KNOWLEDGE BASED ON SOURCES AND HISTORICAL DATA VERSUS KNOWLEDGE BASED ON CLICHÉS AND LEGENDS IN THE INDIAN STAGE OF RROMANI HISTORY

Marcel COURTHIADE
International Rromani Union &
INALCO Paris City Sorbonne
mdro2emc@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the origins of the Rromani people and their language, taking into account both the legends that have circulated for centuries, and the scientific approach to the subject, considering mainly, but not exclusively, linguistic data.The conclusion of this research is that legends have to be deconstructed wisely and, on the other hand, plausible theories have to be tested using the historical method, namely not only checking "written documentation" (which can be untrue) but also putting together all historical, political, economical, military, religious, philosophical, psychological etc. aspects, in order to check the consistency of these factors.

Keywords: Rroms' origin, Rromani language, gypsy, linguistics

«Have you heard? Now you have to integrate the results of modern research into your own knowledge about the Rromani people».
Ms Suśma Swaraj (at the opening of the scientific session in ICCR in New Delhi on 12.02.2016)

0. Introduction: some recently highlighted elements which question the routine narrative

Human imagination knows of no limits. Especially when applied to the ethnogenesis of concrete peoples, it is capable of the most unexpected creativity. However, as time elapses, scientific research usually brings historical data which progressively replace legends and reveal a consistent image of the whole historical process the given people went through (or produced). Beside history itself, it is in fact very informative to study how these mechanisms develop, shifting from "stories" to "history". The analysis of historical researches themselves is called historiography and it belongs also to history itself, as a specific branch. Actually, in the case of no other people, historiography appears to be such an integral part of its history as it is for the Rroms. The situation is the following: an impressive series of legends have been produced through centuries about the Rroms and their origin. To date many of them are still circulated, even among educated milieus; on the other hand, the scholarly approach based on systematic linguistic observations has resulted recently in bringing to light some new pivotal facts and subsequently a handful of conclusions.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

1. New elements

1.1 One of the most significant facts is directly related to the Rromani language itself, namely it has been confirmed that the Indian element is exactly the same in all Rromani vernaculars, wherever they are spoken: not only common vocabulary (we disregard locally forgotten words) is the same from one end to the other of Europe, but in addition one may observe almost no significant difference in morphology. The unity of the lexical core may be even extended to the Persian, Armenian and Medieval (or Micrasian) Greek elements (forgotten words being put aside). Indeed, the lexical difference between the two main superdialects[1], concerns less than 0,5 % of all the vocabulary of Indian origin – for example O: **puzgal**/E: **istral** "to slip"; O: **ćulal**/E: **pićal** "to drip"; O: **morravel**/E: **rràndel** "to shave"; O: **suslo**/E: **kingo** "wet" etc. This unity was not perceived until recently due to the chaos prevailing in the early descriptions of the Rromani dialectal system, descriptions which remain unfortunately still widely in use up to date, despite their lack of systematic method. Nevertheless we dispose by now of much more rigorous descriptions, which confirm this fact and substantiate that all Rromani dialectal forms originate from the same comparatively small area and that their users left it in one single go, as Sampson already emphasized almost one century ago, when he wrote that the Rroms "entered Persia as a single group, speaking one common language" (1923:161). This allows disregarding a whole range of suppositions, which are kept alive due to a deficient knowledge of the dialectal structure of Rromani on behalf of the authors.

1.2 In the linguistic field again, Ian F. Hancock submitted to a systematic analysis some key elements in the evolution of Rromani, mainly the vanishing of the neuter and the reassignment of former neuter nouns to other genders in Rromani and other Indo-Aryan languages, the comparative development of the nominal system and vocabulary examination, in terms of both innovation and conservatism. On this objective basis, he could conclude that the split between Rromani and other Indo-Aryan languages occurred around the year 1000 A.D.

1.3 A third brand new element is the recent entire translation of a pivotal book, the Kitab al Yamini, written by Abu Nasr al-Utbi, personal secretary to sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazni and in which five pages are devoted to the capture of the city of Kannauj by sultan Maḥmūd in 1018. True enough, a substantial part of this book had already been translated from a Persian translation into English by James Reynolds in 1858 but these wide excerpts didn't encompass the passage relevant to this study. An entire translation from the Arabic original into a western language was not available until Abdelali Alami's translation into French in 1989[2]. These two new elements

1 The two superdialects are defined by the split between O and E forms in the endings of the 1st person of the past in verbs: **gelom** "I went" in O-superdialect versus **gelem** in E-superdialect.

2 Although one may find a partially forgotten translation by Theodore Nöldeke, published in Viena in 1857.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

modified thoroughly the set of available clues, leading possibly to reliable conclusions. One may observe however that most persons who write even now on this subject are not informed of these two crucial discoveries and keep relying on very poorly substantiated writings of the nineteenth century.

1.4 The sharp distinction in Rromani phonology between two kinds of "**r**", namely between one pronounced rolled [r] and the other one pronounced in various ways [ṛ, ɾ, ʁ, ʁ̆, ɣ̡, ɣ, x, r, rr etc..] according to the dialect at issue was already observed and rendered in script as early as 1890 by Ferenc Sztojka from Paks, the very first Rromani lexicographer, in his "Dictionary of Rromani Roots". He used consistently the spellings **r** for rolled [r] and **rr** for the other one, at least between vowels and at the end of a word: **ćoripen** "theft" *versus* **ćorripen** "poverty" or **bar** (fem.) "hedge, garden" *versus* **barr** (masc.) "stone". In fact Ferenc Sztojka didn't dare to write double **rr** at the beginning of a word – due to its aspect unusual in Hungarian and German, the two languages he best mastered. Yet the family of sounds covered by the spelling **rr** appears – by sheer luck – at the beginning of the Rroms' ethnic name, and this is the reason why it is justly written by double **rr**: first it is as a rule pronounced differently than regular **r** [r] (except in some exceptions[3]) and secondly it developed from Indian retroflex sounds (ṭ, ḍ, ṛ etc.), whereas regular Indian [r] develops into regular Rromani [r] and not into another sound. In spite of this obvious contrast between **r** and **rr**, non-Rroms (mainly journalists, publishers, institutions, the Internet etc.) have imposed the erroneous one-**r** spelling in mainstream use. In fact, the recognition of the genuine pronunciation (and spelling) of the word Rrom would have eliminated *ipso facto* some quite fanciful identifications of the Rromani people with some concepts, the name of which begins with regular [r]; let us recall that Middle Indic rolled **r** develops into Rromani **r** and not **rr**. Accordingly the fabricated "etymology" of **Rrom** from the name of Lord **Rama**, implying [r] > [rr] and [a] > [o], is just a nonsense, while the etymology of **Rrom**, allegedly from an old Muslim Arabic name of the Christians[4], namely **Rum**, is totally out of place for the same reasons. For all these reasons – and in addition to the scientific justification, it is important to promote the double **Rr** spelling in all languages, in so far their rules accept it (Cyrillic script for example cannot accept initial double **pp**/**rr**). Similarly, it is of the utmost importance to introduce into Hindi the correct Devanagari forms ड़ीम (instead of *रीम). This spelling does not only mirror etymological and present phonetic reality, rooted in a millenary heritage, but also makes visible within a glimpse both Rromani identity and

3 Namely in some dialects, which have lost the distinction between the two kinds of "r" under the influence of local languages which do not distinguish r from rr; untrained ears, as it is the case of most non-Rromani descriptors of Rromani dialects, do not distinguish them at hearing and insist to write both sounds in all cases with one single r. Linguistic deafness, or rather insufficient power of acoustic discrimination of the majority population, leads to the imposition of mistaken spelling rules in the minority language.

4 Mainly Orthodox Christians, in the XIth century context of the Middle and Near East.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

historical, with cultural, Indian background. The dispute about single or double RR is therefore a good opportunity to provide people with appropriate information.

1.5 One other important point is that we have reviewed and cross-checked the various assumptions about the Rroms' origin (at least those presenting a glimpse of plausibility – obviously not about the Atlantis, the Roman province of Mauretania Tingitana (Μαυριτανία Τιγγιτανή) or the sons of the Indian God Ram). The result of this scrutiny is given below.

1.6 A further significant element is that there is no ideological agenda or endeavour to justify such or such thesis or attitude driving the research and the argumentation. Conversely practically all other alternative hypotheses are dictated by such a non scientific will. Even in the case of pure legends, there is always an apparent glimpse of truth, reinterpreted yet by non scientific motivation: usually prejudices which have given birth to the legend under discussion. On the contrary, there is no preliminary belief in the real scientific approach, just observation of facts, critical analysis and contextualisation with deduction and hypothesis – namely conclusion supposed to last until a more consistent and satisfactory hypothesis is set forth and accepted. This doesn't mean that facts and evidences have to be treated mechanically, as in a building set or an exercise of arithmetic; to quote Ashok R. Kelkar, the historian has "to be both humanist and human scientists at the same time [and] think of the persons involved not as shadowy venerable (or despicable) figures, but as human beings of the same flesh and blood as us".

2. The Rroms' Indian origin in the context of conflicting speculations

This is most likely not by chance that guesswork and legends play such an important role in the Rroms' history, much more than in the case of any other people, and let me suggest you to keep this in mind throughout this presentation, so that we may attempt to draw appropriate conclusions in due time.

Probably nobody among you is expecting from me a speech proving the Rroms' Indian origin. This point is obvious for all of us, since we are gathered in New Delhi and not somewhere in Egypt, Romania, Bohemia, Israel or any other country. We are all convinced of this origin and I feel free to stress, that, beyond our group, the Rromani people are now aware and proud of it in its overwhelming majority. However some voices keep denying this Indian origin in spite of all obvious evidences and I will try here to explore with you this attitude in the perspective of a wider strategy of negation of the Rromani identity and culture.

My presentation is articulated in the following sections:

A) the emergence of knowledge about the Indian origin itself

a) the mainstream (false) affirmation that it was discovered by Heinrich Grellman in 1783

b) the less prevailing affirmation that it was discovered by Samuel Agoston (ab Hortis) and published in 1775-76

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

c) its ascription to Rüdiger in his comparison of Rromani with khaṛī boli around 1780
d) the "forgotten" precursors
e) alternative geographic proposals
f) the global negation of an extra-European origin
- in the past
- currently
B) the debates about the area of origin inside India and causes of the exodus
a) the Madhyadeś-Kannauj historical data and ensuing clue.
b) the ancient affirmation of an alleged origin from all over India
- the "pariah" misunderstanding
- the "untouchable" misunderstanding
c) other fanciful assumptions: the evergreen legend ascribed to Ferdowsī
d) the Dardic misunderstanding
e) the more fashionable (especially in show-business) affirmation of a Panʒabi origin
f) Rajasthan as another fashionable supposed origin.
So far I mentioned only possible areas of origin but not the reasons of the migration. However both aspects are tightly related.

At this point we have the choice between two possible approaches :
A. either a systematic discussion of all these dozen of elements, what implies at least to sketch briefly each of them, due to the fact that not everybody is familiar with all of them; in addition, their refutation would take quite a lot of time, because they are often based on really naive and outdated arguments (or prejudices) as well as a blatant lack of knowledge, requiring some previous teaching in order to lay the ground for the expected discussion;
B. or to shift directly to the currently more and more recognized thesis, namely the one of the Kannauj cradle. However in this case a simple narration of the events we have identified would lack the support of a structured argumentation.

3. A preliminary refutation

I decided therefore to go through the main points listed at the beginning and disclose quickly for each its weak point, before I tackle the Kannauj thesis and come back to the negative positions of so many authors. However in the beginning, I would like to make clear one point: I was recently stunned while reading, in a recent mail sent to me by Prof. Ian Hancock, the following quotation:

"*activist-scholars such as Hancock and Courthiade have in fact suggested in their writings that the Indian origin does account for the bulk of Romani customs and values, and for the Roma's history of social segregation in European society [giving] a complete and self-contained account or explanation of their history, culture, or present circumstances*".

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

To the best of my knowledge, I never suggested such a direct all-inclusive cultural filiation – and even less any explanation of the social segregation faced by Rroms in the West. On the contrary, I have always been very cautious in this field, refusing to answer questions about any item-to-item direct Indo-Rromani correspondence in traditions or rituals and I systematically encourage anthropologists to turn up their research beyond the observation of single concrete behavioural acts and sharpen their insight in order to bring out, if possible, correspondences of more abstract structures of word representation. I confess that such a research stands beyond my personal capacities and this is why I leave it to others.

My Indian concern is just motivated by the wish to get rid of so many tiresome and time-consuming empty debates, which create aback-holding hotchpotches for reasons very remote from any desire of historical exactitude. My purpose is by no means to lay any foundation for political struggle, since I consider what happened 1000 years ago, or even before, is not any more relevant in today's world, except if it may substantiate that Rroms are not "thieves, vagabonds and counterfeit Egyptians", but a real people, with its own culture – unfortunately wrongly perceived and rejected upon their arrival in the West, leading to the well known consequences one may observe over the centuries. I agree with Yaron Matras, when he says that "*understanding the Indian connection is a relevant piece of information that adds insight into the general picture of Romani history*" – nothing more, nothing less.

4. A review of the main assumptions as historically produced in the field of the Rroms' origin

The question of the Rroms' origin is not a mere academic issue; it has been through the centuries an influential factor, which directed the local populations' and authorities' attitude toward the Rromani people. One may read repeatedly in reports of the past that no consistent policy addressing the Rroms can be designed, due to their unknown origin and identity. In this context, free rein was given to exclusion, persecution and all kinds of destructive violence, in addition to direct scapegoating and justifications to oppression. This oppression was a spin-off not only of xenophobia but also of various concrete accusations, which constitute a separate chapter of the Rroms' history.

True enough, the clarification of the Rroms' origin will not change over night the European mainstream attitude, but replacing fabrications and prejudices by elements closer to historical truth has always a factor of improvement in a given society and here also it will contribute to a better social mutual understanding. In the present case, a major achievement will be to close as soon as possible this chapter of Rromani history and historiography, in order to free fresh energy for other, under-explored subjects of all kinds in this field.

So let's resume our scanning of Rromani historiography in relation with the origin of this people and the way how it came to the knowledge of the learned.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

4.1) Who really authored the discovery? Is this question relevant?

4.1.1) The common place of imputing the "discovery" to Heinrich Grellman in 1783:

Almost all literature devoted to the "discovery" of the Rroms' Indian origin ascribe it to Heinrich Moritz Grellmann, who allegedly disclosed it in his book "Die Zigeuner", published in Dessau and Leipzig in 1783. As now established however, his work was by no mean original, since the Indian origin was mentioned earlier and the comparative Rromani and Hindustani lists of words he published had been provided to him by Christian Wilhelm Büttner, the very one who had mentioned in his 1771 booklet (without any shadow of surprise) that we have in Europe "even an Indostano-Afghan tribe, the Rroms...". In addition the books of two other authors, Samuel Agoston and Johann Rüdiger, had been published with the affirmation of the Rroms' Indian origin prior to the one by Grellmann.

