

Texts of Oral Literature

1.1

Nalačo suno | Nightmare (by an unknown Xaladytka-speaking singer)

E džuvaći | About a Louse (told by Ramo Bejtula)

Pedar o mule | On the Dead (told by Julius Horvath)

This factsheet serves as an illustration to the Oral Literature factsheet of this series. The texts have been chosen to represent the main genres, fairy tale, (mulo-)story, and song. With regard to the dialect diversity of Romani, the examples enable the reader to get an impression of three different varieties, Gurbet Romani, Burgenland Romani, and Xaladitka Romani.

WHAT IS “ROMA” IN THE TRADITIONAL ROMANI TEXTUALITY?

III. 1

Maybe the most delicate, yet central question in the field is about the difference between Romani tale-telling and the traditional textuality of other ethnicities. Most of the features cited in the factsheet “Oral Literature” do not separate Romani textuality from the others’: For instance, formulas, dialogical passages, and “beautiful” language were used everywhere tales were told, people came together for telling-sessions all over Europe, and even most of the tales could be heard anywhere.

What, then, is “Roma” in the Romani oral literature?

There have been identified several idiosyncrasies of Romani oral literature: The strong role of the dead, the frequency of India-related types of tales, the special role of God, the existence of a popular type of tales with witty Romani heroes, the characteristic texture of the formulas and phrases

etc. Even though such observations still lack “proof” in a scientific sense, nobody would deny the Romani tales a special Romani-character, be it only for the language, Romani, in which they are told.

Interestingly, several scholars give evidence to the phenomenon that Roma seem to have adopted and preserved rituals that had been abandoned by the majorities before. This conservative feature and other observations drew the attention of scholars towards the practise and rules of intercultural exchange and towards the question, what the Roma take over from others, why they might do it, and how they integrate it into their own culture. It has been suggested that these very features of integration of others’ cultural elements may in fact be characteristic features of Romani oral literature themselves.

PROVERBS

Gođasa mosto na keraša, koli love nane (Xaladitka):

It is impossible to build a bride only with one’s mind when there’s no money.

Romes gijbnastir pinčkiresa (Lotfitka):

You know who is a Rom by looking at his way of walking.

Kon perela ki len, i sapes angali dela (Sepečides):

He who falls in the river even embraces a snake.

Jiv ži ande’l čanga, haj leske grast čar xan (Kalderaš):

Snow up to his knees but his horses eat grass. Said about an untrue or doubtful story.

Tho les tela pato, anklel vi po pato (Kalderaš):

Put him under the bed, he’ll get on it.

Said about a person who takes more than his share.

Maj sigo šin t’i šib sar t’i šib t’o šero te šinel (Lovara):

It’s better to cut your tongue before your tongue cuts your head.



E DŽUVAČI

(katar e Ramo Bejtula)

Čidisajle e barvale, čeren lafi maškár peste. Ječe barvale, řa le i džuv pi kor. Jekh barvalo mandol te řol la katar lesi kor, a i džuv peli tele pi phuv. E bare vačaren kaj sa le i džuv palal pi kor. Vov vačarda: »Na avli mae.« Vov čhuta aščeren te roden i džuv, ali e džuva našti arakhle. Pale disave dive e roktara čhudle o gunoj the arakhle la. I džuv čerdili gabor i bijolica. O barvalo čhinda e džuva, užarda la, řa lači morči thaj čhuta la ane vudara. O barvalo phuřla: »Ko džanol so si kava? Ko pindžarol, kasi morči si kaja, me ka-dav le ječe raklja munřa.« Khoni džangla, kasi morči si goja.

Jekh d'ive avilo gothe jekh haždrano, vačarol: »Me pindžarav, kaj morči kasi le.« Phuřla le o barvalo, kasi si. Vov vačarda: »Kaja morči si katar i džuv kaj phirda tu pi kor.« O barvalo vačarda: »Ak, le me raklja.« Vov řa e barvalse raklja thaj d'elo lasa ano krřo, tale bař. A andre sa manuřengo mas kaj xala o haždrano. Vov vačarda pe řomnače: »Řomnije, te peče kav mas kaj kamam me te xav.« I rakli pekla o mas. Voj čhinda jekh kotor, čhuta talo vudar o mas. Avilo o haždrano, vačarol lače: »K-ave te xa manřo?« Voj: »Našti xav, xalem.« Vov vačarda: »Me ka phuřav e mase. Te na xalan, naj te ave manca lače.« Kana vov xala, phuřla e mase. »Kaj san, masa?« O mas dja-pe anglal: »Me sem tale vudara.« Vov vačarda: »Lače.« Avili i rači te soven. Kana voj suta, vov čhuta po řoro po lako kolin, pijol lako rat. Oteharin i rakli muli. Vov hurada-pe aver seja thaj d'elo gothe ke lako dad, o

ABOUT A LOUSE

(told by Ramo Bejtula)

The rich gathered and talked to one another. One of them had a louse clinging to his neck. Another rich man wanted to remove it, but it fell down to the ground. His friends told him that he had had a louse on the back of his neck. He said: "It couldn't be." He sent out soldiers to search for the louse, but they couldn't find it. Some days later, they found it while rumaging in the garbage. The louse had grown the size of a water ox. The rich man slaughtered it, skinned it, took the skin and nailed it to the door. He asked: "Who knows what this is? I shall give one of my daughters to one who tells me whose skin this is." Nobody guessed correctly whose skin it was.

