
TRANSYLVANIAN REVIEW

Vol. XIX, Supplement No. 4, 2010

Identity Projects and Processes in the Romanian Space, 19th-20th Centuries

Edited by
VIOREL ACHIM

The Policy of Settling Gypsy Blacksmiths in Wallachian Villages, 1831–1848

VENERA ACHIM

Introduction

THIS ARTICLE is meant to study the settling of Gypsy blacksmiths in Wallachian villages in 1831–1848. It refers to a matter regarding mainly the habitat of this population, since in Wallachia, as well as in Moldavia, but also in other countries in the region, nomadism was characteristic only to Gypsies. The sedentarization of Gypsies had a much larger connotation, because there were economic and social motivations behind this process, and its implications were important from many points of view. The sedentarization of Gypsy blacksmiths in the villages of Wallachia occurred in the framework of a long term policy, coherent and quite consistent, of settling all nomadic Gypsies in villages.¹

The sedentarization of Gypsies became a government program starting with 1831. It was overlapped, a bit later, by another process, just as important, namely the emancipation of Gypsies from slavery and their transformation into free people. The abolition of slavery in the Romanian principalities was carried out through a series of laws which each ensured the freedom of a particular category of Gypsies (slaves): Gypsies owned by the State were emancipated in 1843 in Wallachia and in 1844 in Moldavia; Gypsies owned by monasteries, in 1844 in Moldova and in 1847 in Wallachia; and privately owned Gypsies, in 1855 in Moldavia and in 1856 in Wallachia.²

Sedentarization and emancipation were to some extent complementary, the two processes aiming at the same group of population, but referring to different aspects, which were closely interrelated. They were important for the economy and for the politics of Wallachia, because they involved a numerous popu-

This paper was supported by CNCISIS-UEFISCSU, PN II – Idei, project code ID_717.

lation. Gypsy slaves represented around 1830 about 120,000 people, and in 1856, a few years after the emancipation of the last category of Gypsies, the former slaves amounted to about 150,000 persons, which meant, for both indicated years, about 7% of the principality's population.³

The Role of Gypsy Blacksmiths in the Wallachian Economy of the First Half of the 19th Century

THE MAIN service that the Gypsy slaves provided to the village population was blacksmithing. The processing of iron, the production of tools and of other iron items necessary to a village household, the repair of agricultural equipment and horseshoeing were activities of great economic value. Usually working in villages, on the estate of a boyar or of a monastery, or even for peasants, blacksmiths became indispensable to the rural economy. The quasi-totality of blacksmiths in the Wallachian villages of that time were Gypsies. There was some kind of Gypsy "monopoly" in the field, the word *țigan* ("Gypsy") getting to mean in the world of Romanian villages *fierar* ("blacksmith").⁴ There are many archive documents illustrating this special relationship between the peasants, who tilled the land, and the Gypsies, who were blacksmiths. We mention here the action of inhabitants from several villages of Vâlcea county, from 1854, who asked for the Gypsy craftsmen to be left where they were. This concerned the former slaves of the state, emancipated in 1843, who had settled there a few years before and who served the rural community with their trade, but whom the authorities now wanted to move to some other place, where their work was also needed.⁵

For a long time blacksmiths practiced their trade itinerantly, crossing the villages in search of work. They would stop on the boyars' and monastery estates, whenever they were asked to do so, but usually every estate had its own blacksmith(s), who implicitly were the boyar's slaves or slaves of the monastery; they could also be state slaves, and later on, after the emancipation, free people. Sometimes, blacksmiths were only employed for a short period or for a single commission. Still, most Gypsy blacksmiths worked for the peasants.

