that might compromise them. Self-imposed demarcations appear in the domains of work and participation in institutions, among others. This has been noted and interpreted in numerous studies. To name but a few, both Stewart (1997) and Gay-y-Blasco (1999) have questioned the existence of Romani historicity and so ethnicity in the conventional sense, Tauber (2004) has pointed out the absence of a Romani material culture that would be vulnerable to direct attack by the Gaje, as well as the internal functionality assigned to school attendance (as a place to familiarise oneself with the Gaje, rather than a place to acquire an education). Sutherland (1975) outlined the functionalisation of Gaje institutions such as welfare benefits, and Okely (1983) even challenged the relevance of territorial origin, language and politics to Gypsy everyday culture (and, going beyond that, even questioned the accuracy of mainstream descriptions of Romani language and origins).

The separatist narrative represented by Hancock differs from traditional Romani separateness in that it seeks to accommodate Romani values within a presentational paradigm that is borrowed from the world of Gaje institutions and norms: an official historiography, political offices, and other symbols of modern nationalism. The title of the book itself represents just this combination of an outsider paradigm for the depiction of the demarcated, separate self. Hancock has chosen a bilingual title: *We are the Romani people. Ame sam e Rromane džene*. But the Romani part is a literal translation and appears foreign to any native speaker of Romani, for the word

džene in Romani means 'persons, individuals,' but not 'people' in the sense of 'nation' or 'folk'. The proper translation of the phrase into Romani would be simply *ame sam e řom* 'we are the Rom'. The Romani title, like much of the content of the book, is a hybrid: Romani content in a Gajo presentational framework.

Contrary to Hancock's web-page polemics, mainstream Romani studies has in the recent two to three decades largely moved away from past romanticism, and on to a rational paradigm of analysis, one which invites an interdisciplinary approach to accompany the strict application of discipline-centred methodology in the various fields of investigation. Many of the barriers that have existed until recently—for instance between the social anthropologist view of Roma predominantly as a socio-economic grouping, and the linguistic view that stresses language and other aspects of culture as markers of ethnicity and ancient origins—are giving way to more differentiated models. There is no doubt that the transformations of Romani society since the early 1990s, more frequent encounters between scholars and Romanies, and growing involvement of Romanies in scholarship and other institutional activities, have contributed to this development.

The clash between the 'integrationist' and 'separatist' paradigms is a product of this new reality. The integrationist approach could only evolve out of the sober, technical pursuit of reform that takes the Romani issue seriously, but is not involved emotionally and makes no pledge of loyalty to the Roma. It refutes the deterministic view of Romani society as non-reformable, but links the chances of cohabitation to this reform. Its analytical method is answerable only to evaluation criteria that are independent of the study of Romani communities, and not tailored to them. The separatist approach capitalises on the attention and the legitimacy granted to, and acquired by, Roma during the past decade. It regards scholarship as an instrument of representation that could help reform the majority, and is therefore answerable to the interests of Romani representation, and not to any independent yardstick of academia. It is the Orientalism-challenge of Romani studies.

A growing number of young scholars will recognise an opportunity in applying sober, theoretical models to the Roma in a variety of academic fields, with no emotional ties. Likewise, more and more young scholars, both Roma and non-Roma, are exposed and attracted to the moral, emotional self-emancipation narrative of the minority in the face of the historical injustice that it has endured. The two paradigms are likely to stay with us for quite some time.

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Čačipen pal o Roma. A global report on Roma in Slovakia. Michal Vašečka, Marina Jurásková, Tom Nicholson, editors. Bratislava: Institute of Public Affairs. 2003. ISBN 80–88935–46–6.

Reviewed by Michael Stewart

The riots (some might prefer to see them as a small scale uprising) that broke out amongst Roma in eastern Slovakia in early 2004 surely mark a new phase in the relationship of the impoverished Roma and the post communist state. While Slovak politicians were quick to blame the violence on the

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