

09.11.2023, 9:00 - 16:00 (CET)

Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI)
Goethestraße 31, 45128 Essen & Online (ZOOM)



Memory, Representation, Reparations

Opening Remarks by Prof. Dr. Julika Griem & Prof. Dr. Kader Konuk

Opening Address by Dr. Frank Reuter

Organized by Dr. Dezso Mate

For registration and further information please contact Dezso Mate via dezso.mate@kwi-nrw.de

Conference on Critical Engagement with the History of Sinti and Roma

Memory, Representation, and Reparations

Synopsis

Organizer
Dezso Mate

Conference Date and Time: 9 November 2023, 09:00–16:00 (CET)

Location: Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen (KWI) and Zoom

Conference language: English

We invite scholars, activists, and practitioners to participate in the international conference “Critical Engagement with the History of Sinti and Roma: Memory, Representation, and Reparation.” The conference is a joint event organized by [Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen \(KWI\)](#) and [Academy in Exile](#). It will be held on 9 November 2023, in a hybrid format, in Essen (Germany).

Through a triadic exploration, the conference seeks to break down the deep-rooted barriers that have resulted in the persistent omission of the “Gypsy” experience from academia. This omission is evidence of the pervasive power of anti-Gypsyism, a transhistorical, transnational, and intergenerational phenomenon encompassing various forms of systematic and structural discrimination and racism that directly affect Sinti and Roma. Anti-Gypsyism deprives Sinti and Roma of their dignity and rights, undermines their identity and cultural practices, erases their shared past and memories, discredits their scholarship, and suppresses their demands for recognition and transitional justice. The central argument is that Sinti and Roma knowledge production, scholarship, and self-representation remain unrecognized and excluded, reflecting the broader power dynamics that shape historical narratives.

In this context, the conference will address three critical dimensions. First, research on Romani historiography acknowledges the multi-layered and overdetermined memories of the Sinti and Roma communities. Through scholarly and activist inquiry, the conference seeks to bridge temporal gaps, bring forth neglected voices, acknowledge narratives left in the dark, and amplify shared memories. This proactive engagement aims to make the past more tangible and resonant, enriching our collective understanding of history.

The second theme deals with representations. The history of the Sinti and Roma has been portrayed through the lens of the dominant society, perpetuating harmful narratives. The conference will challenge these misrepresentations and highlight the richness of Sinti and Roma cultures, contributions, and agency. We aim to pave the way for a more accurate and inclusive representation by scrutinizing how mainstream media and cultural discourses have shaped perceptions.

Finally, the concept of reparation will emerge as a critical discourse at the conference. Beyond the matter of financial compensation, the conversation will acknowledge the historical legacies of Sinti and Roma as victims, especially during the Holocaust, and the harrowing experiences of slavery forced upon them. These collective memories have been suppressed, underrepresented, and often silenced. The goal is to give voice to these narratives and reflect on the resilience and survival strategies developed in the face of adversity. The discourse of reparation encompasses broader dimensions of redress, recognition, and justice. Addressing historical injustices requires not only redressing past wrongs but also eliminating the systemic structures that continue to perpetuate discrimination against Sinti and Roma communities.

In an era when inclusivity and equity are paramount, bringing about change in Roma studies is imperative. This transformative journey involves a rigorous process of decolonization and recognition that entails reassessing “Gypsy” identity politics, the contours of memory, and the dynamics of representation. By delving into the depths of Sinti and Roma history, their past experiences, and their lived narratives, it is possible to cultivate a collective memory and raise consciousness.

Program

Conference on Critical Engagement with the History of Sinti and Roma: Memory, Representation, and Reparations

Registration with Coffee 8:30–9:00

Opening Remarks 9:00–9:10

Julika Griem

Director, Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen

Kader Konuk

Director, Academy in Exile, Technische Universität Dortmund Faculty of Cultural Studies

Opening Address 9:10–9:30

Frank Reuter

Scientific Executive Director, Forschungsstelle Antiziganismus – Historisches Seminar,
Universität Heidelberg

Research on Antigypsyism at the University of Heidelberg

VIDEO ONLINE

Panel I. 9:30–11:00

Romani Historiography – Memory

9:30–9:45 **Adrian Marsh**

Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul
Researcher on Romani Studies

The Temporal “Gap” of Earliest Migrations and Movements of the “Proto-Romani” People

ONLINE

9:45–10:00 **Ann Ostendorf**

Professor and Department Chair of History, Gonzaga University, Washington,
US

Romani Americans: Linchpins in the Imperial Atlantic’s Entangled Racial Matrix

ONLINE

10:00–10:15 **Hazel Marsh**

Associate Professor of Latin American Studies in the School of Politics,
Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies, University of East Anglia,
UK