Gypsy blacksmiths from the salt pits had a special situation. They were few, but their work was important for the extraction of salt. Documents indicate that there were Gypsy blacksmiths at Ocnele Mari, Telega and Slănic.⁶

Public authorities also resorted to skilled craftsmen. They were used for public works. For example, in 1833, Gypsies did the ironwork for the Normal School of Pitești.⁷ At the same time, the whole ironwork of buildings of the Bistrița monastery, built under the reigns of Gheorghe Bibescu and Barbu Știrbei, was

performed by slaves. After the finalization of works, as a reward, the prince awarded those people with their freedom, and they left, settling on the estate of the Vaideeni monastery.⁸ In 1848, in Wallachia, during the revolution, Gypsy blacksmiths repaired the army's weaponry.⁹

The fact that Gypsy blacksmiths were appreciated for their skill is proved by the high price of blacksmith slaves in the slavery period in comparison with that of unskilled Gypsies. In the 1830s, the sale price for a blacksmith was 70 francs, while an unskilled slave was sold for only 50 francs.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Gypsy blacksmiths were sedentarized. Blacksmithing was the first "sedentarized" craft, in the sense that Gypsy blacksmiths were the first to stop moving from one place to another and set up their shop and residence in a village, where their craft was in demand. There had been villages with settled blacksmiths even before the period of the Organic Regulations,¹¹ but now, in the 1830s and 1840s, the number of settled blacksmiths grew, so that in the 1850s there were only very few itinerant blacksmiths left.

As far as the proportion of blacksmiths in the Gypsy population is concerned, it certainly was not big. Blacksmiths were very visible though, because they were everywhere in the country, not only in certain places. According to the 1831 Wallachian census, among the 5,633 Gypsy families belonging to the state and registered as craftsmen, 918 were blacksmiths (16.3%). The total number of state-owned Gypsy families was 4,453, with 22,265 individuals.¹² The census of state Gypsies made in 1837 registered 5,672 families of craftsmen all over Wallachia.¹³ The census did not break down the number according to crafts, but we can assume that the number of blacksmiths, not only the total number of craftsmen, was quasi-identical to the one recorded in 1831.

Itinerant Blacksmiths

UNTIL THE first half of the 19th century, many Gypsy slaves in Wallachia and Moldavia were nomads. The nomadism specific to those Gypsies must not be understood in the strict meaning of the word. It was a limited nomadism, controlled by the public authorities and regulated in many respects.¹⁴ Nomadic Gypsies wandered the country, regularly in the warm seasons, from Saint George's day (23 April) to Saint Demetrius's day (26 October), and in the winter they stayed on the estate of their master or on another estate, with the permission of the owner, and they often went back there. They had obligations to their master, and had to fulfil these obligations at his residence or, for the state Gypsies, in various places where state officials dealing with them had their residence. As far as the movements during the warm season were concerned, Gypsies

had the same routes, went through the same villages, and earned their living with their craft. In the Romanian countries, there was no conflict between the sedentary way of life of the majority population and the Gypsies' nomadism.¹⁵

The occupations practiced by nomadic Gypsies were not necessarily specific to them and them alone. Blacksmithing, for example, was a trade that, in towns, but also at some boyars' courts, was practiced by craftsmen of Romanian or of other origin, who lived there, who had their workshop established in a certain place and were usually members of a guild. Unlike those blacksmiths, who were less numerous and worked in few places, Gypsy blacksmiths practiced their craft itinerantly. This means that the Gypsy blacksmith, along with his family, went from village to village, in a cart pulled by horses or mules. Not all blacksmiths had a cart though, so that they had to walk, using a beast of burden. The family took all of its assets with it. The group was usually made of a few families, so a convoy of carts would be put together. Gypsies would pitch their tents on the edges of the village, set up their workshop in front of the tent and started working for the villagers. The mobile workshop, consisting of a small number of rudimentary tools and materials, could easily be installed anywhere. For the work they would use old techniques, transmitted from generation to generation. When necessary, the whole family, including the women and children, worked to make horseshoes, nails, knives or other iron objects, or to perform repairs. The payment for the iron products or for the services provided was made in money, but especially in produce (maize flour and other foodstuffs), an exchange convenient for the peasants, who were still superficially integrated in the market economy.¹⁶

The quality of the products made by the Gypsies was not high and was quite inferior to the production of craftsmen in towns or from the factories. The determining fact in the peasants' preference was the price. The Gypsies' products, which were cheaper, easily found a market at a time when there were no stores and workshops providing the villages with the necessary tools, and the products of urban craftsmen were difficult to obtain and too expensive. Gypsy blacksmiths' products would be brought to every village and remote area, because they were sold by those who made them. Actually the Gypsy blacksmith, with his skill, performed services for the inhabitants of the settlements they would pass through. This blacksmith would satisfy the economic needs of the rural population. He was part of the economic mechanism of the respective communities.