4.1.2) Samuel Agoston (ab Hortis) – and his series of articles 6 years earlier (1775-76):

The naturalist Samuel Agoston[5] had indeed already published in March 1776 the famous anecdote about pastor Valyi István's meeting with three Indian students in Leiden and the mention of a list of 1000 words of the language spoken on the Malabar coast, which the Rroms of Győr (where Vályi was a pastor) allegedly "recognised immediately and without any effort". As Ian Hancock detected, this story is full of fiction and it seems that the connexion between the Rroms and India didn't ensue from any list of words, but from the acoustic similarity between the name of the students' nation, namely "Siŋhali" and the Latin word for Rroms, namely "Tsingari" – from Italian Zingari. Accordingly, Vályi's account could be a simple cover-story intended to convey an information acquired in other circumstances and there is again here no "discovery", just a mistake interpreted in the light of an earlier clue. The famous list of 1000 words never existed (the one enclosed in Agoston's article from March 1776 includes only 53 basic lexemes plus 20 numerals), not only because it has never been found but indeed because, among the 800 Rromani stems of genuine Indian origin, only some 100 or so may be identified "immediately and without hesitation" by non-linguists.

4.1.3) Rüdiger's comparison of Rromani with khaṛī bolī around 1780

The discovery by Johann Rüdiger is much more convincing and I agree with Yaron Matras, who underlined Rüdiger's correctness in investigation method. I also agree with him about Rüdiger's ethic correctness and humanity – it was Rüdiger who said that the Rroms constitute a distinct nation (*eine eigene Nation ausmachen*). Practically however, the 23 sentences he used for his purpose present so few real similarities between

5 He was mainly mineralogist, botanist and horticulturalist and one may assume that his research about the Rroms in Austria had been ordered by the empress Maria-Theresa, who wanted this way to justify her new policy addressing this people. The anecdote of Valyi's meeting with the three students from Malabar coast is to be encountered in almost all books about Rroms.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

the two languages that one may hardly believe Rüdiger drew his conclusions only from this comparison, without any previous hint – and this leads us to the concept of forgotten precursors, namely those authors who mentioned earlier for the Rroms a possible Indian origin, without yet any attempt to substantiate their statement.

4.1.4) The "forgotten" precursors

It is widely publicized that the Rroms' origin was unknown and unidentified; one may read in most publications it was a mystery, an enigma until Grellmann – or we should rather say Rüdiger, discovered it. This is also a legend. Be it as it may, the following list of "forgotten" pre-Rüdiger documents referring to the Rroms' Indian origin unveils these exist and are not as scanty as one could believe.

Year	**Documents – previous and contemporaneous to Rüdiger**	**Tab. 2**
1417	Hermann Korner "*Chronica novella*" in Lübeck	
1422	Girolamo Fiocchi "*Chronicon forliviense*" in Forli	
1450	Vaillant de Tours "*Pis suis que boesme n'yndien*" (rondo) in Blois	
1590	Cesare Vecellio "*De gli Habiti Antichi e Modérni di Diversi Parti di Mondo*" (overleaf of an illustration) in Venice	
1592	David ben Šalomon Ganz – צמח דוד [*Tzemah Dawid*] in Prague	
1630	In municipal documentation in Bras (Provença) "les Indiens de ce lieu" near Brinhòl	
1771	One sentence in the introduction to Büttner's book in Göttingen: Indo-Afghan origin	
1775	Study by Hortis (Samuel Agostini) "*Von dem heutigen Zustande, sonderbaren Sitten und Lebensart*" in Vienna	
1776	Jacob Bryant's letter in London: Indo-Persian origin	
1777	Bacmeister/Büttner/Johann Christian Rüdiger [private correspondence]	
1782	Johann Christian Rüdiger	"Neuester Zuwachs ... Sprachkunde" in Leipzig
		"Grundriss einer Geschichte..." in Leipzig
1783	Heinrich Gottlieb Grellmann: "Historischer Versuch über die Zigeuner" in Göttingen	
1784	Christian Jacob Kraus in his "Letter of the 28 December" in Königsberg (?)	
1785	William Marsden: "Observation on the language of the people..." in London	
1785	Immanuel Kant: "Bestimmung des Begriffs einer Menschenrasse" in Königsberg	
1789	Peter S. Pallas: "Сравительный словарь..." in Sankt-Peterburg	

Accordingly, one should probably not consider that the 18th century (re)discovered the Rroms' Indian origin but that scholars merely began then,

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

after Rüdiger's, and especially Grellmann's publications, to treat seriously the Rroms' declarations about their origin; "an impression existed among them of their having come from that country (India)" to quote col. John Staples Harriott (see below 4.2.3).
Most probably (as it emerges from the recounting of their journeys and meetings in the early XVth century), the Rromani leaders knew pretty well the mainlines of European policy and some of them opted to disclose their real origin, whereas others preferred to stick to the Egyptian discourse, based actually on historical facts, but which had been distorted and wrongly interpreted – partly on purpose, as a strategy of integration to the Western narrative. In this respect, the question of the real "father" of the (re)discovery loses its relevance, since one has probably to do with the reaffirmation of a disregarded information, relegated to the rank of legend – one among many others, and emerging anew from among them due to a new academic context – as Farkas Bolyai said "When the time is ripe for certain things, they appear at different places in the manner of violets coming to light in early spring".
One should keep in mind that the way how people perceive history and geography is at least as much significant as the historical and geographic realities themselves; and accordingly it may impact substantially on this reality. This was the case of the Egyptian cover-story which obliterated the Indian origin.
The ideological prerequisite is that information from the source is never perceived by the West as reliable as when learned Europeans have "discovered" it (not only in the Rroms' case).

4.1.5) Alternative geographic proposals



Fig. 3

This conference is not the appropriate opportunity to discuss extra-Indian proposals of origin – one may just mention that in most cases they contain a glimpse of truth, yet falsely reinterpreted through the prevailing vision of the time, full of prejudices of different kinds (prejudices sometimes taken

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

over as self-defence strategy by some Rroms themselves). The most antiquated mistake which had an influence on the origin ascribed in the Middle Ages to the Rroms dates back more than one millennium and a half before their arrival in the Western sphere, namely when early Greek geographers believed India and Ethiopia were a single "black" continent, south of a presumed Prasodis sea. The idea of an Afro-Indian continuity relied on the fact that when moving southward on both continents, the climate was warmer and warmer, people darker and darker, and on both sides you had elephants. This naïve error led to call Ethiopia *India tertia* or *ultima* (and even Egypt *India ægypti*), and thus consecrated centuries later that an Egyptian identity could cover as well the Indian origin – which explains English word "Gypsy" to refer to the Rroms in Europe – as for the initial motivation for the Rroms' "Egyptian" identity, see below point j. Let us remind here a second element, namely that there is a group of probably real Egyptians in the Balkan (500.000 of them), but also in Asia Minor, what contributed to reinforce the mistake. The alleged Jewish origin is a separate issue in itself, to which we will come back later.

4.1.5) The global negation of an extra-European origin

4.1.5.1) in the past:

The affirmation that the Rroms are European "thieves, vagabonds and *sorners*" pretending to be refugees, mainly from Egypt, was broadly used all over Western and Northern Europe to disclaim any hospitality, kindness and sympathy toward them, allowing and justifying any kind of mistreatment upon them. We had definitely to do with an ideological option leading to racist conclusions. At the beginning of his chapter II "on the true fatherland of the Rroms", Agoston asks this important question: « Are the Bohemians really a people, and coming from which European countries ? » This question is quite relevant even in present-time politics (including the short-viewed second part « from which European countries? ») and this is why Rüdiger's statement of a « distinct nation » (see above point c) is so important. The doctrinal prerequisite is the mistrust to the Rroms.

4.1.5.2) currently:

The denial of the Rroms' extra-European origin, especially the Indian origin, is still vivid at present. Current reasons for it are slightly different than in the past and we will come back to this topic later. For the time being, I would like to show the table of the various options historically offered to account for the Rroms' origin, as a basis for further discussion (note that the number of assumptions is much higher, but most of them appeared only as hapax in the literature, they are totally forgotten and don't need to be mentioned here).

Indigenous Europeans	thieves, vagabonds and "sorners" (U.K.) counterfeit Egyptians		**Tab. 4**
Foreigners to Europe	unknown origin defined origin	from Atlantis, Caucasus, Summer etc. from Egypt, Ethiopia, Somali	

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

	with Alexander of Macedonia		
from India	from all over India	*Pariah*	
		ćaṇḍala (*dalit)	
	from one specific area	Rajasthan/Punjab (*Banʒara*, *Lohara*)	
		Madhyadeś	Kashmir **Kannauj**

Jewish origin

The underlying idea is the rejection of any link between despicable Rroms and such a sanctuary of culture as India.

4.2) The debate about the Rroms' area of origin within India

This is the second face of the issue and it is still a matter of fierce discussions – most of which could melt away as snow in the sun provided less consideration is devoted to empty and ignorance-based speculations and if a little more scrutiny is devoted to real information about Indian history and wider to Asian culture.

4.3) The Madhyadeś-Kannauj historical data and clue.

The first hint about the Rroms' origin from Kannauj emerged at the turn of the century, some 20 years ago from Abdelali Alami's PhD, in which he translated entirely into a modern language the Arabic original of al-'Utbi's Kitab al-Yamini devoted to the capture of Kannauj in 1018 by sultan Maḥmūd of Ghaznī, including the passage about Kannauʒ, which had been omitted by earlier scholars. Previous translations, as Reynolds' for example, based on a Persian version, had been limited to selected passages (with the exception of a German version by Nöldeke) and researchers in the Rromani field had no clue of this crucial event in Indian history, in so far Kannauj was then still a major economic, cultural, artistic and spiritual centre in India – albeit not any more its capital city.

I have devoted many pages to this episode of Indo-Rromani history (see bibliography) and I will not develop here again the whole story. I will just sketch its main lines:

4.3.1) In the VIIth century, emperor Harshavardhana made of the modest hamlet of Kannauj in Madhyadesh the capital city of his empire, namely almost all India, to the north of the Narmada river – so most of Indo-Aryan territories. It grew eventually as an outstanding economic, cultural, artistic and spiritual centre (cf. popular Indian expressions as "a Brahmin from Kannauj", or "to cry for Kannauj [= for the moon]").

4.3.2) At the turn of the XIth century, sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazni, in Zabulistan, carried out several raids to neighbouring Indian (Hindu Shahi) kingdoms in order to loot tangible riches and raise his mountain small city into an outstanding metropolis.

4.3.3) In 1010, Ferdowsī came for a visit to the court of Ghazni, in search of financial support (cf. below 4.6.7 and note 15) and he probably told Maḥmūd during their exchanges that human and spiritual riches can support

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

his intention much more than material goods, maybe pointing out at Kannauj, which he probably knew for its international fame and especially its *attars* (alcohol free perfumes); the court of Ghaznī possibly imported their own flagrances from there. Such an advice is very likely on behalf of such a visionary thinker, since he either directly or by implication offered Maḥmūd moral advice (at least five such cases are embodied in the Shah-Nameh). According to Marsh, Ferdowsī wrote then his famous chapter about Bahrām Gūr and the Lūrīs, putting the last touch to his immortal epic the same year.

4.3.4) Maḥmūd launched in 1014 his first raid to Kannauj but was repelled near Thaneśwar by the Indian coalition of 6 cities (Kalanjār, Delhi, Ajmir, Kannauj, Gwalior and Ujjain). In his second attempt as Firishta tells us, he "bade farewell to sleep and ease" and departed along with his valiant warriors (11,000 regulars and 20,000 volunteers) in September and reached Kannauj on the 20 of December 1018. r. According to Firishta, he there saw "a city which raised its head to the skies, ans which in strength and beauty might boast of being unrivalled" (ans. by Briggs (1827:57) and quoted by Rama Sh. Tripathy (1964). It was his first raid so deep eastward into India and this means he had a very powerful aim: probably plundering of an opulent city, but not only.

4.3.5) Instead of killing the population (as he used to do especially when the sovereign of the city had fled – and indeed king Rajapal had crossed the Gange to hide into the forest on the left bank), he deported from the city of Kannauj to Ghaznī all 53.000 inhabitants, bringing 16 carts full of wealth and jewels (to a value of thirty lakhs of dirhams of gold) as well as 385 elephants (he had also brought 200,000 captives earlier from Thaneśwar and Mathura, also in Kannauj kingdom, yet without specific skills). It should be emphasized here that no other deportation of so many captives from India to the west ever occurred; in addition this one corresponds geographically to the linguistic features of present-day Rromani.

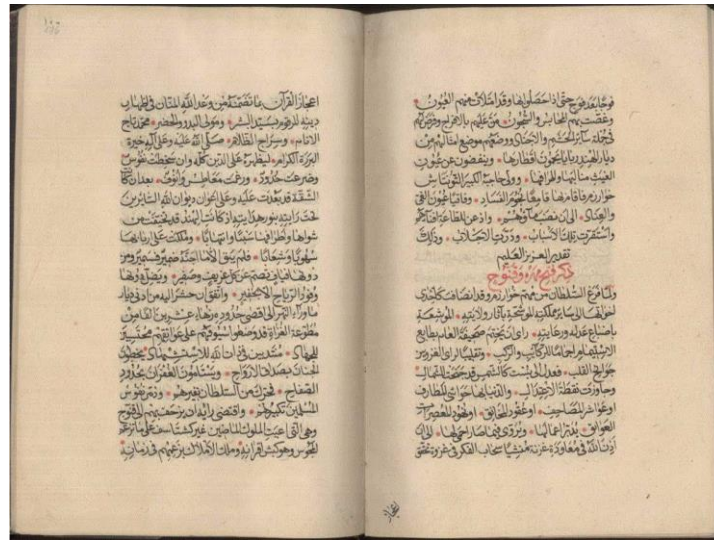
4.3.6) An anecdote in the Kitab al-Yamini tells that in search of oracle, he put his finger into the Ku'ran and when he lifted it, he could see the word futuh [فتوح], which in Arabic letters can be read also as Qannauj [قنوج] – what gave him the conviction that God was with him to capture of this city. In the city itself, the Indians concluded from the flight of the bees and the positions of the stars that they should not expect victory on their side – a prospect they could have deduced as well from the respective number of soldiers of the belligerents.

4.3.7) A few years later, he came again to the devastated city Kannauj but there was no more deportation.