George Borrow and the Representation of “Gypsy Song” in England

10:15–10:30 **Iulius Rostas**

Visiting Professor at the National University of Political Studies and Administration, Bucharest, Romania

Constructing “the Gypsy” – an Inquiry into Knowledge, Memory, and Social Imaginary

10:30–10:40 Discussant

Ismael Cortes

Independent Researcher, Former Member of the Spanish Congress of Deputies

10:40–11:00 Q&A Chair

Ana Jovanovic

European Roma Rights Centre, Human Rights Monitor

Coffee break 11:00–11:30

Panel II. 11:30–13:00

Romani Arts and Culture – Representations

11:30–11:45 **Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka**

Deputy Director, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture

From Victims to Heroes – Building Roma Narratives of History at the Intersection of Scholarship and the Arts ONLINE

11:45–12:00 **Jan Selling**

Associate Professor of History and Head of Department of Critical Romani Studies, Södertörn University, Sweden

Invalidating “the Conceptual Gypsy” through Academic and Cultural Activism

12:00–12:15 **Isaac Blake**

Executive Director of the Romani Cultural and Arts Company (RCAC), Cardiff

Romani, Gypsy and Travellers Knowledge Production Through Arts and Culture

12:15–12:30 **Andre Raatzsch**

Head of Documentation Department at the Documentation and Cultural Center for German Sinti and Roma, Heidelberg

The Sinti and Roma Civil Rights Movement: The Struggle for the Recognition of the Genocide and Resistance to Discrimination and Stereotyping

12:30–12:40 Discussant

Delia Grigore

Researcher, Writer, Philologist, and Romani Rights Activist

University of Bucharest, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures,
Romani Language and Literature ONLINE

12:40–13:00 Q&A Chair

Bela Varadi

Documentary Photographer, (RCAC), Cardiff, London, UK

Lunch and coffee break 13:00–14:00

Panel III. 14:00–15:30

Sinti and Romani Holocaust, Slavery – Reparations

14:00–14:15 **Margareta Matache**

Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Director of the Roma Program at the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights,
Harvard University, US

**The System of Slavery in the Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldova: Legacies
and Reparations** ONLINE

14:15–14:30 **Marius Turda**

Professor, Director of the Centre for Medical Humanities, Oxford Brookes
University, UK

Some Reflections on Anti-Roma Racism and the Holocaust ONLINE

14:30–14:45 **Verena Meier**

PhD Candidate at the Research Center on Antigypsyism, Ruprecht-Karls
Universität Heidelberg

**Voices of Resistance by Sinti and Roma in Petitions for the Release from Concentration
Camps – Ego-documents and Speech Acts in a Broader Communicative and Societal
Context of Policing** ONLINE

14:45–15:00 **Nicolae Adrian Furtuna**

PhD Researcher at the Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy

History and Memory – the Case of Roma Slavery ONLINE

15:00–15:10 Discussant

Marissa Petrou

Professor of History and Director of the Guilbeau Center for Public History at University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Department of History, Geography & Philosophy

ONLINE

15:10–15:30 Q&A Chair:

Egemen Özbek

Academy in Exile, Academic Coordinator

Closing remarks 15:30–16:00

Vanessa Agnew

Associate Director, Academy in Exile, Technische Universität Dortmund Faculty of Cultural Studies

Dezso Mate

Academy in Exile Alumnus, Associate Research Fellow
Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut, Essen

Dinner 19:00

Research Outlines and Speaker' Bios

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Conference on Critical Engagement with the History of Sinti and Roma: Memory, Representation, and Reparations

Opening Remarks 9:00–9:10

Julika Griem

Director, Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen

[Julika Griem](#) is the Director of the [Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities \(KWI Essen\)](#). She completed her doctorate at the University of Freiburg and her habilitation at the University of Stuttgart. Between 2012-2018, she was a Full Professor of English Literature at Goethe University Frankfurt, and at Darmstadt University of Technology (2005 – 2012). Since 2016, she has been Vice President of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). Her research interests are, among others, the analysis of the contemporary literary industry, its changing forms and rituals as well as the assessment of its methodologies; Science Policy; and the institutions and frameworks that enable literature and literary studies.

Kader Konuk

Director, Academy in Exile, Technische Universität Dortmund Faculty of Cultural Studies

[Kader Konuk is professor at Technische Universität Dortmund Faculty of Cultural Studies](#), as well as an honorary professor at the Australian National University Humanities Research Centre, Research School of Humanities and the Arts. She was previously the associate chair of Turkish studies at the Universität Duisburg-Essen in Germany. Between 2001 and 2013, she was an assistant professor and, subsequently, associate professor of comparative literature and German studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, in the US. Her research focuses on ethnic and religious communities in the Ottoman Empire, Germany, and Turkey, and examines discourses, cultural practices, and disciplinary formations that are shaped by migration and exile. Her monograph *East West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey* (Stanford University Press, 2010), for example, investigates the relationship between German-Jewish exile and the modernization of the humanities in Turkey. In 2017, she co-founded [Academy in Exile](#), a third party-funded consortium that has offered fellowships to 78 scholars-at-risk from 15 different countries to resume their research in Germany.