Obviously, this type of trade was in conformity with the development level of the rural world in the Romanian principalities. Most villages, given their small size and the modest economy they practiced, were not able to provide permanent work for a blacksmith, so that he could live there. The nomadism of Gypsy blacksmiths was an answer to a concrete economic situation.

The Sedentarization of Gypsy Blacksmiths, after ca. 1830

THE SEDENTARIZATION of blacksmiths was to a great extent a natural process, meaning that it was related to a certain evolution of the country's economy. Gypsy blacksmiths who gave up their itinerant trade and settled in a place had existed in the past too, but in the period of the Organic Regulations it became an important phenomenon, both numerically speaking and in what concerned its economic and social impact. The sedentarization of blacksmiths occurred in the new economic conditions roughly after 1830, when the development of agriculture made it necessary for blacksmiths to settle in certain localities, where they could practice their trade permanently. There were several factors that accelerated this social transformation.

A favoring factor was the extensive development of agriculture in the Romanian principalities after 1829, when the Russian-Turkish peace treaty of Adrianople was concluded. Among other things, it abolished the Ottoman monopoly upon Wallachian and Moldavian trade. The Romanian principalities could presently export cereals to the West. The result was the significant and fast expansion of lands cultivated with grain crops. The extensive development of agriculture increased the need for labor force, including the blacksmiths who serviced the boyar estates and the villages.¹⁷

In this era the boyars passed to an efficient exploitation of their estates. The slave owners tried to bring the nomadic Gypsies whom they owned or other Gypsies, of other owners, on their estates. There was a clear preoccupation for the sedentarization of those people and their use in agricultural work. The owners tried to provide villages on their estates with blacksmiths, who until then had practiced their trade itinerantly. Boyars' estates and the peasants themselves needed the blacksmiths' products and services more and more.

The Gypsies' sedentarization was also influenced by another process occurred in Wallachia during that period, a process affecting the rural habitat. It involved the systematization of villages, also called "village alignment" in the language of that time. By way of this systematization villages were concentrated and even larger settlements were created, bringing together the population of several villages, hamlets and isolated households.¹⁸ The systematization had repercussions on the Gypsies who lived in villages or who were in process of settling in villages. The most seriously affected were the monastery slaves. The monasteries were more involved in settling slaves in villages than the particular slave owners, and used the occasion offered by regulations regarding the village regularization. For example, in 1838, the dispersed houses in the villages on monastery estates in the district of Ialomița, Dâmbovița county were forcibly brought into "line," including the houses of the Gypsies who had been settled

there.¹⁹ On the boyar estates, the rural systematization went on at a slower pace, because many owners refused to proceed with that costly measure. The creation of large settlements favored the settlement of blacksmiths. In the new settlements a special area meant for the village blacksmith workshop was created. That was usually situated on the main street, in the center of the village, at the crossroads, in a place readily accessible from all directions.

We think we can assert that in the blacksmiths' sedentarization process, the most important factor was represented by the country's fast demographic growth and by the changes of the habitat, which took place starting around 1830 and made possible the establishment in villages of families of Gypsy craftsmen, who until then had practiced their trade itinerantly. The villages now needed stable craftsmen and, most importantly, they could presently support by themselves one or more families of craftsmen.