4.3.8) In Ghaznī, he put his deportees to work. Only the architects achieved their duty, since they built for him the largest mosque of his time, but other artists could not comply with his requirements of Sunnite Muslim and he sold them to rich notables of Horassan, a rich region to the north of his sultanate.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

4.3.9) After Maḥmūd's death, and after a period of troubles and upheavals in Horassan under his son Ma'sud, entire tribes of Turks, led by the Seljuks and who had been roaming for decades behind the northern and eastern boarders, entered Horassan, joined the local Persian also Sunnite population and they defeated Masud in 1040 at the battle of Dandanakan. Ma'sud fled but was soon killed near Lahore.
4.3.10) After the terrible year of 1040 (war, drought, epidemies etc.), the Seljuks continued their march westward until they reached Bagdad in 1055 and there freed the caliph from the Buyid grip.
4.3.11) Due to mood swings among soldiers, mainly among Türkmens, who were anxious to loot, Alp Aslan with all Türks, Türkmens, Horassaniots and Indians, turned northwards to non-Muslim lands, where looting was lawful and even very well seen. They arrived at the foot of Caucasus and captured there first in 1064 Ani, the Armenian capital city, and in 1071 Manzikert, a small, but symbolically significant, fortress – an event abundantly recorded by the contemporaneous, among others the Armenian priest Aristakes Lastivertci (1002-1080), why mentions the arrival of wild Indians among the Saracens: "wicked peoples speaking foreign languages […] from the great river crossing northern India". The correspondence between elements drawn from Oriental sources and mentions in Western documents is obviously of the utmost importance.
4.3.12) Then we have the Jerusalem episode: it begins with the capture of the city in 1076 by Malik Shah and his troops (including probably a contingent of Indian gulams 'warriors') and ends with its capture in July 1099 by Crusaders, a span of time which disserves a special chapter of its own. In the meantime other Indians, with Turks and Horassaniots, were continuing their movement southwards, to Konya, and then westwards to the Balat area (now "Ægean region" – Ege bölgesi) and further.



Beginning of the chapter about the capture of Kannauj

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

4.3.13) In this history, it is interesting to point out that the Kitab al-Yamini is not the sole document bringing light on the exodus; in spite of the rampant denegation, there are more than one dozen other direct or indirect sources:

	TITLE	AUTHOR	
	EXSTANT CONTEMPORANEUS		
1.1	Kitābu 'l-Yamīnī [up to 1020]	Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Jabbāral-'Utbi	Ornate, verbose, sketchy, scanty in facts
1.2	Kitāb-i-Yamīnī	Abū'š-Šaraf Nāṣir al-Ʒurbāðqānī (between 1186 and 1206)	Rather an adaptation than a translation
1.3	Zainu' l-Axbar [up to middle of 11th century] (named after Maḥmūd's son)	Abū Sa'īd 'Abdu'l-Ħayy b. aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Maḥmūd al-Gardēzī	History of Iran; omission, sketchy, colorless but treats in full period of Maḥmūd and precise in assigning dates to recorded events. One copy in King's College Cambridge (No. 213) Copy of copy Bodleian Library (No. 240)
1.4	Taḥqīq mā li'l-Hind (Investigation what is India)	Abū Raiḥān Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Birūnī (973-1048)	
1.5	Ta'rīx-i-Mas'ūdī >> Bab-i-Mas'ūdi	Abū' l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ħuṣain Baihaqi	Court life, intrigues, rivalty + lost history of Xwarizm by al-Birūnī
	LATER		
2.1	Siyāsat Nāmah (1091/2)	Abū 'Alī Ħasan b. 'Alī (= Nizāmu'l-Mulk, wazir of Seljuk Sulṭān Malik Šāh)	Anecdotes about SM, not historical, but excellent about his system of administration (cf.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

			Bartold p. 25)
2.2	Ujmalu't-Tawārīx (1135)	???	Some references and quotations
2.3	Rājataraŋginī (1150)	Kalhana	
2.4	Čahār Maqāla (1157) [four speeches] Old name: Majma 'al-nawāder	Abū'l-Ħasan Nizāmu'd Din Aħmad b. 'Umar b. 'Alī an-Nizāmī al-'Arūḍī as-Samarqandī	Relationships Maħmūd/al-Birūnī & Firdawsī
2.5	Al-Muntazam fī Tawārīxi'l-Mulūk wa'l-Umam (cc. 1200) the system in the history of kings and nations	Abū'l-Faraj 'Abdu'r-Raħmān b. 'Alī Ibnu'l-Jawzī al-Bakrī (1116-1201)	Quotations from Dhail & SM's letters of victory
2.6	Axbāru'd-Duwali'l-Munqaṭi'a (beg. 1200)	Jamālu'd-Dīn Abū'l-Ħasan 'Alī b. Abi'l-Manṣur Zāfir b. al-Husain b. Ghāzī al-Ħalabī al-Azdī	Some references + Somnāth letter of victory
2.6	Zahiriddin Naṣr Muhammad 'Aufi	Jawāmi ul-Hikāyāt wa Lawāmi ul-Riwāyāt	Battles of Maḥmūd (Yedeh stone)
2.7	Ta'rīx-e-Tabarestān (1216/17)	Ibn ESfandīār	SM & Firdowsi's account
2.8	Jawāmi'u'l-Ħikāyāt (1228)	Nūru'd-Din Muħammad 'Awfī	Anecdotes (some from Baihaqī)
2.9	Lubābu'l-Albāb (1228)		Poetical anthology / biogr. of poets
2.10	Ādābu'l-Mulūk wa Kifāyatu'l-Mamlūl	Muħammad b. Manṣur b. Sa'īd b. Abū'l-Faraj al-Quraišī (= Faxr-i-Mudīr)	Treatise on the art of war (< Mujalladāt)
2.11	Al-Kāmil fi't-Ta'rīx (1230)	Abū'l-Ħasan 'Alī b. 'Abdu'l-Karam Muħammad b. Muħammad b. 'Abdu'l-Karīm b. 'Abdu'l-Wajhhāb aš-Šaibānī (= Ibnu'l-Karīm)	Very authentic and trustworthy about SM (< Dhail, Kitābu'l-Yasmīnī & Mašāribu't-Tajārib)
2.12	Mir'ātu'z-Zamān fī	Abū'l-Muzaffar	Some letters of

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

	Tawārīxi'l A'yān (cc. 1260)	Yūsuf b. Qizughlī (= Sibṭ Ibnu'l-Jawzī)	victory
2.13	Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī - shāmil-i bīst-u-yak ṭabaqah az jumlah-'i bīst-u-sih ṭabaqah (1259)	Abū 'Umar Minhāju'd-Dīn 'Uthmān b. Sirāju'd-Dīn Jūzjāni	Some references to the relationship SM/Seljuks
2.14	Djāmi al-Tawarīx (1303-1316)	Rašīd aḍ-Ḍīn Faḍlu'llāh (1247-1318)	Edinburgh Univ. Library dikh Stillman 1986:6-7 Marsh p. 149
2.15	Ta'rīx-i-Guzīda (1329)	Ḥamdu'llāh b. Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Mustawfī	Useless
2.16	Zafar Nāmah (1329)		Tries to continue Šah-nameh
2.17	Majma'u'l-Ansāb (1332)	Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Alī b. aš-Šaix Muḥammad b. Ḥusain b. Abū Bakr	Connected story of SM's predecessors + full text of Pand-Nāmah (BN Paris, suppl. persan 1278)
2.18	Kitābu'l-'Ibar (1397)	'Abdu'r-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Xaldūn (= Ibn Xaldūn) (1332-1382)	
2.19	Āthāru'l-Wuzarā (cc. 1460)	Saifu'd-Dīn Ḥājjī b. Nizām al-Faḍlī	Biogr. Viziers; long quotation from Maqāmat [0.4] Useful information
2.20	Mujmal-i-Faṣīḥī (cc. 1460)	Faṣīḥu'd-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad (= Faṣīḥī al-Xwāfī)	Some quotations as above
	MUCH LATER		
3.1	Rawḍatu'ṣ-Ṣafā (cc. 1500)	Muḥammad b. Xwānd Šāh b. Maḥmūd (= Mīr-Xwānd)	< Jurbādhqānī
3.2	Xulāṣatu't-Tawārīx ???	Ghiyāthu'd-Dīn b. Humāmu'd-Dīn (= Xwānd-Amīr)	Based on Rawḍatu'ṣ-Ṣafā
3.3	Ḥabību's-Siyar		
3.4	Ta'rīx-i-Alfī (1585)	Mullā Aḥmad Thatawī & Āṣaf Xān	Chronology
3.5	Ṭabaqāt-i-Akbar¯ (cc. 1600)	Nizāmu'd-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Muqīm	< Zainu'l-Axbar

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

		al-Harawī	
3.6	Gulšan-i-Ibrāhīmī [= "Ta'rīx-i-Firišta"] (1606)	Muḥammad Qāsim Hindū Šāh (= Firišta)	Detailed account of SM's expeditions
3.7	Mir'āt-i-Mas'ūdī (1611)	'Abdu'r-Raḥmān Xišti	About SM's nephew Sālār Mas'ūd-i-Ghāzī
3.8	Xulāṣatu't-Tawārīx ???	Sujān Rāy	Ornate abridgment of Rawḍatu'ṣ-Ṣafā Firišta
3.9	Kitāb mu'jam al-buldān (	Yāqūt ibn-'Abdullah al-Rūmī al-Hamawī (1179-1229)	Dictionary of countries
3.10	Mu'jam al-udabā (1226)		Dictionary of writers
3.11	Iršād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adib		Dictionary of learned men
	SYRIAC		
4.1	Maktbānūt zabnē (Chronicle)	Michael the Syrian	Paris, 1905 mainly Chapters XIV & XV; new edition by Çiçek
4.2	Anonymous Chronicle to AD 1234	Anonymous from Edessa	
4.3	Maktbānūt zabnē /Chronicon syriacum	Bar 'Ebroyo (Gregory Abū'l-Faraj b. Ħārūn)	Paris, 1890 by Paul Bedjan
	ARMENIAN		
5.1	Matenagrowt'yan banasirakan k'nnowt'yown (The misfortunes of the Armenian nation)	Aristakes Lastiverc'i	
5.2	Zhamanakagrutyun (Chronography)	Mattheos Urhaetsi (of Edessa)	

4.4) The allegation of an origin from all over India

Before the discovery of the Kitab al-Yamini and the passage devoted to the capture of Kannauj and its logical concatenation with later testimonies and events on the road to Asia Minor, various allegations were produced, mirroring often some ideological prerequisites – it is more surprising that they are still defended by some authors despite their lack of evidences. The

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

allegation of an origin from all over India, albeit already dating, is for example still encountered in many media and even books and school publications for children. It is based on the external appearance of poor people in India and the stereotype of poor Rroms, as brought from the U.K. by British colonialists. Since Rroms are Indians, simple-minded (and in particular contemptuous, not to say racist) Britons have equated them with Indian destitute and outcasts, without any other hint than an apparent similarity, which could have worked with any other poor population in the world. This error was reinforced decade after decade by the British petty civil servants in India and their housewives, who had no clue and no concern about both poor Indians and poor Rroms – but had political and administrative interest in bringing their views to India. In addition, it is usually connected with another major mistake, namely that the Rroms' ancestors left India due to severe poverty and/or ill treatment. Such a belief demonstrates only ignorance in Indian history: on the one side India and all its population were immensely rich at least up the time of the Rroms' migration. This blatant anachronism is based on the much later experience of India under British rule and a kind of auto-goal into the theory itself. On the other side, it doesn't take on account the *kalā pani* taboo which threatens any Hindu believer of exclusion from the cycles of transmigration (*saṁsara*) if s/he moves beyond the waters delimiting the *sapta sindhu* area. This taboo was already described by Albiruni in the XIth century[6] and remained in force well into the 20th century, as evidenced among others by the two huge silver urns, which Sawai Madho Singh II, Maharaja of Jaipur, ordered for his trip to the U.K. in 1902 to king Edward's coronation and which he brought with himself during all the journey, full with water of the Ganges in order to ensure him the continuity of reincarnation in case of death beyond the *kalā pani*. Smaller urns were taken with by Indians migration to Mauritius and South Africa.

It is clear that under such conditions no Indian would have left an opulent fatherland in search of a "better" life in actually poorer countries, at risk of losing his/her soul, except if forced to do so. This eliminates all assumptions of economical emigration. In the comments after my presentation, one could hear among others the following objection: "We know nothing: perhaps these people (Proto-Rroms) spent 300 years in one place, then 500 years in another place, perhaps 400 years elsewhere, before they left India for an unknown reason[7]". Such ungrounded statements are detrimental to establishment of knowledge, since they rely on no sources (even when they claim historical records, these are never named) and, under the guise of scientific caution ("perhaps", "unknown reason"), they just create confusion and despondency.

The ideological prerequisites are here the observers' incapacity to think of the Rroms as one people, the prevailing view of various tribes moving with

6 Kitāb fi tahqiq mā li'l Hind, Chapter LXXI.

7 Suggested by a primary school teacher from a Balkan country.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

no reason in all directions and in successive waves, the ignorance of the real economical riches of ancient India and the lack of information about the *kalā pani* taboo. Three further misunderstandings are closely connected with these errors.

4.4.1) The "pariah" misunderstanding

Most European people (and now many Indian people as well, in the wake of the British fashion) use the word "pariah" without any clear idea of its real meaning and value(s) – and even of its area of use or place of origin. In fact this word had been borrowed from Tamil by British civil servants and their housewives, who gave it a slightly different meaning than in its genuine language of origin. "Pariah" came back to India as an English word, quite far from its value in Tamil. In addition, the semantic alteration of this word got tangled with the hotchpotch made by the Britons (of both sex) between *castes* (initially a Portuguese concept imported from Brazil), *varṇa* and *jatti* – a series of cascading misunderstandings which could be the subject of an entire study. This is a problem not only in terms of misinterpretation of Rromani history, but also for the image of India itself in the world, because this subject is a favourite support for prejudices in foreign literature and movies – however this is not our subject here. The prerequisite here is simple disparaging ignorance about Indian culture and society.

4.4.2) The "untouchable" misunderstanding

Another naive error is the mistake between "untouchable", a British label of various socially low groups in India, and the Greek term Αθίγγανος "litt. "untouched" – used in Asia Minor but which means exactly the opposite: it was initially the name of a mainly Armenian Manichean sect in N.W. Anatolia, and meant "pure, free of contact, unstained, immune". In spite of its absurdity, the confusion of this concept with the Indian notion of 'intangibility' is still broadly conveyed, especially by charity publications, by using a mediaeval Greek label to justify deceitfully a totally unrelated Indian situation.