Frank Reuter

Universität Heidelberg – Historisches Seminar, Forschungsstelle Antiziganismus

VIDEO ONLINE

Research on Antigypsyism at the University of Heidelberg

After a long period in which the research on antigypsyism was relegated to academic obscurity, in recent years it has experienced a remarkable upswing. One visible result of this development is the establishment of the [Research Centre on Antigypsyism](#) at the Department of History at Heidelberg University. As Europe's first university institution with this thematic focus, the Research Centre was officially opened in July 2017. Frank Reuter will give an overview of the institution's work and briefly present individual dissertation projects. Four main research areas have emerged since the Centre was founded: Visual Antigypsyism (especially in photography and film), Nazi Genocide of the Sinti and Roma, Antigypsyism after 1945, and Emancipation and Civil Rights Movements. A new project titled "Antigypsyism and Minority Subjectivity in German Popular Culture: Football, Hip-Hop, Carnival" has just started. The presentation will conclude with some reflections on future perspectives of antigypsyism research.

Dr. Frank Reuter studied history and German language and literature in Heidelberg. Since January 2018, he has been the scientific director of the Research Centre on Antigypsyism. Previously, he worked for 25 years as a historian at the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma. During this time, he built up the Centre's archive and curated exhibitions on the genocide of the Sinti and Roma, such as the permanent exhibition on this topic at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. He has published numerous works on the history of the Sinti and Roma and on visual antigypsyism. Frank Reuter was also a member of the "Unabhängige Kommission Antiziganismus" (Independent Commission on Antigypsyism) convened by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior in early 2019. [The Commission delivered its report to the federal government in May 2021.](#)

Panel I. 9:30–11:00
Romani Historiography – Memory

9:30–9:45 **Adrian Marsh**
Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul

The Temporal “Gap” of Earliest Migrations and Movements of the “Proto-Romani” People
ONLINE

The presentation offers an overview of the temporal “gap” of the earliest migrations and movements of the “proto-Romani” people, in the critical period between the collapse of the Ghaznavid Empire in the west (1040 CE at the Battle of Dandanqan) and the arrival in Europe of the “Egyptians” (c. 1400 CE) with an emergent identity (*Romitoi*, i.e., “little Romans”) and language (recorded in the Peloponnesos, 1415 CE). The lacuna that has allowed the early history of the *Ghaznavised* Hindu, proto-Romani to “Egyptians” (late tenth to early fifteenth centuries CE) to go largely unrecognised, only lightly explored, or under-investigated by academics is a product of a number of factors, profoundly influenced by the *Gypsy* Lore Society perspective, knowledge, and “skill set.” The Gypsy Lore Society was largely made up of gentleman scholars whose Orientalist world view overlay the imperatives of empire, the emergence of eugenics and scientific racism, and a lack of linguistic skills (Armenian, Turkish) that they glossed over and intellectually ignored rather than admit.

[Dr. Adrian R. Marsh](#) is of UK Romany-Traveller origins, a researcher in Romani Studies, and an expert consultant in Romani and Traveller early-years education. He works with Romani, Gypsy, and Traveller communities and NGOs (such as the Romani Cultural & Arts Company) in the UK, Sweden, Turkey, and Egypt, as well as across central, eastern and southeastern Europe. He gained a PhD in Romani Studies from the University of Greenwich, London (2008), an MA in South-East European and Turkish area studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Marsh has taught Romani Studies at universities in London, Malmö, Lund, Stockholm, Cairo, Istanbul, and Lyon and has held an Economic and Social Research Council fellowship as Researcher in Romani Studies at the University of Greenwich, London. He is currently living in Istanbul, where he leads the International Romani Studies Network, an NGO he established there in 2002. [Marsh has published numerous articles](#) on Romani identity, history, and religiosity, as well as edited collections from international conferences on Romani studies that he organized in Istanbul.