But sedentarization was also one of the main objectives of the state legislation regarding the Gypsies in the 1830s–1850s. There was a policy in this respect, followed with quite enough consistency by the principality authorities. Starting with the Organic Regulations, in both principalities they passed a whole series of laws, decrees and orders aiming exactly at the limitation of Gypsy traveling. Measures were taken to limit and fight nomadism. What is important for our topic is the fact that from the very beginning, the elimination of nomadism and sedentarization were not conceived as matters strictly related to the type of habitat, but they were related to the country's (the villages') economic needs. Concrete measures in this respect were introduced starting with April 1831, in the *Regulation for Improving the Condition of State Gypsies*, which proposed means of intervention for each category of Gypsies.²⁰ The travel permits introduced in 1831 proved to be an obstacle some nomads could not overcome. The movement from one place to another, both of sedentary and of nomadic Gypsies, could only be achieved with the help of a travel permit, issued by the local administration. Even though this provision was not thoroughly applied, it contributed to the limitation of nomadism.

A measure taken for fiscal reasons, but which contributed to a certain extent to the limitation of movement, was the conclusion, in December 1832, between Wallachia and Moldavia, of the convention regarding the capture and return of fugitives, where the Gypsy slaves—state, monastery and private ones—were expressly mentioned.²¹

As a result of the report of the head of the Prison Authority, Colonel Herescu, in 1838, other measures were taken in order to settle state Gypsies in villages and stable households. Marriages concluded in church between Gypsies and Romanians and their settlement on an estate were considered as a means of sedentarization and assimilation of the Gypsy population.²² The Gypsies freed this way were given

to boyars close to the Prince. As far as their obligations were concerned, they were assimilated with the peasants.

In 1843—the year when the state Gypsies (slaves) were emancipated²³—measures were taken to settle the nomadic slaves. By order of the Department of the Interior²⁴ an 18 months term was established for all slave owners to provide their slaves with conditions for settlement. Contrarily, the authorities would take the measures for their settlement, and they would become the property of the state. This measure was also taken with the goal of increasing the number of state contributors and to make possible a stricter evidence of them.

On 8/20 February 1856, Prince Barbu Știrbei signed “the law for the emancipation of all Gypsies in the Principality of Wallachia,” the last in the series of laws of emancipation of the Gypsies in the principality.²⁵ Along with other regulations, the law also included the measures to be taken for the settlement of the emancipated slaves in villages and towns, in permanent housing, their move from those places being forbidden for two fiscal periods, meaning 14 years.

It is obvious that all those measures were meant to stimulate the settlement of state Gypsies on private estates. The last were taken at a time when nomadism was practiced by a relatively small part of the Gypsy population.

We notice that none of the measures taken in order to limit nomadism refers to Gypsy blacksmiths in a special way. There was no express order for stopping the movement of Gypsy blacksmiths, because such an order would have prevented the good functioning of the economy. That was also because the movements of the blacksmiths did not affect public order, as it happened with other categories of Gypsies.

Referring to the Gypsy blacksmiths again, we have seen they practiced their trade itinerantly for centuries. Nomadic blacksmiths followed almost the same route annually, providing services to the inhabitants of the settlements they went through. Step by step they reduced their route to only a few villages, which would provide the market for that family of blacksmiths. Then they settled in one of the villages that they knew, usually in a big village, where they had most work to do. This way they could provide for the family by practicing their trade, without having to move from one place to another. But the blacksmith’s settling in a village does not mean that he would provide services exclusively to the members of that community. People from neighboring villages, who did not have blacksmiths, could be clients too. We will see, from the statistical data, that not all villages had blacksmiths, not even after the state’s serious effort to provide such craftsmen to all villages.

But now, in the 1830s and 1840s, with the changes occurred in the economy and the rural habitat, blacksmiths found themselves facing a double challenge: on the one hand, the village began to need resident craftsmen, which created con-

ditions favorable to sedentarization; on the other hand, all kinds of restraints regarding nomadism, especially public policies for the limitation and elimination of this way of life, forced those people to settle down.