The link between these two opposite notions is a good example of theories circulated by poorly informed people. Recently, Lucian Cherata asked in a publication: "Is it a simple coincidence or did the word *athinganoi* in mediaeval Greek have an affinity with 'intangibility' in the Indian sense?" and gave a positive answer, just because he doesn't know that the word Αθίγγανος appeared more than 400 years before the arrival of the Rroms in Asia Minor, those allegedly "untouchable" Indians (Cherata knows one unique mention of this word from 1030 A.D. in Georgian at Athos monastery, not earlier occurrences) – an arrival which could not have occured earlier, as evidenced by Ian Hancock on the base of linguistic facts.

Let us remind here that the connexion Rroms-untouchables was first launched, out of vague superficial similarities, by the famous plagiarist Heinrich Grellmann, the same who claimed that, in doing his research among Rroms, he felt "a clear repugnancy, like a biologist dissecting some

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

nauseating, crawling thing in the interest of science" (quoted after Ian Hancock). It is amazing to observe that such a notorious racist has been taken as a serious reference through almost 2 centuries and a half, precisely because his contempt toward the Rroms mirrored, and conversely delighted, the European mainstream feelings about this people. Grellmann managed to root in a sustainable way the link between Rroms and untouchables, who supposedly fled India in mass – in an unknown period and for unknown reasons. This affirmation, sloppily fabricated by the German opportunist, was used later as an argument by nazists to deny the Rroms' Indo-Aryan identity and justify the Samudaripen, the nazi genocide of the Rroms, which sent to death over 500.000 Rromani victims and to all kinds of sufferings two or three times more of them. The prerequisite here is not only simple ignorance about both Indian and Byzantine culture and society, but a choice to deny dignity to the Rroms as a people,

4.4.3) The "gypsy" (with low case "g"[8]) misunderstanding

The British occupation brought to India cricket, five o'clock and the 'gypsies' – creating a new concept which developed among others into "scheduled castes and tribes"[9] etc. This topic could also be devoted a whole historical study – which I outlined years ago in *Studia romologica* (V, Tarnów) but this is not our subject here. It is nevertheless indispensable to emphasize that there was never any connection between Indian groups labelled 'gypsies' by the Britons and any Rromani group. Any link is a fabrication, coined out for some defined purpose in politics or fake humanitarian aid, as carried out by the sectarian church "Life and light" in Dekkan. There are in India people called 'gypsies' by Britons since the XIXth century but once again any link between them and the Rroms could arise only from ignorance, misunderstanding or bad faith. The denial of such a link dates back at least to 1922, under Grierson's authoritative pen[10]. It was confirmed by the outstanding Indian research in linguistics, Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji (Calcutta University), who wrote in a letter to French diplomat Frédéric Max: "The wandering groups of people in India who are for want of a suitable term called 'Gypsies' in English, are – with the exception of a group from Persia[11] – all Indians, some of them speaking Aryan languages, others Dravidian. These Indian (and Persian) 'Gypsies' are quite different from the Romani people of Europe"[12]. He denies further their Aryan dialects to be "specifically connected with the group to which

8 The Indian spelling of this word requires a low case "g". I am criticised often by people uninformed of this Indian spelling rule, just because I respect it.

9 Cf. the issue about *criminal tribes and castes* and *scheduled castes and tribes* (in which the hereditary aspect was exaggerated and therefore misrepresented by colonial sources), but also *denotified and nomadic tribes* (over 60 millions today in India).

10 "Linguistic Survey of India", vol. XI.

11 Probably the Laman Banjara, who according to J.J. Roy Burman originate from Afghanistan.

12 Published in JGLS Notes and Queries, Vol. 44, N° 1/2, "The so-called 'Gypsies' of India 1965, r. 71-74

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

belongs the source-speech of the European Romani dialects". The driving agenda is here the preference in listening to declarations by superficial, racist and poorly educated British civil servants of the XIXth century than to other, more modern and neutral, sources of knowledge. In this respect, the outstanding British scholar in the Rromani field, Sir Angus Fraser, pointed out judiciously already 25 years ago: "Too often the assumption has been made, in looking for traces of the Rroms, that any reference to a migrant group pursuing a Gypsy-like occupation can for that reason be equated with them…" (1992: 35).

4.4.4) The constantly-recurring story of an exodus in several waves

The allegation of a spatially (geographically) dispersed origin has its temporal equivalent: an exodus allegedly in several waves. Apart from the mere fact that there is absolutely no hint of such a fragmented exodus, the simple analysis of the Indian element of the Rromani language shows a striking uniformity of its Indian element throughout all its vernacular varieties. Indian elements of lexicon or grammar may have been forgotten here and there but all those which are still currently present in the language follow a unique common compact pattern, irrespectively of the place it is spoken. In addition, the Persian, Armenian, Georgian and Anatolian Greek elements (except those forgotten) are also common to all vernaculars. Real differences begin with influences of European languages – a phenomenon which is compatible only with an exodus in a short span of time and from a comparatively small area of origin.

As in 4.4, the conceptual prerequisite in behind is an incapability for many persons to admit the existence of the Rroms as one historical and ethnic-linguistic group and to give up the constantly-recurring vision of this people as various tribes moving aimlessly in all directions and in separate waves.

4.5) A recent imputation of the Rroms' exodus to Alexander of Macedonia

The ever-renewing fecundity of human imagination has recently produced a new fable, with eventual offshoots: starting probably of the assumption that the Rroms' exodus took place in the 4th or 3rd century B.C. (thus relying on an erroneous interpretation of a phonetic change in Rromani – see below 4.7), the Rroms' exodus was ascribed to Alexander of Macedonia's campaign in the Indus plain (326-324 B.C.). This connection was authored by Konrad Bercovici: "The deeper I delve into the matter, the more am I inclined to the idea that the first great exodus of the Gypsies from India happened at the time of Alexander the Great's invasion of that country. It matters not whether they were driven out and fell into his hands or joined him willingly" (1928:42). To be fair with this ill-fated Romanian novelist and pianist, he didn't disposed one hundred years ago the elements mentioned in the introduction to the present contribution – but be it as it may, "whether they were driven out or joined him willingly" [as he wrote] does matter in *history* – albeit not so much in a *story* as his book was titled. The connection with Alexander of Macedonia was accepted later by the American linguist Terrence Kaufmann (a specialist of Amerindian

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

languages in contact), who insists on an early exodus of the Rroms and even writes: "I am getting bored with hearing again and again the speculations that the Gypsies may have left India at such a late date" (i.e. after 700 A.D.) In fact he considers that the lack of Arabic loanwords indicates that the Rroms went through Iran and left again the country before 700 A.D. The only problem here is that Mr Kaufmann ignores that Persian authorities did promote Persian language and culture against Arabization: the Samanids of the end of the Xth century declared that "here, in this region, the language is Persian, and the kings of this realm are Persian kings" (Mansur ibn Nuh). On the other side, as evidenced by Ian Hancock (see above 1.2), any Rromani exodus contemporaneous to Alexander's withdrawal from India would be an anachronism on linguistic grounds. In addition none of the Greek authors of antiquity (Megasthenes, Strabo, Arrian, Diodores of Sicily, Justin, Plutarque or the later Roman compilers Quintus Curtius Rufus and Plinius) ever mentioned any migration of Indian craftsmen to Europe or even any "admiration" on Alexander's behalf toward such craftsmen. Prisoners after battles are mentioned but no mention of craftsmen or sending of any contingent to Europe is ever mentioned. In addition, Alexander died in Babylonia, very far from Europe and his army was dispersed, leaving no basis to believe that any prisoners, being highly qualified craftsmen, could have been led to Europe in such a number as giving descent to a whole distinct population, to be called later "Rroms"… However, this fable was taken over by Macedonian authorities in search of Alexandrian legitimacy (the so-called "good treatment" of the Rromani minority in Macedonia is a part of the local political showcase and any attempt to link them to Alexander is welcome) and manipulated further in the Kosova context in order to declare that Balkano-Egyptians are allegedly Indians who came to Europe with Alexander, whereas Rroms would be a later migration, which came in the Middle Ages. One may encounter on-line sub-products of this fable, including affirmations like "Alexander the Great tried to civilize the gypsies, ultimately realizing it was impossible" or questions of the type "Was Alexander the Great a Gypsy?"

The connexion with the Macedonian conqueror has various ideological prerequisites, all of which may exist only provided the chronological linguistic data (cf. 1.2) are disregarded. In Bercovici's statement, there is probably no specific doctrine, and Kaufmann's position is probably also free of ideology – but not of historical and linguistic ignorance, or more precisely of excessive confidence to Turner's conclusions (see below 4.7). It is true that Bercovici mentions also other assumptions, deprived unfortunately as well of any ground and eventually abandoned by researchers – after all he was a novelist and a musician, not a historian. In the case of some Macedonian Rroms evoking without any concrete source "numerous Greek authors who report that Alexander was so impressed by the quality of Indian smiths that he brought back with him thousands of them to Greece" – we have to do with cheap double (Macedonian and Rromani) nationalism, in addition to ignorance. As for the interpretation of

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

the Balkano-Egyptians being a first Rromani migration from India, it disregards all studies carried so far about these Egyptians – in fact, genuine bearers of the name "Gypsies (< Egyptians)[13]", and resumes the old racist amalgam between them and the Rroms – an amalgam which arose decades ago in administrative milieus, while the simple population, brought up as neighbours of both groups, was (and is still broadly) capable to differentiate them. The doctrine here in the background is the refusal to distinguish two totally different populations, only due to some uninformed suit-and-tie men who merge both under the common name of "Gypsies", out of ignorance entailed by scorn – as if their error should prevail upon reality. We have to do here with unconditional obedience to the mainstream discourse, as dictated by those who do not want to upgrade their view of the society and stick to the confusion between these two different people.

4.6) The evergreen legend ascribed to Ferdowsī (Abu'l Qasim Ferdowsī – 940-1020)

4.6.1) In spite of its improbabilities and inconsistencies, this legend has become practically ubiquitous in so-called Rromani scholarship, featuring in almost every monograph, article and web-site devoted to the Rroms. It is still a common place narrative, although it has been deconstructed with great insight by Adrian Marsh and the subject would be worth being developed here, since it is a brilliant model of analysis, which could be used in many other fieds. The fable goes as follows:

the Persian shah Bahram Gur allegedly asked his father-in-law, the Indian king Šankal (or Šangūl, Šengil): "O thou helpful king! Choose for and send to me ten thousand Luris, men and women, skilful in playing upon the lute." […]

When the Luris arrived [in Persia], the king ordered to admit them to him; he gave each an ox and an ass, because he wanted to make them husbandmen; he ordered his tax collectors to bestow them also a thousand asses' loads of wheat, because they had to cultivate the land with their oxen and their donkeys, use wheat for seed and produce crops, and besides make music for the poor and grant them this service for free. The Luris departed and ate the oxen and wheat, and they came toward the end of the year, with pallid cheeks; the king said unto them: "You should not have dispelled seeds, wheat grass and harvest. Now your asses yet remain, so load them with your chattels, prepare your lutes and put silk chords on them.

Still today the Luris, according to the king's wise words, are roaming the world, seeking their life by their wits, dwelling with dogs and wolves and always stealing on the road by day and by night (our translation).

13 According to the most recent researches, this population – approximately 600.000 persons mainly in Balkan countries, descent of Christians, all males, who fled Egypt in the 4th century due to emperor Diocletian's so-called "Great Persecution", aiming at restoring the Roman pantheon and religion in Egypt.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

4.6.2) At first sight, this amazing narrative seems to provide a plausible answer to the old question of the Rroms' origin. Yet, there is much to say about this text, embedded at the end of chapter XXXV (Bahrām Gūr's life) in the 6th book of Ferdowsī's masterpiece "Book of Kings" (Shah-Nameh). One puzzling point is that Kannauj is repeatedly mentioned in the book as the capital city of India, seat of prestigious king Šankal. However, in Bahrām Gūr's time, Kannauj was still an insignificant village, whereas the capital city of India was still Pataliputra (today Patna) or perhaps already Ujjain, former capital of the Shaka dynasty. On the contrary, in Maḥmūd and Ferdowsī's times, namely XIth century, it was an important urban centre, renowned for its culture, arts, spirituality and perfumes; the latter (attars) were widely exported and possibly used at the very court of Ghazni. The status of Kannauj had indeed changed radically in early VIIth century, when after an amazing series of events, emperor Harsha of Thaneśwar set there the capital city of Northern India. The medieval scholar Al-Biruni (973-1050 – thus contemporaneous to Maḥmūd and Ferdowsī) considered Kannauj as one of the three major cities of India. Accordingly we are facing here an anachronism. Another confusing point is that the Indian king Šankal's appears not only in this anecdote but over 50 times in the Shah-Nameh, with many political and psychological interactions with Bahrām Gūr[14], allegedly his father-in-law, in the context of a real treaty of political morals. The fable with the Lūrī is only one part of this discourse. Yet, beside the Shah-Nameh (and perhaps Hamza and Dakika's books – which I could not find and consult; in fact they are reputed to tell in a shorter form the same anecdote), there is no mention of any Šankal, Šangūl or Šengil king of India in other sources and furthermore there is no reason to equate him to Kumaragupta I, the monarch of India in the period 415-455 (Šangūl is in fact an… Ethiopian name). This would confirm the *ad hoc* character of this narrative, for the reasons explained below (4.6.7). Marsh is accordingly right to refute Marushyakova and Popov's statement that "the events described, although told in a semi-legendary fashion, and in much later times, are rooted in historical fact" (2001: 11).

4.6.3) The linguistic argument dismisses also such an early date for the Shah-Nameh's, because the changes embedded in the Rromani language occurred by the end of the first millennium of our era, 500 years after Bahrām Gūr's reign, and any earlier exodus is simply not tenable (see above 1.2 for Ian Hancock's demonstration).

4.6.4) In fact, the Shah-Nameh has as a rule always been viewed rather as an allegorical epopee, than a precise book of historical records. In this respect it follows the then fashionable pattern of writing stories to teach princes and rulers equity, courage and other virtues. For example the

14 Strangely enough, in the XVIIIth century illustrations to Shah-Nameh, the Indian king Šankal is represented as a white person, while the Persian Shahanshah Bahrām Gūr is resolutely swarthy (mss Walter 603 fol. 184b).