9:45–10:00 **Ann Ostendorf**

Professor and Department Chair of History, Gonzaga University, Washington, US

Romani Americans: Linchpins in the Imperial Atlantic's Entangled Racial Matrix

ONLINE

Romani Americans significantly and fundamentally shaped, and were shaped by, North American ethno-racial projects from at least the late seventeenth century. Romani colonists were considered, and considered themselves, in relation to the growing and solidifying racial matrix that bound indigenous-ness, whiteness, and blackness into increasingly discrete and significant categories. Their presence as familiar outsiders made them a referent for non-Romani Europeans (both in the Americas and in Europe) anxious to comprehend less-familiar outsiders being racially generated and sorted through the colonial processes. This paper will trace the ideological work that Romani people did for non-Romani Europeans as part of American colonial projects while simultaneously considering how Romani people in the Americas participated in the construction of imperial American racial regimes.

Dr. Ann Ostendorf is Professor and Chair of [History at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, US](#). Her scholarship explores issues of identity, race, and culture in early American history. She is author of *Sounds American* (University of Georgia Press, 2011), and her recent articles have appeared in *Romani Studies*, *Early American Studies*, *Romano Dzaniben*, *Critical Romani Studies*, *Frühneuzeit-Info*, *Journal of Gypsy Studies*, *The American Historian*, and *American Music*. [Her current research](#) considers the histories of the Romani diaspora in the colonial Americas. She is working on an edited collection titled *The Romani Atlantic*, a manuscript on early American Romani history, and a Romani Americans Memory Map with the United Nations Human Rights Office.

10:00–10:15 **Hazel Marsh**

Associate Professor of Latin American Studies in the School of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies, University of East Anglia, UK

George Borrow and the Representation of “Gypsy Song” in England

During the Victorian era, a number of English writers became fascinated with the open-air, rural lifestyle Romani people were seen to represent. George Borrow (1803–1881), who spent most of his life in East Anglia, is perhaps the best known of these writers in the UK. In his work, Borrow presents himself as an enthusiastic scholar of Romani peoples.

But while his writings were to inspire many to take an interest in Romani language, culture, song, and verse, others have criticized Borrow's literary portrayals of the Romani people with whom he claimed such affinity. In this paper, I outline the reasons why Borrow's representations of English Romanies have attracted both admiration and condemnation. With reference to music and song, I then examine how Borrow's literary representations of Romanies established enduring ideas about "authenticity," which have contributed to the erasure of Romani voices from narratives of Britishness.

Dr. Hazel Marsh is Associate Professor of [Latin American Studies in the School of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies, University of East Anglia](#), UK. Her research interests include popular music and social activism, politics and popular culture, collective memory and identity, conflict and disaster recovery, displacement and forced migration, and Romani contributions to cultural and social life. [She has a strong focus on](#) the use of participatory, arts-based methods for action research, bringing the voices of socially, politically, and economically marginalized groups into policy discussions. She is currently Principal Investigator of two interdisciplinary, collaborative projects funded by the University of East Anglia's AHRC Impact Acceleration Account: "Romani and Traveller Voices in UK Music Archives" and "Strengthening Romani Capacity in Colombia".

10:15–10:30 **Iulius Rostas**

Visiting Professor at the National University of Political Studies and Administration, Bucharest, Romania

Constructing "the Gypsy" – an Inquiry into Knowledge, Memory and Social Imaginary

Roma have been misrepresented for centuries. This is illustrated by the exonyms used to appellation them, by the ways power holders have categorized them, and by their portrayal in arts and literature. What kind of strategies have been historically used to portray Roma? What purposes have they served? What explains the persistence of these patterns of thought for centuries? What makes antigypsyism special compared to other forms of racism? In my presentation I will explore the strategies used to portray Roma and the purposes of these strategies, and I will analyze the differences between antigypsyism and other racisms. I will provide a definition of antigypsyism based on empirical data. I will analyze the early depictions of Roma in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century writing, arts and literature, and legislation, and I will identify mechanisms through which these depictions were transformed and became knowledge. I will conclude by differentiating antigypsyism from antisemitism in Europe and anti-black racism in the US.

Dr. Iulius Rostas is a Visiting Professor at the [National University of Political Studies and Administration \(Romania\)](#), and he teaches courses on racism at the University of Stuttgart and Dortmund University of Applied Sciences. Between 2016 and 2019, he served as Chair of Romani Studies and Assistant Professor at Central European University. Previously, he was an Affiliated Fellow with the Institute for Advanced Studies at CEU and Visiting Lecturer at Corvinus University of Budapest. Dr. Rostas is the editor of *Ten Years After: A History of Roma School Desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe* (CEU Press, 2012). He is the founding Editor in Chief of the *Critical Romani Studies* journal (crs.ceu.edu). His latest book, [A Task for Sisyphus: Why Policies towards Roma in Europe Are Failing](#), was published by CEU Press in 2019.