Blacksmiths represented one of the first groups of Gypsies to become massively sedentary during the period of the Organic Regulations. This happened because in the period in question, the itinerant practice of this craft almost ceased. In the 1830s and 1840s, blacksmiths who used to wander the villages with their mobile workshop took up residence in villages and towns. Even before there had been Gypsy blacksmiths who lived in villages and towns, but they represented a minority within this population. Before, when Gypsies traveled from village to village, and now, when they finally settled in a locality, blacksmithing in the rural environment remained a Gypsy “monopoly.”

Regarding the process of sedentarization of Gypsy blacksmiths, the main factor was represented by the state. As shown by the legislation of that period and the archive documents, in the 1840s there was a strong interest from the authorities in sedentarizing blacksmiths. The measures taken in this respect were put together into a well established and coherent policy. This effort of the central administration was successful. In 1847–1848, when a minute registration of blacksmiths was made, in about one third of the principality’s villages there were already blacksmiths, most of them settled in that settlement several years before. There was usually one blacksmith, but in some villages there were several of them, according to the size of the village and the local needs.

Statistics on the Gypsy Blacksmiths Settled in Wallachian Villages, 1847–1848

AMONG THE documents of the central and regional administration of Wallachia, relevant for the matter of Gypsy blacksmiths’ sedentarization and for the program of supplying the villages with craftsmen from this category, the most important in size and content is an inedited statistical material, kept in the Central Historical National Archives of Bucharest.²⁶ It is a 124 pages-long file, containing the work entitled *Statistics on Gypsy blacksmiths settled in the principality’s villages*. It is a statistical work, a registry of Gypsy blacksmiths, former state and monastery slaves, settled in the villages of the principality. The work was compiled on the order of the Department of the Interior of Wallachia. The order of the department, its correspondence with the administration of the 17 counties and the situations sent by them represent the substance of this archive material. The registration was made according to villages, districts and counties.

The data found in this statistical work allowed us to obtain a detailed picture of the Gypsy blacksmiths' presence in the Wallachian villages in 1847–1848. In the principality, 4,028 blacksmiths are registered, in 1,148 villages. It means an average of 3.5 blacksmiths per village. (The statistics also list 182 Gypsy blacksmiths from 15 urban centers. This registration, accidental and partial, does not concern the object of the statistics from 1847–1848, and therefore we did not include those blacksmiths in our calculations.)

But not all villages had blacksmiths. 2,204 villages lacked blacksmiths, representing 65.75% of the total number of the Wallachian villages (3,367 villages). In that moment, one third of the principality's villages had blacksmiths settled there, the rest of the villages lacking those specialized craftsmen. In five counties, the percentage of villages without blacksmiths is much higher than the general average: in Prahova county there were 82.2% villages without blacksmiths (218, as compared to 47 villages with blacksmiths), Buzău 81.9% (177 – 39), Ilfov 80.99% (277 – 65), Dâmbovița 79.2% (168 – 44; in this county none of the 37 villages of the Ialomița district had a blacksmith), Vlașca 75.9% (123 – 39). The following counties registered values close to the average for the principality: Slam Râmnic 67.5% (100 villages without blacksmiths compared to 48 villages with blacksmiths), Ialomița 67.4% (91 – 45), Romanați 67.3% (109 – 53), Argeș 66.3% (156 – 79). The following counties had percentages below the general average: Olt 61.1% (83 villages without blacksmiths as compared to 55 villages with blacksmiths), Mehedinți 59.8% (158 – 106), Teleorman 57.5% (88 – 65), Gorj 51.7% (146 – 136) and Vâlcea 50.9% (111 – 107). Only in three counties the number of villages without blacksmiths is outnumbered by the number of villages with such craftsmen: Muscel 48.4% (46 villages without blacksmiths, as compared to 49 villages with blacksmiths), Dolj 47.4% (128 – 142) and Brăila 45.4% (25 – 30).

The number of blacksmiths differs considerably from one county to another. The higher numbers are registered in the counties of Prahova (494, a county where villages without craftsmen represent 82.2% of the total villages) and Dolj (466, a number that we can consider normal, because there the number of villages with blacksmiths outnumbers the number of villages without them), closely followed by Mehedinți (389) and Gorj (364). The fewest blacksmiths are registered in the following counties: Brăila (105; Brăila was a small county, with only 55 villages), Vlașca (125), Buzău (135) and Olt (136).