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

chapter about Alexander of Macedonia has very little in common with the real history: the ambitious conqueror is represented as wise scholar who had travelled beyond the limits of the world and spoken with the tree bearing human heads as fruits (the waq-waq tree)… As Zia-Ebrahimi points out (2016:73), "Ferdowsi's work accounts for the mythological dynasties of the Pishdadids and the Kayanids while ignoring all the historically attested Achæmenids and only cursory mentioning the Parthians. Even the 'historical' Sasanian section is populated with fabled heroes and witness to extraordinary events". The pages at issue aim in fact at illustrating the king's condemnation for parasitism and social injustice, since they are introduced as follows: "if one of my servants, were he my father himself, demands for a land [he has not cultivated] even a single penny, I'll bury him alive wherever he is, and cursed be his home, cursed his house!" Accordingly there is no reason to treat exceptionally the paragraph devoted to Lūrī musicians in a different way, namely as a historical source.

4.6.5) One passage confirms especially well the fictitious nature of the whole story, namely the Lūrī musicians were supposed to "work every morning in agriculture and work again every evening as artists, and this for free". This is acceptable in a tale or a fable, but forcible double employment is not compatible with real life.

4.6.6) Another unrealistic point is to believe that 12,000 persons, dispersed all over Persia in villages, could all gather again after one year, leave Persia and give birth to an entire nation of millions, even centuries later.

4.6.7) Marsh analyses the Shah-Nameh anecdote with Lūrīs as an *ad hoc* "panegyric courtly composition" (2008:85) lacking any concern of veracity, a text following the familiar Persian pattern of beneficence on the part of the monarch, but I would go much further, beyond the rhetorical *captatio benevoletiæ*, since money and even life were at stake for Ferdowsī, who even dedicated the book to sultan Maḥmūd, a Sunni king, despite his own overt adhesion to Shīʿīsm. The epic and moral poet came to Maḥmūd's in search of a substantial reward for his Shah-Nameh – in a time when there was an "army of poets and panegyrists" (some 300) at this court, generously paid and organized in a military hierarchy (with officers' ranks etc.). He initially asked for one golden coin (*ašrasi* – equal to 15 or 16 silver rupees) for each of his 120,000 verses (two for each *beit* or distich)[15] but the sultan's response was quite fierce, due to the uncomfortable position he was set in by the poet: he condemned the latter to death, by having his head crushed by an elephant – only the executioner's intervention, who told the sultan that

[15] Firdowsī had been penniless all his life and the poet's hopes of a monetary reward from Maḥmūd must be considered a pivotal reason for his praise of the sultan, a praise to be considered "an entirely calculated gesture, forced on the poet by his poverty" (Nöldeke 1920:34, see also Eslāmī Nadūšan quoted in *Enc. Iranica* "Ferdowsi"). In fact he was quickly desappointed and his praise turned after his escape from the Ghaznī jail into mordant satire. Be it as it may, even in the 250 verses of praise to Maḥmūd, some of which being very hyperbolic, one can never find the accents of sincerity which are visible when he celebrates some other, even lesser, patrons (*ibidem*).

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

Ferdowsī's fate should be let to God, due to his age (he was over 75 at the time), saved him from a horrible death. He could flee at dark night through the door of the jail, opened to this end – and with Maḥmūd's miserly reward. The reason invoked for this condemnation was not directly, as often suggested, the mere fact that Ferdowsī was a Shīʿī and Maḥmūd a Sunni, in so far his main vizier himself, Abu'l Abbas al-Isfarayani (994-1010), was a Shīʿī as well[16]. The real motivation was – beyond Maḥmūd's legendary avarice, that the Shah-Nameh was an overt praise of Persian pre-Islamic dynasties, an initiative deemed dangerous by Maḥmūd for his authority, especially as a Sunni sultan. In fact Ferdowsī was depicting the former monarchs (including Bahrām Gūr) in terms matching perfectly to Islamic hagiology – relying on the idea that the saints of the past may be considered as Muslims, provided they acted as such. At this point (2008:100sq [2.5]) Marsh goes even further in his analysis of Ferdowsī's strategy: his

"*unequivocal praise for Maḥmūd and his descriptions of Bahrām are intended as a reflection of the characters of each, and an exemplar of the princely qualities embodied by both monarchs […]. The cycle of events that leads to this episode demonstrates the duplicity of the Indian princes through the characterisation of Shangūl […] portrayed as deceitful and cunning, intending upon bringing Bahrām to destruction […] Firdawsī does not fail to point out the Indian remains "an idolater", whilst Bahrām is "a worshipper of God*[17]*" […], this is clearly intended to draw attention to the Shāh's similarity to the Sultān. In this, the contrast is drawn with the inferiority of the non-Persians, in their claims to majesty, their dealings with monarchs, and their bravery and prowess. […] Like earlier episodes in Iranian history, the Ghaznāvids had secured their position over their previous Samānīd masters through these qualities, and thus had every claim to be considered shāhanshāh*".

Marsh's analysis deserves a careful reading and his method could be used with profit in other cases to interpret texts of this kind. The whole fable may be therefore seen as a political, more than courtly, panegyric to justify the praise of pre-Islamic dynasties and soften up the sultan. This is probably the reason why Maḥmūd gave up Ferdowsī's death penalty – releasing the poet, who could write shortly after that infuriated verses against him. As stated above, the reality was much more complicated than the alleged acquisition by Persia of a handful of musicians and dancers.

4.6.8) If we look for similar events in Persian history, we find a paragraph in Sir John Malcolm's History of Persia (1815:117), telling the following:

[16] In fact, Ferdowsī never hid his belonging to Shīʿīsm, but on the contrary used to solemnly and blatantly declare his adherence to this branch of Islam – although its rules authorised its believers to hide their affiliation (practice of *taqiyyeh*) – see Reza Zia-Ebrahim *ibidem*.

[17] Indeed, Bahrām is presented in the long and actionpacked chapter devoted to him as a monotheist – in obvious contradiction with the reality of a Sassanian emperor.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

"*Under this sovereign (Bahrām Gūr's, called Baharam), whose reign spread joy, minstrels and musicians were introduced into Persia. Baharam, we are told* [he is quoting the book "Zeenut-ul-Tuarikh"], *observed a merry troop of his subjects dancing without music: he inquired the cause: 'We have sent every where, and offered, said one of them, a hundred pieces of gold for a musician, but in vain'. The king sent to India for musicians and singers; and twelve thousand were encouraged by his munificence to enter his dominions*".

The story is much shorter and doesn't encompass the part with the distribution of cattle and wheat nor the final curse by the king, resulting in endless roaming for the musicians. So if we follow the demonstration above, the first part could have been the basis of the story: possibly introduction or, better, multiplication of musicians [cf. "there were, no doubt, always a few of this class in Persian: since the days of Baharam they have abounded" (note t, p. 117), and the second part – as well as the mention of Kannauj – Firdowsī's personal addition for a concrete purpose, which we cannot presently fully understand.

4.6.9) At this point, one is untitled to ask about the genesis of the link between Rroms and the Shah-Nameh. As a matter of fact, the Persian master-piece was translated into English by Turner Macan in Calcutta a published there in 1829. At the end of the same year, on the 5 Dec. colonel John Staples Harriott of the Bengal Infantry read a communication at the Asiatic Society monthly meeting, probably in Calcutta, in which he was proposing a connection between a tribe of "Belochistan […] called *Luri*[18], a corruption of *Luli*, or rather *vice versá*", the Lūris of the Shah-Nameh, and "a race of vagrant men, called […] Gypseys" he had met ten years earlier in North Hampshire. To substantiate his proposal, he quotes extensively (yet not in a pristine version) the Persian text of the aforementioned passage of the Shah-Nameh, with his English translation. Although he quotes Girolamo Fiocchi (from Forlì)'s reference to India (see above 1.4.1) and Münster (*ibid*. but erroneously read), he is proud of a note sent to him by the Governor of Bombay and telling: "You are, I believe, the first who has traced them home to India through Persia and Kabul" (1830:531) – so half a century after the famous quarrel of 1776-1783, there was still one more candidate to the beforehand paternity for the discovery of the Rroms' Indian origin.

4.6.10) It seems then that the following features: musical virtuosity ("silken bows", "singing for the amusement of the high and of the low"), heedlessness, reluctance to agriculture and laziness, irresponsibility, erratic life, "thieving by day and by night" and happy acceptance of such a fate ("agreeably to this mandate" 1830:528), as described in the English version, reminded Col. Harriott of the North Hampshire Rroms, or more exactly of

18 Note however that the Lūrīs are anthropologically a branch of the Kurdish nation and they speak a Kurdish dialect; they are not to be found in Balochistan.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

the clichés conveyed about them for centuries in Europe and this lead him to conclude that the origin of this people is evidenced by the Shah-Nameh anecdote.

4.6.11) This first connection enjoyed soon great popularity, because it matched perfectly to the cliché the British mainstream had of the Rroms, or rather the "Gypseys", to such extend that in 1915, the brothers Arthur & Edmond Warner rewrote in English verses James Atkinson's prosaic translation of the Shah-Nameh, using the word Gypsy instead of Lūrīs:

The Sháh […] a camel-post to king Shangul
To say thus: "O thou monarch good at need!
Select ten thousand of the Gipsy-tribe,
Both male and female, skilful on the harp,
[…]
... he raised his head in pride
O'er Saturn's orbit and made choice of Gipsies,
[…]
The Gipsies went and ate the wheat and oxen,
[…] And so the Gipsies now,
According to Bahrám's just ordinance,
Live by their wits; they have for company
The dog and wolf, and tramp unceasingly.

This literary trick[19] was seemingly done not just for aesthetic or romantic reasons but most probably first of all because the legend corresponded to the British clichés about "Gypseys" (and now we need lots of pages to deconstruct this so lightly imagined myth).

4.6.12) Is there anything to retain from Bahrām Gūr's anecdote? Probably yes, in spite of all the additions done on purpose by Ferdowsī, who wanted to please to sultan Maḥmūd for his own aims – in the context of their amazing love-hate relationship. The whole real story seems to be embedded in the short record in the Zinut-ul-Tuarikh, as quoted by Sir John Malcolm in his History of Persian (see above 4.2.3.8). He adds in a footnote "There were, no doubt, always a few (musicians) in Persia: since the days of Baharam they have abounded. The dancing and singing girls in Persia are called Kaoulee, a corruption of Cabulee, or from Cabul[20]" and the arrival of

[19] The two brothers were not an isolated case and a similar trick is to be found in the English translation of Theocritus' Idyll 10 by their contemporaneous John M. Edmonds in 1912, who renders Βομβύκα χαρίεσσα, ***Σύραν*** καλέοντί τυ πάντες, / ἰσχνάν, ἁλιόκαυστον· ἐγὼ δὲ μόνος μελίχλωρον as "Bombýca fair, to other folk you may a ***Gipsy*** be, / Sunburnt and lean they call you; you're honey-brown to me" while the exact translation should be "Bombýca fair, all may call you a ***Syrian*** *(girl),* withered (lean) and sunburnt; but I [call] you just honey-brown". Such a freedom had no serious implications in the case of the Syrian girl but it consolidated the clichés and mistaken origin in the case of the Lūrīs/Gypsies.

[20] The next paragraph is also very interesting, stating that foreign powers believed "that the king and his subjects were immersed in luxury; and that the love of the dance and song had

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

musicians and dancers from Kabul (in Hindu Shahi kingdoms, thus viewed as a part of India), summoned or not by a Persian king, is quite possible, in so much as these areas were Buddhist and had no fear of the *kalā pani* taboo. And that is probably all as historical fact. Ferdowsī's additions, motivated as explained above (and perhaps all Bahrām Gūr's adventures with Šankal), rely on the idea that Kannauj is a major cultural centre. Later Firishta will write that in the VIIth century "the population of this city was such that one could count 30,000 shops of bethel (in fact more probably perfumes) and 60,000 houses of instrument players and singers" (1808:631 – translation after Alexander Dow); Firishta recounts after that the capture of Kannauj by Maḥmūd Subuktegin in 409 of Hegira, 1018 of Jesus Christ, and this leaves not doubt about the identity of the city. The fame of Kannauj was certainly very loud, even before Firishta, namely in Ferdowsī's times and in addition, perfumes from this city circulated in Persia. So when the poet wrote the passage under discussion (and he wrote this passage in Ghazni in 1010, just before he left in appalling circumstances – see above 4.6.7), he naturally placed the musicians and dancers in this celebrated town, because he was not aware of its insignificance in the time of the event he was ideating. He then added the fable with the oxen, wheat and donkeys, to show Maḥmūd all the troubles people has with non-Persians and reinforce the parallel between him and Bahrām Gūr. On another plan, Maḥmūd probably shared with the old poet his ambition to raise Ghaznī to the level of a universal capital city, explaining he was looting neighbouring realms (including Kabul) to achieve this. It is quite natural and consistent with his personality that Ferdowsī replied that such an undertaking requires much more than booty, namely qualified task force, craftsmen and artists (as for Maḥmūd's change of strategy, see below 5.4, 5.5).

4.6.13) There is still one more delicate point: whilst we know that Kannauj acquired its rank of capital in the VIIth century A.D., why is it mentioned in books before our era – and do we have to do with the same city? As a matter of fact, this small city had a local importance BC under the name of Kania Kubʒa ("lame girl"[21]) as a regional centre of pottery but it decreased after that, until emperor Harṣa settled there and made of it the capital city of his empire. The problem is indeed that we have to distinguish between three "Kanauj" (Kannauj, Kanuj, Canoj, Canouge etc. – former Kania Kubja) in

---

superseded that martial spirit, which had lately rendered Persia the terror of surrounding nations".

[21] The former name of the city Kaniakubʒa meant 'hunchbacked, crippled maid (virgin)'. The origin of this name is to be found in a passage of Valmiki's Ramajan: Kuśnabha had founded a city called Mahodaja (Great Prosperity); he had one hundred beautiful daughters and one day, as they were playing in the royal garden, Lord Vàju, god of the wind, fell in love with them and wanted to marry them. Unfortunately he met with a refusal and out of angry he changed them to hunch back, what became the name of the city. In another version, Kană Kubʒa was the nickname of a disabled devotee of Kriṣṇa, to whom the god restored a beautiful and sound body in thanks for her fervently anointing his feet. In fact, 'hunchbacked maid' was chiefly one of the titles used to refer to Durgā, the warrior goddess, another form of Kali.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

history: basically, it is the name of the large village on the Ganges converted by emperor Harṣa into an imperial capital town in early VIIth century; it may also refer in Antiquity (Alexander's times) to a tribe or small kingdom (*maharajanapad*), not a city, near Pūruvām's (Pōros, Πῶρος) between Jhelum and Chenāb rivers (possibly an alternative form of Kamoja < Kamboja – pers. comm. by Ian Hancock); finally, it is the common (but not definitely proved) interpretation of the Greek name of the town Κανόγιζα, as quoted by Ptolemy in his Geography (VIII.2 § 22). However, the coordinates which he gives: ρμγ λ̄β (or ρμς λ̄β in other editions) would place this city somewhere in Buthan, what is impossible. Yet, one may assume there is a mistake in the original (since there is already a hesitation between latitudes ρμγ and ρμς – the assumption of a misprint has to be excluded since the longitude ρμγ or ρμς "packed" the city into § 22 of the Geography, so frankly East). Accordingly, if we restore the coordinates as ρκγ λ̄β (or ρκς λ̄β), then the location is indeed somewhere near Jhelum and Chenāb rivers, corresponding then probably to Alexander's travel. In this case we have only two locations, with no mutual connection: the ancient one, corresponding to the narratives of Antiquity and to be found in today's Pakistani Punjab, and the new one, which is consistent with the new era books (Edrizi's Geography, Ibn Khaldun's Prolegomena, Firishta's History etc…). The great confusion to be observed in XIXth century comments was caused mainly by the scholars' lack of information but also their reluctance to admit that such misunderstandings may arise from approximately and erroneously transcribed local names into Greek or Arabic script.