10:30–10:40 Discussant

Ismael Cortes

Independent Researcher, Former Member of the Spanish Congress of Deputies

Dr. Ismael Cortés completed his MA in Philosophy at the University of Granada, and at the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace, he gained his PhD on International Conflicts and Development Studies with an international award. His research interests focus on the relation between culture and politics by analyzing how ideologies constitute legal norms, policy strategies, and action programs. During his academic career, Ismael has been a visiting researcher at the School of Critical Theory of Nottingham, the “Gregorio Peces-Barba” Human Rights Institute of Madrid, and the CEU Roma Studies Program of Budapest. He has worked as a policy analyst for Brussels-based think tanks such as the Open Society European Policy Institute and the Centre for European Policy Studies. He has served as an MP in the Congress of Deputies of Spain. He is author of dozens of [peer-reviewed articles in academic journals](#), and hundreds of op-ed articles in newspapers.

10:40–11:00 Q&A Chair

Ana Jovanovic

European Roma Rights Centre, Human Rights Monitor

Ana Jovanović is a dedicated transgender Romani activist from Novi Sad, Serbia. Ana has actively contributed to various non-governmental Romani organizations, focusing on improving the position of the Romani community in Serbian society. Since 2019, she has been involved with a local LGBT+ organization, addressing the multiple layers of discrimination faced by LGBT+ Roma individuals. Ana recently joined the [European Roma Rights Centre \(ERRC\)](#) as the LGBTQ+ Human Rights Monitor, extending her advocacy for marginalized communities.

Coffee break 11:00–11:30

Panel II. 11:30–13:00
Romani Arts and Culture – Representations

11:30–11:45 **Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka**

Deputy Director, European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture

From Victims to Heroes – Building Roma Narratives of History at the Intersection of Scholarship and the Arts ONLINE

For decades, the Roma history has been narrated by the non-Roma, often presenting them as passive and anonymous victims. But with a growing number of Roma scholars, a new reading of Roma collective past is taking place.

Roma scholars and artists play a key role in shifting the approach to Roma historical discourses, with a growing focus on agency rather than victimization and relying on individual stories first-hand accounts. In her presentation, Dr. Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka will discuss the process of building Roma historical narratives at the intersection of scholarship and arts, and building on the vast experience of the [European Roma Institute or Arts and Culture \(ERIAC\)](#).

[Dr. Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, anthropologist and Roma activist](#), from Cracow/Poland. She earned her Ph.D. in Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) in 2016. She holds an MA in European Integration from UAB and an MA in Comparative Studies of Civilizations from the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (UJ).

Dr. Mirga-Kruszelnicka is the author of policy evaluations, reports, and articles, and is the co-editor of the book “Education for Remembrance of the Roma Genocide: Scholarship, Commemoration and the Role of Youth” (Libron, 2015). From 2013 to 2015 she was an Open Society Foundations Roma Initiatives Fellow, conducting a comparative study of the Roma associative movements in various countries of Latin America and Europe. Since, 2017, she is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow of the Romani Studies Program at the Central European University (CEU) in Budapest. Currently, she serves as Deputy Director of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC).

11:45–12:00 **Jan Selling**

Associate Professor of History and Head of Department of Critical Romani Studies, Södertörn University, Sweden

Invalidating “the Conceptual Gypsy” through Academic and Cultural Activism

Antigypsyism is based on a construction, which I term “the conceptual gypsy.” Its function is to 1) rationalize and justify exclusion or exploitation of Romanis and people perceived as

“gypsies,” and 2) to affirm the identity and social position of the antigypsyist. This concept peaked in the late 1800s in Victorian England, at the height of the empire, through the creation of the Gypsy Lore Society and a simultaneous boom of gypsyism in popular culture. Its impact became hegemonic. For several decades, it has increasingly been challenged by a new generation of Romani scholars building on critical theories and the historical struggles for Romani rights. Contrary to some gypsyist scholars, who refute critical Romani perspectives as unscientific activism, I argue that 1) this misunderstanding of critical theory is itself scientific antigypsyism, 2) there is a logical connection between cultural and academic activism, and 3) emancipatory scholarship by definition is linked to social change.

Jan Selling is Associate Professor of History and Head of the Department of [Critical Romani Studies at Södertörn University](#). His work focusses on antigypsyism, Romani liberation, and historical justice in Scandinavia and other European countries. From 2015 to 2019, he was one of the curators of the Roma civil rights movement section of RomArchive.eu. His latest publication is [Romani Liberation: A Northern Perspective on Emancipatory Struggles and Progress](#) (CEU Press, 2022).

In 2013, he organized the first international conference in the Nordics on antigypsyism and was the main editor of the volume *Antiziganism: What's in a Word? Proceedings from the Uppsala International Conference on the Discrimination, Marginalization and Persecution of Roma, 23–25 October 2013* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).