It is obvious that the number of blacksmiths in a county is not necessarily related to the number of villages from that administrative unit, but more likely to the number of inhabitants. Generally, the most populated counties had the largest number of blacksmiths. But certainly, the large number of blacksmiths that we find in some counties is also the result of the administration's success-

ful efforts of settling those Gypsies in villages. The large number of villages with blacksmiths in Dolj (142), Gorj (137), Vâlcea (108) and Mehedinți (106) is due to the work of the county administration, which in the 1840s proved consistency in applying the policy of settling the Gypsies. There was a concern with achieving a relatively uniform distribution of blacksmiths in the territory. Moreover, all those counties were situated in Oltenia, a region known for its large number of monasteries, almost each of them having Gypsy slaves until 1847, when the law for emancipating the monastery Gypsies was passed. So we cannot explain why in those counties the situation is sensibly different from the others, which had the same geographic features, agricultural potential, habitat and demographic size of villages.

The great number of Gypsy blacksmiths in Prahova county (494, the biggest number of all counties) can only be explained by the demographic and agricultural potential of the county's villages, not only by the great number of villages with blacksmiths (the county still has a big number of villages, 265 registered in this census, only Ilfov, Gorj and Dolj counties having more—342, 282, and 270, respectively). Regarding Ilfov county, as compared to the number of villages and the county's demographic potential, the relatively small number of blacksmiths and villages with blacksmiths is explained, we believe, by the fact that many villages resorted to the services of blacksmiths in Bucharest, which do not make the object of our statistics.

Most certainly, the blacksmiths' distribution map in the Wallachian villages in 1847–1848 reflects, although indirectly, the density of the habitat, but also the level of agricultural development in certain areas of the country. Naturally, the situations in the statistics are different from county to county and from district to district, according to the local economic conditions. In the big villages, with many inhabitants, there are more blacksmith families. The situation is quite natural, as the local community needed those craftsmen and could provide a livelihood for them through the orders they made. Many small villages (but also the hamlets) lacked blacksmiths. They only had several peasant families, who could not afford keeping a blacksmith, meaning that they could not provide him with enough work, and no blacksmith (and his family) could therefore permanently stay in their village. In these cases, as it is mentioned in the census we're dealing with, "these villages do not have blacksmith Gypsies, and when they need one they go to other villages that have such craftsmen."

The statistical work from 1847–1848 also reveals the means of sedentarization followed by the blacksmith Gypsies. We see that in some places villagers redeemed from their masters the blacksmiths they needed. It means that those villages raised, on their own initiative, the money that redeemed the blacksmiths from their master. We are talking about rural communities, quite strong

economically speaking and well-organized, if they could compensate those slaves. We shall give several examples, from Teleorman county, where the census was very rigorously made and provides a lot of information, exceeding the purposes of this statistical operation.²⁷ There, with reference to some blacksmiths, we find the remark “ransomed by the villagers” (Vladu Luncan, from Mereșani). In the villages of Țigănești and Scalofirești, five blacksmiths appear together (Tudor Ilie Fieraru, Ivan Negoii, Ilie Dragu, Neagu Ilie and Nicolaie sin Ilie) with the mention “having belonged to the Ban Barbu Știrbei and redeemed by these two villages.” Other blacksmiths are referred to as “self-redeemed” (or “redeemed by themselves”) or “emancipated by themselves.” Still resorting to the statistics for Teleorman county, we found a similar situation for Ispas Vladu from Măgurelele, Stan Neacșu, Voicu Neacșu Țiganu and Ion Berechet from Alexandria, and Guță Ilie from Atârnați. “Redeemed by himself” or “emancipated by himself” means that the slave in question paid himself the money asked by his master as a price for his emancipation.