4.6.14) The ideological prerequisites have been expounded in detail above and we may conclude here with Marsh: "modern scholars dismiss this story as romantic fiction […] and the continuing uncritical use of this legend of Bahrām Gūr and Lūrī in any narrative of Rromani history is not defendable" (2008:92 [ch. 2.2]); today, even Wikipedia dismisses Col. John S. Harriott's fable, "now considered to be an unjustified and uncritical deduction that has persisted".

4.7) The Dardic misunderstanding

Here also, we have to do with a mistake first suggested in Miklosich's *Beiträge* (1878:295), when the Slovenian researcher contemplates with great caution the alternative that "Rromani might constitute a whole with […] Dardic languages". He was right to be careful because his comparison between Rromani and various Ancient, Middle and Modern Indic languages is quite chaotic, full of lexical mistakes and not conclusive at all. On the basis of another phenomenon (the voicing of voiceless occlusive consonants **t**, **k** and **p** after homorganic nasals **n** and **m**, namely *Nasal + Voiceless Stop > Nasal + Voiced Stop* or [nt] > [nd], [ŋk] > [ŋg] and [mp] > [mb]), the outstanding British Indianist Sir Ralph Turner suggests that this voicing took place in a Dardic surrounding, due to the fact that a similar evolution occured in Dardic languages in the 3rd century B. C. (attested in the Karoṣṭhi documents). He concludes that Proto-Rromani was spoken at the time in the same area as Dardic languages and that the evolution in question

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

was common to them and to Proto-Rromani. In truth Turner overlooked the three following facts:

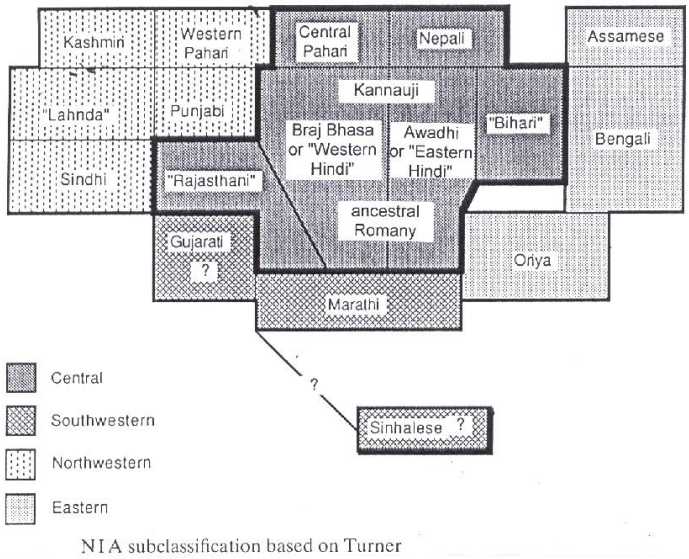
• first of all, voicing of voiceless stops after a nasal consonant is a quite common-place case of progressive assimilation encountered in most various groups of languages all over the world and that there is no need of language vicinity or contact to make it occur.

• secondly, it developed in Rromani not only in stems – as Turner noticed, but also in the postpositional system, a system which emerged during the second half of the first millennium a. D.: *-n + ke > -nge* (spelled **-nqe**), *-n + tar > -ndar* (spelled **-nθar**) etc... namely more than one thousand years after the Dardic evolution under discussion.

• this very evolution did occur in popular Greek, a language spoken all over Asia Minor – alongside with Kurdish, Armenian and Anatolian Arabic, as well as Albanian in the Balkan, at the beginning of the second millenium a.D. that is to say when the proto-Rroms reached this area. This evolution is attested in all positions in Greek: within a stem (πέντε "five" pronounced ['pende]), with an affix (εμπόριο "trade, business" pr. [em'borio]) and at grammatical junctions (την ταβέρνα "the tavern" pr. [tin da'verna], τον πρότο "the first one" pr. [tom 'broto], την κασέτα "the tape" pr. [tiŋ ga'seta] etc... – just like at the Rromani junction noun + postposition; as a matter of fact this Rromani evolution is coterminous with the Greek, not Dardic, evolution). It is clear that Turner had no hint about this Micrasian phonetical change and his mistake is quite excusable.

In fact, Turner took on account in his study only strictly etymological, not morphological, data and this is the reason why he was misled: he first identified properly the Proto-Rromani area of origin as a ember of the central group (along with Braj and Awadhi) on the basis of a number of features, both archaisms and innovations, but he felt compelled to invoke an aberrant initial migration of the Proto-Rroms to the Dardic area in 250 B.C. to give an account of the aforementioned phonetical development. This is probably the only mistake in all Turner's seminal study but it led to erroneous conclusions in dating the Proto-Rromani exodus. In addition, his information was not complete since the same phenomenon has been described later as affecting not only Dardic languages but also Sindhi, Lahnda, Panʒabi and Pahari incl. Nepali (although without incidence on Rromani – this substantiates only common-place character of progressive assimilation; Colin P. Masica's "The Indo-Aryan Languages" § #RI-2 p. 203 & App. II). In the present case, there is probably no driving agenda, just lack of information at a given moment of linguistic research.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)



After Colin P. Masica "The Indo-Aryan Languages" Cambridge, 1991 pp. 453 sq.

4.8) The affirmation of a Panʒabi origin

The idea of a Panʒabi origin is much more fashionable but disregards the fact that the name Panʒab has been used widely in Greek antiquity to refer to entire India (Πενταποταμία; cf. Sanskrit पञ्चनद, later translated into Persian as پنجاب "Panʒāb", a word reintroduced into Hindi). Actually, the main promoter of this thesis was Padma-Śri Rajendra Rishi Weer (1917-2002), a prominent Panʒabi diplomat and linguist, who was stunned to find in the language of the Rroms in Moscow, where he was appointed at the Indian embassy in the early 50ies (under Dr S. Radhakrishnan), so many words of his native Bāngarū[22] (from Karnal). Rishi's pivotal work had and still has a major significance in Rromani history, especially his noble commitment to rebuilt the **sumnakuni phurt** ("golden bridge") between India and the Rromani people. Without him, who was close to Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, I am not sure we would be here in Delhi today, since the Indian connexion would definitely not be so widely recognised in all milieus worldwide. In fact, as already observed by Sir Ralph Turner, the analogy of Rromani is higher with the central group (around Awadhi and Braj) than with Punjabi – and historical data confirm his conclusions, but Rajendra Rishi was a passionate humanist and he was enthusiastic to see brothers, Punjabi fellows, in the Rromani people; this was his ideological concern. In the meantime, the Punjabi connexion was taken over by the show-businessmen, who began to include Punjabi performers in "Gypsy" festivals.

[22] Grierson describes, p. 51-3, the relationship of Hindī as a whole to its variants Hindōstānī, Urdū, and finally Bāngarū (Hariānī), Braj Bhākhā, Kanaujī, and Bundēlī. Bāngarū is “partly Hindī, partly Panjābā, and partly Rājasthānī.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

4.9) Rajasthan as another fashionable supposed origin.

Rajasthan also was much larger in the past than today's rashtra of the same name. There are two sources to the Rajasthan connection: one is the prestige – in some people's eyes, of the status of Rajputs, whilst the other one probably arose from an anecdote, which took place near Novi Sad in early October 1973 during Ms Laxmi Kumari Chundawat's official journey to Vojvodina in former Yugoslavia. This major Rajasthani author, scholar and politician[23] had then been invited to pay a visit to the Rromani village of Deronje, near Odžaci. There, under the mulberries, a Rromani violinist, "Maestro Toša (Jovanović)" and his group welcomed her, playing a few melodies and ending with the music of the Indian movie Aan[24], by Mehboob Khan. Deeply moved, Ms Chundawat declared at the end "Once more I can see we are the same people. I will write this in my book". Be it as it may, this link was widely taken over by media and show-businessmen, who created a new mythological link with such colourful and scenic groups as Banjara or Lamans[25]. In addition, these are migratory tribes (seemingly of Afghan origin but mainly living in Karnataka), so that the connection became (seemingly) obvious due to the European obsession of considering all Rroms as eternal wanderers – whereas in fat only 2 to 3% of them lead a mobile way of life (probably up to 25% in the XVIIIth century). If there are here ideological prerequisites, they are related to the prestige of the word Rajasthan – as connected with *Raja* and other warriors, Rajputs etc. and a very touristy area, but also with the view, as Fraser points out, "that any reference to a migrant group pursuing a Gypsy-like occupation can for that reason be equated with them." (1992: 35).

4.10) De Goeje's conjectures

The Dutch Arabist Michael Jan de Goeje (1836-1909) published in 1903 "Mémoire sur les migrations des tsiganes à travers l'Asie", an expended French version of his "Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der Zigeuners" (1875), based on two postulates: that there is a high number of Arabic loan-words in Rromani and that the "Tsiganes", the "Zott" and the "Djat" are one and only people. The first statement was dismissed by Franz Miklosich as early as 1876 and Richard Pischel in 1883. As for the second statement, he considers that all peoples use consistently and during centuries very precise words when naming other peoples – what is far from being true, and he constructs demonstrations on the basis of this obviously unrealistic prerequisite. He also takes for granted the anecdote from the Shah-Nameh: "There is no reason four doubting the authenticity of this tradition". A crucial mistake is that he considers that adult Sindians, when coming to Arabic countries, can pronounce the letter *dj* only as *z* and explains so the

[23] In the time of this visit, Ms Chundawat was member of the Indian National Congress, member of the Indian Council of State (Rajya Sabha, upper house of the Parliament of India) and President of the Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee.

[24] Known outside India rather as "Mangala, Daughter of India" (or "The Savage Princess" in the USA).

[25] Some of them have even usurped the name "Roma" as a result of their visits to Europe.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

alleged equivalence between Djat and Zott. The reality is inverse: most Indians pronounce the sound [z] (from Arabic, Persian and even English) as [ʤ], while they have no problem with Arabic [ʤ], since it exists also in their mother tongue (ज). In addition, the 90 pages of his book are so confused, unreliable (taking racist views for granted), lacking consistency and rigour that they lead to no clear conclusion. As a result, any references to his work have practically disappeared from recent and present serious publications.

5. Concatenation of the Kitab al-Yamini with with later testimonies and events

5.1) The Kitab al-Yamini is not peremptory in its information, and this is not bad news, because the majority of historical documents are also like this (what didn't prevent national historians to build up their own historical narratives, as a rule much more fragile than in our field, relying on very confuse sources – but they are accepted, or sometimes even ordered by the authorities). On the other side, peremptory documents may quite well be totally untrue and they must be interpreted through crosschecking with other historical, cultural, religious and social elements, written or not.

5.2) The western documentation (mainly Armenian, Syriac and crusaders' records) is by no means peremptory either, but the combination of the two sets of information complete and explain each other, within the broader historical, social, religious, ideological, economical context of the given period, and they lead to consistent conclusions about the exodus itself and its aftermath (including the question of the names)

5.3) The promoters of the Kannauj thesis have been accused of following a driving agenda. Is this legitimate ? We also try to single out ideological prerequisites behind other assumptions. In this case, some voices[26] use counterarguments based on the principle: "you are promoting (or even inventing) this theory, because you are ashamed of your pariah origin and want to dismiss any connection with untouchable people". The accusation is obviously void: how could such a relation be relevant or not after 1000 years and the crossing of dozens of other cultures? Another accusation is the alleged invention of an ethnic identity as an aspect of political mobilisation. Be it as it may, the Rromani identity is common knowledge, not a recent invention, and the Kannauj narrative has but a minimal impact on it at the European level; conversely it allows delivering realistic information in schools with classes of Rromani and this is always better than bigoted legends[27]. The impugning of wrong intentions, on this pattern,

[26] Among others in some departments of the Council of Europe.

[27] In 2004, a European country introduced into its school programme of History for Rroms the legend of the nails of Christ's cross, allegedly forged by… a "Gypsy" (one millennium before they left India) – without saying that this slanderous anachronism was forged in 1550 by Carlo Borromeo – Archbishop of Milan and a notorious anti-semite who wanted to blame Rroms together with Jews. Let alone countries and NGOs, which circulate the Shah-Nameh anecdote about the heedless and lazy Indian musicians.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

characteristic for street disputes, is not accepted in the case of other peoples, so there is absolutely no reason to accept it the Rromani field.

6) Further forms of denial

Presently we may observe an unbridgeable gap between knowledge based on sources, historical data, analysis and reflection, the kind I just set out, and affirmations based on clichés, legends and mental inertia, not only in the Indian stage of Rromani history, but also in many other fields as Rromani later History, linguistics, tradition, literature. The first category remains restricted to some confined groups, as in a closed besieged house, while the second category are widely heard among "selectively sceptical scientists", but also among civil servants, various kinds of activists, journalists, teachers and even printed in books or circulated via the Internet… In fact it is much easier to condemn in one word "stupid, worth nothing!" an elaborated and well-argued study than to produce a serious counter-argumentation.

6.1) One could expect the Rroms' Indian origin is by now taken for granted. However some voices deny this Indian origin in spite of all blatant evidences but with some very cunning – albeit simple and groundless – political argumentation; the problem is that such voices have privileged, or even almost exclusive, access to mass-media like in France Ms Henriette Asseo (Paris High School of Social Sciences) who declared recently on France Culture radio (without any further explanation or back up): "Come on with this history about India, it's obvious we have to do with a mythology!", a position shared and widely published by Ms Nicole Martinez (University of Montpellier). The ideological doctrine in behind is clearly negation, but another motivation is often set forth: "If we recognize the Rroms are from India, racist will ask them to go back there". So far, the only serious case of racists demanding the Rroms' repatriation to India occurred in February 1995 in Oberwart (Austria), when four Rroms were killed by a pipe bomb, as they were trying to remove a plaque with racial abuse ("Zigeuner zurück nach Indien" [Gypsies back to India]) and which was hiding the bomb. Nevertheless, this tragic case cannot be compared with the millions of Rroms in history who were deprived of their dignity, humanity, freedom and even life, exactly because their real identity had been denied and replaced by a slenderous identity of innate offenders, lazy and poor parasites, spies disguised in pilgrims and heedless vagrants, thirsty of disorder.