12:00–12:15 **Isaac Blake**

Executive Director of the Romani Cultural and Arts Company (RCAC), Cardiff

Romani, Gypsy and Travellers Knowledge Production Through Arts and Culture

Isaac Blake's presentation outlines [the Romani Cultural and Arts Company](#) as an organization: its beginnings, purpose for being, governance, staffing, and daily operations. This will provide a deep insight into the workings of a small but powerful organization so delegates can see how great impact can be achieved, even with very few resources. It is not always the size of an organization that makes the ultimate difference.

Isaac will then move on to talk about the rich work and significant impact of the Romani Cultural and Arts Company by showcasing three projects in detail: [Gypsy Maker](#), [LGBTQI+ projects](#), and the [Roma Holocaust Education Resource Pack](#).

Isaac Blake was born in Bromsgrove and grew up on Gypsy and Traveller sites in England and Wales. He studied and trained in dance theatre at the LABAN Dance Centre (now the Trinity LABAN Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London); went on to study at the Martha Graham School in New York; then returned to Wales, where he was choreographer for

performances at the Wales Millennium Centre, Riverside Arts Centre (Newport), and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. He continues to teach a popular movement and dance course at the RWCM&D (2009–present). He is a proud Gay Romany Gypsy and is currently Executive Director of the Romani Cultural and Arts Company in Cardiff, UK, an organization funded by a variety of major donors, government departments, and UK charities (such as the National Lottery Community Fund, Arts Council of Wales, and the Welsh government).

12:15–12:30 **Andre Raatzsch**

Head of Documentation Department at the Documentation and Cultural Center for German Sinti and Roma, Heidelberg

The Sinti and Roma Civil Rights Movement: The Struggle for the Recognition of the Genocide and Resistance to Discrimination and Stereotyping

This paper analyzes the most important stages of the civil rights movement and places them in the discourse of contemporary memory politics and the struggle for the recognition of the genocide in post-war Germany. For decades after the Second World War, Nazi crimes against Roma and Sinti were silenced. Genocide perpetrators were able to pursue their careers in post-war West German society without fear of punishment and to maintain the power to define and shape the discourse. Thanks to the commitment of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, the situation changed. This paper argues that besides the political recognition of the genocide, more is needed for justice with the crimes against Sinti and Roma and the centuries-long history of stereotyping, discrimination, and persecution. Recent initiatives such as the RomArchive or the exhibitions of the Documentation and Cultural Center of German Sinti and Roma demonstrate self-representations of Europe's largest minority and their contribution to European history.

André Raatzsch, born in 1978 in Ilmenau, Germany, has participated in numerous international exhibitions over the past few years, among them the first Roma Pavilion "[Paradise Lost](#)" at the Venice Biennial in 2007. Subsequently, he carried out several artistic and cultural projects, including "Rewritable Pictures," which—as part of a studio work using participatory and artistic methods—questions, expands, and critically reflects on pictorial representations in private Roma image archives. Raatzsch has contributed several essays and exhibitions on the representation of European Sinti and Roma, taking into account photography, photo archives, and the accompanying discourse on the politics of photography. Raatzsch has been head of the documentation department at the [Documentation and Cultural Center for German Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg](#) since 2016.

12:30–12:40 Discussant

Delia Grigore

Researcher, Writer, Philologist, and Romani Rights Activist

University of Bucharest, Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures,
Romani Language and Literature

ONLINE

[Delia Grigore](#) holds a PhD in visual arts, with a specialization in ethnography-ethnology (Romanian Academy, Institute of Ethnography and Folklore “Constantin Brăiloiu,” 2004). She is a senior reader at the University of Bucharest, [Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Romani Language and Literature Section](#) and the president of the Roma Centre “Amare Rromentza.” She works in education, romology research (ethnography, ethnology, ethno-linguistics, folklore, oral history, and literature), and Romani culture. She is the author of *Introduction to the Study of Traditional Cultural Elements of Contemporary Rromani Identity* (University of Bucharest – CREDIS, 2001), *Rromanipen – Keystones of Rromani Culture* (Amare Rromentza, 2011), and poetry in Romani (*Babel.ro. Tineri poeți minoritari* [Babel.ro. Minority Young Poets], Status, 2000).

12:40–13:00 Q&A Chair

Bela Varadi

Documentary Photographer, (RCAC), Cardiff, London, UK

Bela Varadi worked as a journalist and public broadcaster in Hungary, and he was one of the founding members of Europe's first Roma radio. After working for various radio stations and online newspapers, Bela became a television news reporter and broadcaster. He also created a documentary mini-series which won at the Faces of Poverty Film Festival in 2010. After his moving to the UK, Bela had to reconsider how he could create socially conscious visual art.