The material condition of blacksmiths cannot be seen in the file we are dealing with, but in other archive documents from that period we can find such information. It seems that the blacksmiths’ material condition was not at all a bad one. In the examples given before we’ve seen that there were blacksmiths who, with the raised money, redeemed themselves, gaining their freedom. In the 1840s and 1850s, there were still situations of blacksmiths who, being free or even keeping their slave status, succeeded to raise a large amount of money and opened a workshop in town.

Conclusions

AT THE end of this study, we can say that the measures taken by the authorities for the sedentarization of blacksmith craftsmen in the 1830s and 1840s were part of a well-founded and coherent policy. A program for supplying the villages with blacksmiths was applied, aimed at all Gypsy blacksmiths in Wallachia, regardless of whether they were slaves or former slaves, more precisely, slaves emancipated on the basis of the laws of 1843 (concerning the state Gypsies) and 1847 (monastery Gypsies). The efforts of the administration were successful. In 1847–1848, when a detailed registration of blacksmiths was made, blacksmiths were already present in about one third of the principality’s villages. Usually it was only one blacksmith, but in some villages there were several, according to the size of the village and the local needs.

One of the factors of this success was represented by the fast demographic growth of the country and the thickening of the habitat, phenomena that occurred

roughly after 1830 and allowed for and made it necessary to settle Gypsy craftsmen in villages. In the 1830s and 1840s, blacksmiths who had previously wander from one village to another with their mobile workshops, settled in villages and towns. In 1847–1848, the practice of itinerant blacksmithing was not completely abandoned, but it was a lot less common. In the following decade, though, it disappeared almost completely. □

Notes

1. For the history of Gypsies in the Romanian principalities in the first half of the 19th century, see Viorel Achim, *Țigani în istoria României* (Bucharest, 1998), 76–104.
2. For the emancipation of Gypsy slaves, see especially Viorel Achim, *Țigani*, 90 sqq.; id., “The Gypsies in the Romanian Principalities: The Emancipation Laws, 1831–1856,” *Historical Yearbook* 1 (2004): 109–120; Venera Achim, “Dezrobirea Țiganilor – prima reformă socială în Principatele Române în epoca modernă,” in *Schimbare și devenire în istoria României*, eds. Ioan Bolovan and Sorina Paula Bolovan (Cluj-Napoca, 2008), 241–248; id., “Emanciparea Țiganilor și programul legislativ al guvernului provizoriu din 1848,” *Revista Istorică*, N.S., 20 (2009) 1–2: 63–72; id., “Bonds Issued in 1856–1858 in Moldavia and Wallachia in Compensation to Former Slave Owners,” *Transylvanian Review* 19, 1 (Spring 2010): 121–131.
3. For the numerical evolution of the Gypsy population in that period, see Venera Achim, “Statistica Țiganilor din Principatele Române în perioada 1830–1860,” *Revista Istorică*, N.S., 16 (2005) 3–4: 97–122.
4. Martin Block, *Die materielle Kultur der rumänischen Zigeuner. Versuch einer monographischen Darstellung*, ed. J. S. Hofmann (Frankfurt am Main-Bern-New York-Paris, 1991), 131.
5. National Archives, Vâlcea County Directorate, coll. *Prefectura județului Vâlcea*, file 62/1854.
6. Documents speaking about these blacksmiths in *Documente privitoare la economia Țării Românești 1800–1850*, ed. I. Cojocaru, vol. 1 (Bucharest, 1958), doc. 326 (p. 455), doc. 328 (p. 458), doc. 329 (p. 459).
7. *Pitești. Mărturiu documentare (1388–1944)*, vol. 1, eds. Teodor Mavrodin, Mircea Gâlcă, Violeta Sima, Lucian Probeagu and Dan Pintilie (Bucharest, 1988), 75–76.
8. Veniamin Micle, *Mănăstirea Bistrița Olteană* (Râmnicu Vâlcea, 1996), 165.
9. *Anul 1848 în Principatele Române*, vol. 5 (Bucharest, 1907), 51.
10. This information comes from a relation of Charles de Bois-le-Comte, from 1834, published in Romanian translation in *Călători străini despre țările române în secolul al XIX-lea*, vol. 3 (1831–1840), ed. Daniela Bușă (Bucharest, 2006), 134–135; and in a report by the diplomat Edouard Thouvenel, from 1839: Eduard Thouvenel, *La Hongrie et la Valachie (Souvenirs de Voyage et notices historiques)* (Paris, 1840), 245–246.
11. Between 1831 and 1858 the political, institutional and social regime of Wallachia and Moldavia was governed in each principality by the Organic Regulation, a kind of constitution. The modernization of both principalities began in this period.
12. Cf. Charles de Bois-le-Comte, loc. cit., 100–101.
13. *Analele Parlamentare ale României*, vol. IX/1 (Bucharest, 1897), 1143 (hereinafter: *APR*).
14. Viorel Achim, *Țigani*, 53–54.
15. *Ibid.*, 54.
16. A detailed description of such a mobile workshop was made by Felice Carroni in 1812: Felice Carroni, *Carroni in Dacia. Mie osservazioni locali, nazionali, regionali, antiquarie sui Valachi spe-*