6.2) In the U.K. and the Nederlands, one faces a similar posture with Okely, Willems, Lucassen and Cottaar who qualify the Indian origin as a "myth" (cf. Asseo above) forged by European imagination, in an attempt to exoticize a socially excluded and marginalised group. As they mingle under the common name of "Roma" not only real Rromani people of Asian origin, but also several other groups, often much more excluded and marginalised than the Rroms, it is logical that they find the identity composite and disparate. Considering as an axiom that all Rroms are poor and marginalized (in fact less than 30% of them match to the poverty criteria),

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

these researchers deem them among the ‘undeserving poor’, who are a threat to a “well-ordered society” (reviving a familiar extensive debate which was took place during the Renaissance especially in Italy).

6.3) In all three countries (but also in some others), researchers belonging to this group of influence also reject as a rule the word "Rrom" itself, arguing it is a political neologism (although it appears for the first time in Frescobaldi's travelogue, printed in 1385 in Florence). Their hostility toward the term Rrom is widely due to the fact that this endonyme is of Sanskrit origin, and meant initially "percussionist" (in medieval India, percussions were the axis of music), and later "musician, dancer, artist" and they dismiss anything related to India. Some other scholars are more cautious, but make fun of Rromani peers who endorse the Indian origin of their people and reject the word "Gypsy", which actually refers in the Balkan to a totally different ethnic group (those Christian Egyptians who fled to the Balkan during Diocletian's persecution in the IVth century – cf. note 13 above). Only racial contempt toward both ethnicities allowed such a centuries-long amalgamate between them. Evangelic churches also are very active in denying the Indian origin (see below 6.4) and allegedly scientific journals (Etudes tsiganes 2004) publish respectfully statements of uneducated promoters of this denial, which contributes to maintain mystery and therefore discrimination.

7) "Language is not enough" to deprive Rroms of their… Jewish identity

In statements which deny the Rroms' Indian origin (and even Indo-European identity), one may often encounter the following argument:

"*The whole hypothesis regarding their alleged Indo-European ethnicity is founded on a sole thing: the Romany [sic] language. Such theory does not take account of other more important cultural facts and evidences that show that Roma have nothing in common with Indian peoples besides some linguistic elements. If we have to take seriously any hypothesis that considers only language to determine a people's origin, then we must assume that almost all North-Africans came from Arabia, that Ashkenazim Jews are a German tribe, that Sephardic Jews were Spaniards belonging to a religious minority but not a different people, and so on. Black American people do not even know what language their ancestors spoke, consequently they must be English*."

This ironical quotation from a South American web site[28] conveying the theory of a Jewish origin of the Rroms, a forgotten 13th tribe of Israel, is

28 Myths, Hypotheses and Facts - Concerning the Origin of Peoples. In this web-site, one may read "The most relevant elements that persist in any people since the most remote past are of spiritual nature, that are manifested in their inner feelings, typical behaviours, subconscious memory, namely, their atavic heritage". Unfortunately such ideologies have usually accompanied in history criminal national dictatorships. The author's ignorance not only in history but also in linguistics and various other fields is conspicuous. I do appreciate

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

indeed very shocking: first it declares without any justification and against all odds that "*Roma have nothing in common with Indian peoples besides some linguistic elements*", secondly it ignores that the Jews had already given up Hebrew and switched to Greek, Aramaic or Latin centuries before they acquired German or Spanish and thirdly it doesn't take on board all the century-long violence exerted against African peoples by trafficking and slavery, which led to their deculturation (and programmed death). A similar quibbling is used about Amerindians speaking Spanish and Portuguese – reminding with irony they are not Iberian tribes. Here again the physical and cultural genocide which led to past and present atrocities has seemingly been forgotten (or denied) with a criminal thoughtlessness.

Be it as it may, the Rroms' Jewish alleged identity was invented by Pierre Haitze (1688-1744) on the basis of the following argument: these people are called Bohemians, so they originate from Bohemia. Who lives there ? Peasant, Husites and Jews. Since they are not peasants nor Husites, they can be only Jews. Elisabeth Clanet dit Lamanit has devoted an excellent study to this abuse of identity, which has been fashionable in the past every 40 or so years and is now powerfully advertised by Evangelic churches and similar groups.

8) Current situation as for the Rroms' origin

Globally speaking we are moving forward with the recognition of the Indian origin and it will be much better with the recognition of the Kannauj cradle of the Rromani people, earlier or later. There will be always contradictors, and that is not so bad – it is an encouragement to deepen the research and optimise our argumentation.

For the time being we have roughly the following situation:

Thesis	basis, sources	deconstruction	Diffusion
recurrent exodus, "in waves", from India	reluctance before any feature which could point at any initial unity	done	+++++
from all over India			
Bahram Gur's fable	Shahnameh (erroneous interpretation)	done	++++
Dardic	mistake about a phonetic evolution	done	++
war, hunger	supposition	done	++++
pariah, Banʒara etc.	vague superficial similarities, prejudices about Rroms (outcast, nomads etc.)	done	++++
unknown origin	alleged epistemic doubt	done	++++

when unaware people take part in discussion (nobody knows everything), but they should show more modesty.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

13th forgotten tribe of Israel	Rroms are from Bohemia, a "country full of Jews and Hussites" (Pierre Haitze)	done	++
.....			
Kannauj	Kitab al Yamini and western data	no	increasing

In any research devoted to humanities, we have the researcher and the '*researchee*' – results arise from the interactions between both sides. In the Rromani case, refusals and vacillation disguised in fake epistemological doubt reflect the incapacity of some researchers to accept:

- that ***Rroms are not a sub-product of social European rubbish*** but a real people;
- that ***Rroms are not the incarnation of the hated, feared or romanticised clichés*** created through misunderstandings and manipulations by the Europeans, but a people like any other;
- that ***Rroms are the synthesis of an Indian subtle heritage and millennium long experiences of contact*** with other peoples and cultures;
- that ***Rroms have also a history*** *and that serious research in this field is* ***possible, necessary and respectable – even fascinating, much more than all kinds of legends***;
- that ***Rroms have a historical unity*** as a people (as already ***emphasized by Franz Miklosich and after him John Sampson in his grammar***). This historical unity in terms of time of exodus and area of departure, that's to say since Indian times, is ***not an asset or a disadvantage*** in present-time society, it is just a fact and there is no reason to deny it;
- that Rroms ***have nothing specific in common with untouchables, migratory tribes or marginalised people of India***. This also is only a simple fact, not an asset or a disadvantage especially after 1000 years, and again there is no reason to deny it.

9) Negation in other fields: the case of linguistics

This phenomenon of negation spreads widely beyond the historical domain and can be encountered also in other fields as linguistics. I will give but one example here of negation at against all odds: although the New-Indic system of postpositions in the flexion of the Rromani nominal group was pointed out as early as 1781 by Johann Rüdiger, it is still widely denied in many Rromani grammars, which follow the Latin-German (or Russian) non-Rromani pattern, as if there were a fear of recognising the Indian identity of the Rromani language and of the 15 millions of people, for whom this language is a crucial and beloved heritage. Even a simple grammatical pattern is denied or distorted, just to keep away such a small tie with India. Nevertheless, if you look at the following table, it seems impossible to reject the Indian postpositional system of Rromani:

Direct case		i **bakri**	o/e **bakria**
Indirect	with no postp.	e **bakria**	e **bakrien**

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

case			
Indirect case	with postp. **-qe**	e **bakria-qe** [ke]	e **bakrien-qe** [ge]
	with postp. **-q**/**o**,**-i**, **-e**	e **bakria-qo** [ko]	e **bakrien-qo** [go]
	with postp. **-θe**	e **bakria-θe** [te]	e **bakrien-θe** [de]
	with postp. **-θar**	e **bakria-θar** [tar]	e **bakrien-θar** [dar]
	with postp. **-ça**	e **bakria-ça** [sa]	e **bakrien-ça** [tsa]
Indirect case	with circump. **bi -qo**	bi **bakria-qo** [ko]	bi **bakrien-qo** [go]

What is the argument against the recognition of postpositions in Rromani? The denial is based on the fact that the second layer of adpositions is postponed in Indian languages (**bakria ke pās** "near the goat/sheep"), while it is anteposed in Rromani (**paś-e bakriaθe** [arch.])….

Let us look at the following table illustrating the Rromani possessive postposition:

Short variant	possessed object singular	possessed object plural
possessed object masc. **kan**	e **bakria-qo** kan	e **bakria-qe** kana e **bakria-qe** jakha
possesses object fem. **jakh**	e **bakria-qi** jakh	

but also (more restricted in dialectal terms in both Rromani and Hindi):

Short variant	possessed object singular	possessed object plural
possessed object masc. **kan**	e **bakria-qoro** kan	e **bakria-qere** kana e **bakria-qere** jakha
possesses object fem. **jakh**	e **bakria-qiri** jakh	

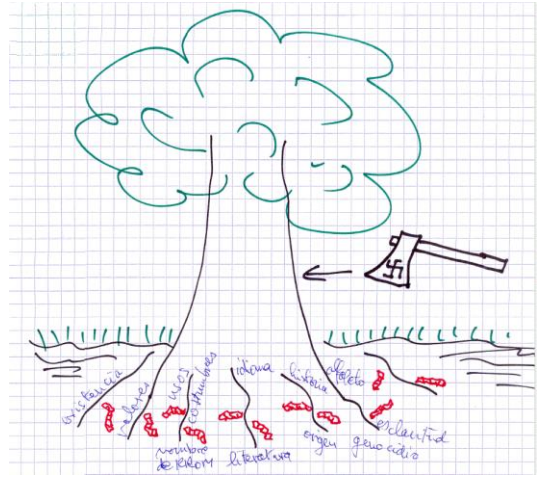
Only liars talking to ignoramuses can maintain that this grammatical system is not Indian. I would also add that this complex system evidences that Rromani is not a pidgin or a lingua franca, which would never have preserved such a structure, but a genuine – albeit forgotten – Prakrit, to use Pathania's so appropriately coined formula.

10) The driving agenda behind all these negations

Similar negations exist in the field of Rromani dialectology, language standardisation, values and tradition, literature etc. as well as more recent history: slavery in the Danubian principalities, persecutions of all kinds, Samudaripen (hitlerian genocide), current corruption at the Rroms' expenses etc…. Demoniac forces of the past have not managed to fall down the tree of the Rromani people, wipe off their Indian and European identity and melt the Rroms into shapeless marginalised populations, but now we are at risk to see the addition of all these punctual denials of specific aspects of Rromanipen, all capitalised together, achieve in a soft sabotage what centuries of brutality have not completed: to disintegrate the Rroms, seen as

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

a foreign body in Europe, not as one more people in partnership with all others.



For this purpose ***Division*** has been widely used, but also ***Confusion*** in order to dissolve Rromani identity in a common melting-pot with various non-Rromani marginalized social groups and ***Negation*** of all positive features underpinning a positive image of the Rrom in our society.

As you could notice, this presentation was an attempt of analysis of this so widespread, albeit groundless, fake "knowledge", which obliterates in mainstream society, but also among Rroms, regular knowledge based on sources, historical data and methodical reflection. This situation represents a form of racism and it is globally very harmful – I may be forgiven for considering that truth in knowledge, or at least aspiration for truth, is in practically all cases a powerful prerequisite of social harmony and cohesion, much more than lies and fabrications.

11) Perspectives

Despite all good intentions, the primacy of regular objective knowledge based on sources and historical data upon disinformation inspired by clichés and legends will not emerge by itself over night and therefore a specific strategy is very much needed in order to guarantee it, as a precondition to any efficient combat against discrimination. On the one hand legends have to be deconstructed wisely and on the other hand plausible theories have also to be tested with the historical method, namely not only checking "written documentation" (which can be untrue) but all putting together all their historical, political, economical, military, religious, philosophical, psychological etc. aspects to check the consistency of all these factors. In many cases, no evidence in itself permits to draw conclusions but if consistency is reached when all aspects are laid end to end, ignoring the findings is then a matter of lack of intelligence or bad faith.

If we call "Gypsism" the adhesion to a counterfeit image of the Rrom, as produced by fear, contempt, hatred, suspicion, romanticism or any other approach, it is clear that this Gypsyism has to be deconstructed, while selecting the true and consistent features in order to save them, in a way

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

totally parallel to the deconstruction of Orientalism, which had been produced in a similar way as Gypsyism. From this point of view, Antigypsyism is the blind fear or hate of the Rrom, not a real human being, but as represented by Gypsyism. This is the reason why persons who have developed a strong felling of Antigypsyism happen to have Rromani friends, due to the difference of nature between the two levels of perception. In this respect, the same person, if confronted tomorrow to an unknown Rromani person, will response in accordance with his/her Antigypsyism, with all the prejudicial consequences this racism may bring. It is clear that science is a privileged battle field, in so far serious work is carried out in terms of quantity, quality and preciseness, and the second field is education of both mainstream citizens and Rromani citizens.

We are trying to work in this spirit in Europe, at all possible levels, but it is a gigantesque challenge. Some countries like Romania have introduced good quality teaching material into schools, but there is still quite a lot to do – first of all convince stake holders as the UNESCO, the Council of Europe and various other similar bodies, as well as local governments, to dare give up clichés and switch to real knowledge. For example, deconstructing Orientalism is highly praised as a combat again racism, but deconstructing Gypsyism is perceived as an attack jeopardizing a common heritage.

12) Mother India and Rromani PIO

As for Mother India, let me suggest to continue raising a wider and wider awareness among its population and abroad about the **very first Indian historical diaspora** (I overlook here the Sri-Lankese, who didn't really exit the Indian sphere). A chapter could be introduced into school programmes of History and our organisation will be very honoured to participate.

We have produced an on-line university course of Rromani language and culture, called "Restore the universal dimension of Rromani" [29] and I prepared the *ad hoc* niche to insert a translation into Hindi for all our cousins who would like to learn Rromani and know better our heritage. It would be advisable to enrich this course with a section teaching Sanskrit for Rromani people. The Indian element of Rromani is probably closer to Sanskrit than Hindi itself and this is an important asset for both India and the Rroms. Accordingly, I would appreciate help from our Indian partners to achieve the Hindi version of the course and the Sanskrit section. A reliable and well illustrated Rromani history could be printed also in Hindi. One could also promote a world wide distribution of such a publication – notably through the mediation of the Indian ambassador to the UNESCO, in order to ensure a wide coverage, well beyond India, especially if the book is published simultaneously in Hindi, English, French and Spanish. Hindi translations of Rromani literary works would be very welcome (one of my students, from Western Bengal, speaks quite well Rromani and could participate in checking the outcome). In a similar perspective it seems that the opening of a chair of Rromani studies in India, be it in Delhi (for

[29] The URL of site is www.red-rrom.com and the password r3drr0m.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

example at Nehru University) or in U. P. (Lakhnau University) would be a fruitful step not only to promote Rromani culture in India and worldwide but also as a centre for dissemination of Indian culture among Rroms, wherever they live.