In the most recent period, he turned his attention to photography and started creating [documentary photo series](#) about Roma and Traveller life in the UK and documenting the intersectionality of Roma and LGBTQ+ experiences. Some of his photo series have been awarded and nominated in international photo competitions. Bela exhibited his photos at the Glastonbury Festival in 2022 and 2023. Since 2022, he is working for the [Traveller Times](#), the leading GRT magazine in the UK.

Lunch and coffee break 13:00–14:00

Panel III. 14:00–15:30

Sinti and Romani Holocaust, Slavery – Reparations

14:00–14:15 **Margareta Matache**

Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health
Director of the Roma Program at the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights,
Harvard University

The System of Slavery in the Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and Moldova: Legacies and Reparations ONLINE

The enslavement of Roma people in Moldova and Wallachia, territories of present-day Romania, represents a major point of genesis for both anti-Roma racism and the enduring processes of racialization. The Principalities crafted a division of human, labor, power, and social hierarchy that placed Roma people at the bottom. It is self-evident that the history of five hundred years of economic exploitation stripped Roma people of any prospect of accumulating intergenerational wealth, as they were producing wealth for their enslavers. A large portion of the huge wealth disparities between Roma and non-Roma in Romania stems from this history of economic exploitation, though little is known about it; its effects on the Romanian Roma have not been well researched, as most quantitative research has focused on income poverty and multidimensional poverty. Furthermore, this five-hundred-year system of exploitation, control, and domination within Europe has remained on the periphery of national, European, and global history, as well as of memory, education, and knowledge production.

Margareta (Magda) Matache is a Lecturer on Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and the co-founder and Director of the [Roma Program at the FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University](#). She is also a member of the O’Neill-Lancet Commission on Racism, Structural Discrimination and Global Health. [Dr. Matache’s research and teaching](#) focus on the manifestations and impacts of racism and other systems of oppression in different geographical and political contexts. Her research examines discrimination, reparations, social determinants of health—including education and social and economic disparities—and their nexus with the historical past and contemporary public policies, with a particular focus on anti-Roma racism.

14:15–14:30 **Marius Turda**

Professor, Director of the Centre for Medical Humanities, Oxford Brookes University, UK

Some Reflections on Anti-Roma Racism and the Holocaust

ONLINE

In my talk, I want to outline the development of anti-Roma racism during the interwar period, with a particular focus on Croatia, Hungary, and Romania, and how it contributed significantly to the deportation and the murder of the Roma during World War II. I also highlight the need to come to terms with the legacies of racism in these countries, considering the resurgence of anti-Roma feelings and attitudes today.

Marius Turda is Professor and Director of the [Centre for Medical Humanities at Oxford Brookes University](#), having previously taught at University College London and the University of Oxford. He has authored, co-authored, and edited more than twenty-five books on the history of eugenics, race, and racism in East-Central Europe and beyond. He is the General Editor of Bloomsbury's *A Cultural History of Race* (2021). Between 2018 and 2022, he also curated four exhibitions on eugenics, racial anthropology, and biopolitics. His most recent public engagement project is www.confront-eugenics.org.

14:30–14:45 **Verena Meier**

PhD Candidate at the Research Center on Antigypsyism, Ruprecht-Karls Universität Heidelberg

Voices of Resistance by Sinti and Roma in Petitions for the Release from Concentration Camps – Ego-documents and Speech Acts in a Broader Communicative and Societal Context of Policing

ONLINE

Documents that are written by persecuted Sinti and Roma under the Nazi regime are a rare and valuable source for historians of the Holocaust, as they reveal the perspective of the oppressed in contrast to the oppressor's documents that exist in much larger numbers. This paper critically engages with petitions written by Sinti and Roma. Following the deportations of Sinti and Roma in the course of the "Aktion Arbeitsscheu Reich" in June 1938 and their transport to concentration camps, family members wrote pleas for clemency and asked for their release from the concentration camps. Analyzing the letters that were written in Magdeburg, this paper argues that these ego-documents are a challenging type of source that needs to be situated in a broader communicative and societal context. This context reveals not only that the speech acts in these letters can be regarded as a voice of resistance but that writing the pleas was a communal effort that put everyone involved into potential danger.

Verena Meier studied history, English philology, European art history, and philosophy at the Ruprecht-Karls University Heidelberg and Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In her previous role at the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma, she assisted in creating exhibitions. She has also worked at the Working Group on Minority History and Civil Rights in Europe, the Grafeneck memorial site, the Documentation Centre of North African Jewry during World War II in Jerusalem, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, the Foundation Topography of Terror Foundation, as well as the State Archives of Saxony-Anhalt. Since August 2018, [she has been a PhD candidate at the Research Centre on Antigypsyism](#) at the University of Heidelberg. The title of her PhD project is “Criminal Police and Genocide – The NS-persecution of Sinti and Roma in Magdeburg and Transitional Justice after 1945 under the Allies and in the GDR.” Her research interests include minority history, the history of ideas, and research on [historical antisemitism and antigypsyism](#).