- cialmente e Zingari transilvani, la mirabile analogia della lingua valacca coll'italiana, la nesuna della zingara colle alter conosciute; con un rapporto su le miniere piu ricche di quell Principato* (Milan, 1812), 48.
17. A general survey of the economy of the Romanian principalities in that period, in *Istoria Românilor*, vol. VII/1, *Constituirea României moderne (1821–1878)*, ed. Dan Berindei (Bucharest, 2003), 135–166, 595–631; Mihail Opreșcu, *Economia în Principatele Române (1829–1866)* (Bucharest, 2001).
 18. For the systematization of the villages in Wallachia, see Ilie Corfus, “Încercări de sistematizare a satelor din Țara Românească sub Regulamentul organic,” *Revista arhivelor* 10 (1967) 2: 195–212; id., *Agricultura Țării Românești în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea* (Bucharest, 1969), 276–293.
 19. Corfus, “Încercări de sistematizare,” 201, 203.
 20. *APR*, vol. I/1 (Bucharest, 1890), 511–516.
 21. I. C. Filitti, *Documente din vremea Regulamentului organic* (Bucharest, 1935), 59–60.
 22. *Buletin. Gazetă administrativă*, No. 33 (11 May 1838): 130–131; No. 62 (16 September 1838): 250–251.
 23. *APR*, XII/1 (Bucharest, 1910), 301–304; Gh. Bibescu, *Domnia lui Bibescu*, vol. 2 (Bucharest, 1894), 32–34.
 24. *Buletin. Gazetă oficială*, No. 80 (3 September 1843): 317.
 25. *Buletinul oficial*, No. 13 (13 February 1856): 49; *Acte și documente relative la Istoria Renașterii României*, eds. Dimitrie A. Sturdza and C. Colescu-Vartic, vol. 2 (Bucharest, 1896), 961.
 26. Central Historical National Archives, coll. *Ministerul de Interne – Administrative*, file 116/1847.
 27. *Ibid.*, f. 44–52.

Abstract

The Policy of Settling Gypsy Blacksmiths in Wallachian villages, 1831–1848

The present article studies the settling of Gypsy blacksmiths in Wallachian villages in the years 1831–1848. Having started as a natural process in the previous centuries, the sedentarization of Gypsies accelerated during the period of the Organic Regulations (1831–1858). The legislative measures taken after 1831 and later on the administrative measures taken by the Department of the Interior and other central or districtual institutions were part of a well-founded and coherent policy. In that period a program was applied in Wallachia to provide villages with blacksmiths, a program that aimed at all Gypsy blacksmiths in the country, whether they were slaves or former slaves, meaning persons emancipated from slavery as a result of the laws of 1843 (state Gypsies) and 1847 (monastery Gypsies). The efforts of the administration were successful. In 1847–1848, when a detailed registration of the blacksmiths was made, blacksmiths were already present in about one third of the principality's villages.

Keywords

sedentarization, nomadism, Gypsies, blacksmiths, Wallachia