I consider it also a seminal project to organize a joint Rromani-Indian (true) scientific conference with a high quality festival in 2 years in Kannauj, because there will be 1000 years since the deportation. The project could be called "perspective 2018".

Still in the scientific and cultural fields, it would be extremely profitable to elaborate a Rromani and Indian museum in Europe, preferably in the Balkan. The best place would be probably Skopje. In parallel, it would be also very beneficial to introduce standing exhibitions about Rromani history, culture, heritage and creation into the new museum of Kannauj and set up a similar centre in New-Delhi.

In order to consolidate the relationship between Rroms and India, one should not dwell only in the scientific and cultural fields, but also plan exchanges of tourists and workers, import-export for Rromani enterprises, medical counselling (mainly in the Ajurvedic and Yunan fields), ecological cooperation etc… A very judicious first step would probably be to provide Rroms with a PIO status, leading so to a formal recognition of the vast Rromani diaspora, historically the very first Indian diaspora, with an amazing dynamism and potential. Such a step would contribute resolutely to Rromani children's self esteem and give the adults a new instrument to combat discrimination.

In the field of commercial movies, subtitling Bolliwood films into Rromani would have a significant impact to consolidate the bridge between the richest cinema of the world and the Rroms, who all know of Shah Rukh Khan, Rani Mukherjee, Amithab Bacchan, Kajol, Chopra and so many others, younger. Rromani history, from the deportation and up to date, is full of fantastic moments which could be adapted for the screen. So it would be an immense achievement to shoot a Bollywood popular movie about the Rroms' Exodus – but not altered, please, as Vikas Kapoor's ***Shobha Somnath ki*** or Santosh Sivan's ***Ashoka*** !!! No, a movie based on the real narrative. It would be very relevant as well to shoot another film about the so outstanding emperor Harshavardhana of Kannauj – to whom I devoted a scientific session and a book, and also to later events of Rromani History. This would help very efficiently to grant the primacy of regular objective knowledge based on sources and historical data upon disinformation inspired by clichés and legends, in an artistic form.

Bibliography

AGOSTON "ab Hortis", Samuel. Von dem heutigen Zustande, sonderbaren Sitten und Lebensart, wie auch von denen übrigen Eigenschaften und Umständen der Zigeuner in Ungarn. In: *Kaiserlich Königlich allergnädigst privilegirte* [sic] *Anzeige*. Wien, 1775-1776.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

ALAMI, Abdelali. *Les conquêtes de Mahmūd al-Ghaznawī d'après le Kitāb al-Yamīni d'al-'Utbī.* Paris, 1989.
ATEŞ, A. Şâh-Nâme'min, Yaziliş Tarihi ve Mahmud Sultan karşı hiciv (The date of the final redaction of the Shahname and his satire against Sultan Mahmud)" in *Türk Tarihi Kurumu Belleten* 18, Ankara, 1954, pp. 159-68.
BAEVSKII, S. I. & A. N. Vorožeikina. Низами Арузи Самарканди - *Собрание редкостей, или Четыре беседы*. Moscow, 1963.
AL-BĪRŪNĪ, Afzal Muḥammad. *Kitāb fi tahqiq mā li'l Hind*, Chapter LXXI.
BOSWORTH, C.E. Ilek-Khans or Karakhanids. In: *Enc. Iranica*, vol. III. Leiden, 1971.
BOSWORTH, C.E. Barbarian Incursions: the Coming if the Turks into the Islamic World. In: *Islamic Civilisations 950-1150*. Oxford, 1973.
BOSWORTH, C.E. Karluk. In: *Enc. Iranica*, vol. IV. Leiden, 1978.
BOSWORTH, C.E. Ferdowsī, Abul-Qāsem i. Life. In: *Enc. Iranica*, vol. III. Leiden, 1976.
BOSWORTH, C.E. The Coming of Islam to Afghanistan. In: *Islam in Asia 1: South Asia*. Jerusalem, 1984.
BOSWORTH, C.E. Saldjukids. In: *Enc. Iranica*, vol. VIII. Leiden, 1995.
BOSWORTH, C.E. *The New Islamic Dynasties*. Edinburgh, 1996.
BOSWORTH, C.E. Yabgu. In: *Enc. Iranica*, vol. XI. Leiden, 2002.
BURMAN, J.J. Roy (2010). *Ethnography of a Denotified Tribe: The Laman Banjara*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
CAHEN, Claude. *La Tughra seljukide*. In: Journal asiatique. Paris, 1943-1945.
CAHEN, Claude. La première pénétration turque en Asie-mineure (seconde moitié du XIe s.). In: *Byzantion*, vol. XVIII (1946-48)
CAHEN, Claude. Le Malik-Nameh et l'histoire des origins seljukides. In: *Orien*s, Vol. 2 (1949).
CAHEN, Claude. Une campagne du Seldjukide Alp-Arslan en Géorgie. In: *Revue de kartvélologie*. XLI-XLII (1962)
CAHEN, Claude. Une historiographie of the Seljuqid Period. In: *Historians of the Middle East*. London, 1962.
CAHEN, Claude. Pre-Ottoman Turkey. Trans. J. Jones-Williams. London, 1968.
CAHEN, Claude. *The Turkish Invasion: The Selchükids*. In: A History of the Crusades. Madison, 1969.
CAHEN, Claude. The Turks in Iran and Anatolia Before the Mongol Invasions. In: *A History of the Crusades*. Madison, 1969.
CHATTERJI, Suniti Kumar. The so-called 'Gypsies' of India. In: *JGLS Notes and Queries*, Vol. 44, p. 71-74. Edinburgh, 1965.
CHERATA, Lucian (2014). The etymology of the Words Ţigan (Gypsy) and Rrom. In: *Journal of Romanian Linguistic and Culture*. Bucharest, Nr 2.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

CLANET dit Lamanit, Elisabeth. Enjeux et instrumentalisation de l'objet «origine» dans les discours autour du concept d'un «peuple » dit « rom ».
CLANET dit Lamanit, Elisabeth. Une autre approche sur l'histoire de la migration des ancêtres des Rroms, Sinté et Kalé. In: *Etudes tsiganes*, n˚ 39-40. P. 218-228. Paris, 2011.
CLANET dit Lamanit, Elisabeth. «Gens du Voyage», «Rroms», «Tsiganes»-quelques repères. Paris, 2012.
COURTHIADE, Marcel. Originea poporului rrom — realitate și legendă » In: *Cultură și civilizaţie indiană, manual universitar* [Mircea Itu & Julieta Moleanu eds.]. Bucharest, 2001.
COURTHIADE, Marcel. The Gangetic city of Kannauʒ: original cradle-town of the Rromani people. In: *Linguistic and Oriental Studies from Poznań*. Poznań, 2004. Reprint in: Rroms: from the Ganges to the Thames. Hatfield, 2004.
COURTHIADE, Marcel [ed.]. *Śri Harsha – dernier empereur bouddhiste d'Inde*. Paris, 2008.
COURTHIADE, Marcel. Próba bilansu dotychczasowych hipotez o rodowodzie narodu rromskiego w kontekście jego migracji. In: *Studia romologica V*. P. 13-75. Tarnów, 2012
COURTHIADE, Marcel. *Gjeografët e lashtësisë*. Ndih. në Akademinë e Shkencave/Albanian Academy of Sciences. Tirana, 2013.
COURTHIADE, Marcel. Les premières approches linguistiques du rromani (1500-*1800*) : entre présupposés, dégoût, ambitions et objectivité de méthode. In: *Dossiers d'HEL*, SHESL. Paris, 2014.
FRASER, Sir Angus. *The Gypsies*. Oxford, 1995.
FIEY, J.-M. Turks in Khurasan and Transoxiana at tht Time of the Arab Conquest. In: *The Moslem World*, vol. XXXV (1945).
GOEJE, Michael Jan de. *Mémoire sur les migrations des tsiganes à travers l'Asie*. Leide, 1903.
GRIERSON, George A. *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. XI. Delhi, 1903-1928.
HABIB, Irfan. *The Economy of the Ghaznavid Empire, Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*. In: Economic History of Medieval India – 1200-1500. New Delhi, 2011.
HANCOCK, Ian. *On Romani Origin and Identity*. Radoc, 2000.
HANCOCK, Ian. K upřesnění doby odchodu mluvčích protoromštiny z Indie. In: *Romano dzaniben*, Praha, 2001 Nr. 3-4. Pp. 6-12.
HARRIOTT, John Staples. Observations on the Oriental Origin of the Romnichal, or Tribe Miscalled Gypsey and Bohemian. In: *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* Vol. 2, No. 1. pp. 518-558. Calcutta, 1829-1830; pub. Cambridge.
HASAN, Mushirul (ed.). *Inventing Boundaries. Gender, Politics and the Partition of India*. Delhi, 2000.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

HERD, Kate (2011). De Indische identiteit van de Roma: constructie en relevantie? Gent.

Myths, Hypotheses and Facts Concerning the Origin of Peoples (web-site)

AL-KASHGARI, Mahmud. *Диван Лугат ат-Турк (свод тюрских слов)*. Moscow, 2010.

KAUFMAN, Terrence, 1984. "Explorations in proto-Gypsy phonology and classification," Paper presented at the Sixth South Asian Languages Analysis Round Table, Austin, May 12-15

KELKAR, Ashok R. *Sanskrit & Prakrit, Sociolinguistic Issues*. Delhi, 1993.

LEES, Captain Nassau. *The Tabaqát-i Násiri of Aboo 'Omar Minháj al-Jawzjani*. Calcutta, 1864.

LEVY, Reuben. *"A Mirror for Princes" – The Qabus Nama, by Ka'us ibn Iskandar, Prince of Gurgan*. New York, 1951.

MAJUMDAR, Ramesh Chandra. *The History and Culture of the Indian People.* (especially volumes 1 to 5). Mumbai, 1951.

JOHN MALCOLM, Sir John. *The History of Persia From the Most Early Period to The Present Time* (in two volumes). London, 1815.

MARSH, Adrian. *"No promised land": history, historiography and the origins of the "Gypsies"*. Greenwich, 2008.

MARUSHYAKOVA, Elena & Vaselin Popov. *Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire: A Contribution to the History of the Balkans*. Hatfield, 2001.

MASICA, Colin P. *The Indo-Aryan Languages*. Cambridge, 1991.

MATRAS, Yaron. Johann Rüdiger and the Study of Romani in 18th Century Germany. In: *JGLS*, 5th series, 9:89-116.1999.

MEHTA, Jaswant Lal. *Advanced Studies in the History of Medieval India*, Volume 1. New Delhi, 1986.

MEYER, Eric. *Questions et hypothèses sur la Migration des Rroms depuis l'Inde*. In: Etudes tsiganes, n° 39-40. P. 209-217. Paris, 2011.

MIKLOSICH, Franjo. *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Zigeunermundarten*. Wien, 1878.

MOAYEDI, Hasan Gholi. Invasion seldjoukides [sic] en Arménie Byzantine. In: *Tarih araştırmaları dergisi*. P. 127-133. Ankara, 1968.

МОХОВ, А. С. Византийская армия в правление Романа ИВ Диогена (1068-1071 гг.) In: *Античная древность и средние века* (вп. 34, стр. 276-296). Yekaterinburg, 2003, вп. 34.

MONTAUT, Annie. Colonial language classification, postcolonial language movements and the grassroot multilingualism ethos in India. In: [Mushirul Hasan & Asim Roy eds.], *Living together separately. On the historicity of India's composite culture*, John Benhamins, 2005 pp. 75-106.

NAẒIM, Muhammad. *Kitab Zainu'l-Akhbar, composed by Abu Sa'id […] Gardizi about a.h. 440*. Berlin, 1928.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press

Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)

NAẒIM, Muhammad. *The Life and Times of Sulṭan Mahmud of Ghazna*. Cambridge, 1931; New Delhi, 1971 (2nd edition).
NIKOLIĆ, Jovan & Ruždija [Ruso] Sejdović. *Kosovo mon amour*. Paris, 2004.
NÖLDEKE, Theodor. *Über das Kitâb Jamînî das Abû Nasr Muhammad ibn 'Ab d al gábbâr al 'Utbî*. Viena, 1857.
NÖLDEKE, Theodor. *Das iranische Nationalepos*. Berlin, 1896; 2. Verlag 1920.
RICE, Tamara Talbot. *The Seljuks in Asia Minor*. London, 1961.
ROUX, Jean-Paul. *L'Asie centrale: histoire et civilisation*. Paris, 1997.
ROUX, Jean-Paul. *Histoire des Turcs*. Paris, 2000.
RASHID al-Din Tabib. *The History of the Seljuq Turks from the Jami' al-Tawarikh: an Ilkhanid adaptation of the Saljuq-nama of Zahir al-Din Nishapuri*. Trans. and annot. Kenneth Allin Luther, ed. C.E. Bosworth. Richmond: Curzon, 2001.
SARĂU, GheorGh. *Rromii, India şi limba Rromani*. Bucharest, 1998.
SARĂU, GheorGh. *Indice de idiomuri indo-ariene moderne*. Bucharest, 1998.
SARĂU, GheorGh. Rromii şi limba rromani în context indian. In: *Cultură şi civilizaţie indiană*. Bucharest, 2001.
SOULIS, G. The Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire and the Balkans in the Late Middle Age. In: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* Vol. 15. Washington, 1961.
STEPHENS, Alonzo. The Battle of Manzikert: Genesis of International Cultural Cultivation. In: *Tarih araştırmaları dergisi*. P. 73-84. Ankara, 1968.
SZTOJKA, Ferenc. *Un dictionnaire rromani oublié le "Gyök-szótár" de Ferenc Sztojka*. Commented reprint by Courthiade, Marcel. Paris, 2007.
Tripathi, Rama. History of Kanauj to the Moslem Conquest. Delhi, 1964.
WARNER, Arthur & Edmond. *The Sháhnáma of Firdausí*, 9 vols. London, 1905–1925; reprinted, 2000.
ZIA-EBRAHIMI, Reza. *The Emergence of Iranian Nationalism: Race and the Politics of Dislocation*. New-York, 2016.

BDD-A24376 © 2016 Ovidius University Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 20:50:19 UTC)