14:45–15:00 **Nicolae Adrian Furtuna**

PhD Researcher at the Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy

History and Memory – the Case of Roma Slavery

ONLINE

The Roma from the Romanian territory were slaves for more than four and a half centuries. The relation between the history of slavery and memory is entangled with the history of each historical region of present-day Romania. Also, this relation is dictated by the social history of each category of owners of slaves. The abolition of Roma slavery was a long process that lasted from 1843 to 1856. My work aims to treat history as one of the social frameworks for the social construction of the public memory of slavery. I thus question the limits imposed on the memory of slavery by the historical framework, which is in turn influenced by the political ideology in which it is produced.

Adrian-Nicolae Furtună is a sociologist currently preparing his PhD thesis on the social memory of Roma slavery within the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy. He is a counsellor in the Documentation and Research Department of the National Centre of Roma Culture in Romania, as well as a founding member of Cultural and Social Research Center “Romane Rodimata.” He is also affiliated with the [Centre for the History of Eugenics and Racism within the Institute of History “George Barițiu,” Romanian Academy](#). His published works include “*Roma Slavery in Wallachia. Fragments of Social History. Children Sales/Donations. Marriages. Petitions for Emancipation*” (Furtuna, 2019), and “[The Roma and the Question of Ethnic Origin in Romania during the Holocaust](#)” (Turda & Furtuna, 2022).

15:00–15:10 Discussant

Marissa Petrou

Professor of History and Director of the Guilbeau Center for Public History at University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Department of History, Geography & Philosophy

ONLINE

[Marissa Petrou](#) is Director of the [Guilbeau Center for Public History](#), and Co-Director of the LGBTQ+ Archive at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her research and curatorial practice focus on how scientists and artists work with images to (de)construct human diversity. Their current project: "Collecting Asia-Pacific in Germany: Museums and the Anthropological Sciences, 1870-1914," explores how current efforts to decolonize museums both build upon and expose the failures of nineteenth century anticolonial science.

15:10–15:30 Q&A Chair

Egemen Özbek

Academy in Exile, Academic Coordinator

Egemen Özbek is the [Academic Coordinator of Academy in Exile](#) at Technische Universität Dortmund. He completed his PhD in Cultural Mediations at Carleton University with a dissertation on the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in Turkey, [His research focuses on](#) the politics of memory and the interplay of denial and coming-to-memory of the genocide.

Closing remarks 15:30–16:00

Vanessa Agnew

Associate Director, Academy in Exile, Technische Universität Dortmund Faculty of Cultural Studies

Vanessa Agnew is the Associate Director of Academy in Exile, Technische Universität Dortmund Faculty of Cultural Studies. She is an Honorary Professor in the Research School of Humanities and the Arts at the Australian National University, and [Director of Academy in Exile's Critical Thinking Program](#). She was previously a professor in Anglophone studies at the Universität Duisburg-Essen. Agnew's monograph, *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds* (Oxford University Press, 2008), won the Oscar Kenshur Prize and the American Musicological Society's Lewis Lockwood Award. In 2022, Professor Agnew inaugurated an artist-in-residency program and launched a short-form imprint, *Ostrakon*, to publish scholarly and creative material dealing with forced migration, conflict, and climate issues. She co-curated exhibitions include Right to Arrive (Canberra, 2018), [What We Brought with Us](#) (Re:Writing the Future Festival, 2021; German Literature Archive Marbach, 2022), and Fixing What's Broken (Berlin, 2023)

Dezso Mate**Academy in Exile Alumnus, Associate Research Fellow**

Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut, Essen

[Dr. Dezso Mate](#) obtained his PhD in Interdisciplinary Sociology at Eotvos Lorand University (Budapest) in 2021. In his dissertation, he focused on academic antigypsyism and the psychical violations of Romani people with the social-psychological analysis of resilience. He earned his MA degrees in Media Studies / Film Theory and Romani Studies. Dr. Mate also gained further study experience in the Netherlands at the Fontys University of Applied Social Sciences. He is a former Research Fellow at the Central European University Romani Studies Program in Budapest. From 2015 to 2017, he worked as a Visiting Research Associate at the University of Sussex Centre for Higher Education and Equity Research. Dr. Mate was a consultant for the Open Society Foundations Community Youth Fellowship Program 2018–2020, which focused on the Romani intersectional challenges in public healthcare settings. Currently, he is an [Associate Research Fellow at the Kulturwissenschaftliche Institut](#) in Germany.

Dinner for Contributors 19:00