One day a Haždrano – a maneater – came there and said: "I know what kind of skin this is." The rich man asked him to guess. He said: "This skin belongs to the louse that clung to your throat." The rich man said: "Here, take my daughter." The Haždrano took his daughter, and they went to the karst rock under which he lived. The inside was full of human flesh which the Haždrano used for food. He said to his wife: "Bake this meat, because I want to eat." The girl did it. She cut off a piece of meat and threw it under the door. The Haždrano came and said to her: "Are you coming to dinner?" She answered: "I cannot eat any more; I have eaten already." He said: "I will ask the meat. If you have not eaten, you will suffer the consequences." As he ate, he asked the meat: "Where are you, meat?" The meat answered: "I am under the door." He said: "All right." The night came, and they fell asleep. While the girl was asleep, he laid his

LAJOS ÁMI

III. 3 (see Erdész/Futaky 1996, pp. 299-314)

“Lajos Ámi (Vásárosnamény 1886 – Apagy 1963) is the greatest storyteller in Hungary” writes the ethnologist, Sándor Erdész, in his 1996 book “Zigeunermärchen aus Ungarn” (“Hungarian Gypsytales”). Erdész started to collect Ámi’s tales in 1958 and by 1962 he had recorded 262 of them on tape.

Lajos Ámi was son of a blacksmith Rom, who died when the boy was four, and a Hungarian mother. According to him, he learned his first two tales from his mother, who had in turn learned them from his father. A further eight to ten tales he learned from his stepfather, Imre Balogh, a Rom. With 15 he ran away from home and began to work in a brickyard. He learned many tales there from his colleagues, whom with time he chose according to their skills in taletelling: “Who is able to tell, folks? He shall come and hand me the bricks!” At the age of 18 he had to leave the brickyard and worked in different places until in 1907 he joined a hussar regiment.

At the military, there was telling time every night. Everybody had to present a tale. If somebody wasn’t able to do it, he could chose a paid substitute. Usually the substitute storyteller was Lajos Ámi. But there were other skilled tellers at the regiment, and he memorised their stories as well. He married in 1910, and in 1914 had to return to military again. He told a lot in the trenches and learned new tales there, too. After 1918, according to his memory, he learned not a single new tale. From then on Lajos Ámi performed agricultural work, preferably in the long nights of collective tobacco bunching, where his narrative skills were highly appreciated by the co-workers. So many people came together at his house in his childhood-place Szamosszeg, which he had built in 1925, that he accepted an offer by the innkeeper Dénes to hold these gatherings in his inn for free food and drink. Later he switched over to another inn, and within two years all the others had to close.

barvalo: Lako dad phušla pale. »Ko pindžarol kaj morči, me ka-dav le me raklja, dujtona.« O haždrano vačarol: »Kaja si i džuv kaj phirda tu pi kor.« O barvalo dja le pire dujtone raklja. Vov indarda la čhere ano kršo. Gothe sa mas manušengo. Vov vačarda pe řomnaće te voj pećol kav mas, a voj kandla le. Ľa, pekla o mas, čhinda jekh kotor, čhuta le ano praxo. Vov avilo, arakhol la te xal mas lesa. Vov vačarda: »Naštiv xav, xalem.« Vov darada la: »Te na xalan, ka-čerav tu sar će pheja.« Vov: »Me xalem.« Vov xala o mas thaj akharda e mase. »Kaj san tu, masena?« O mas dja-pe anglal: »Me sem ano praxo.« Avili i raći te soven, pele, pašlile. Kana i rakli suta, vov čhuta po šoro pe late, pila lako rat sa. Teharin huravol-pe aver šeja, đelo pale ko barvalo. Adž ekh drom čhuta i morči o barvalo. Vačarol: »Ko pindžarol la, kasi si, me ka-dav le me terne raklja.« Vov indarol la peste, talo bar.

Kana resle čhere, vov vačarda: »Řomnije, pek kav mas, kan k’avav-tar te xa.« Vov pekla o mas thaj čhinda jekh kotor. Andegoda načhol gothar disavi džukhli. Vov čhol sigate o kotor mas e džukhľaće. E džukhli xala o mas. Avilo o haždrano čhere, phušol la: »K-ave tu te xa mas manca?« Vov vačarda: »Našti xav, me xalem.« Vov darada la: »Ka-phušav e mase, te na xalan, ka-čerdo sar će pheja.« Vov xala thaj phušla e mase: »Masa, kaj san?« O mas dja-pe anglal. »Me sem ano tato por.« O haždrano vačarda: »Akana san tu mi řomni.« A vov ni džangla kaj o mas sa ane džukhľako tato poř. Vov džangla kaj o mas sa ane čhejako por. I rakli teharin thol po muj. Vov džanol te vačarol e bilbilenca. Našti arakhla lil, řa jekh patrin, čhinol po naj, ratesa škurisarda pe dadese: »Te na avilan te le ma, me ka-merav. Me duj pheja mudarde si.« Vačarda e bilbilese i rakli: »Kana ka-

head on her breast and sucked her blood. She was dead in the morning. He put on other clothes and went to her father, the rich man. Her father said again: “I shall give my second daughter to one who tells me whose skin this is.” The Haždrano said: “The skin belongs to the louse that clung to your throat.” The rich man gave him his second daughter. He brought her home under the karst rock. There was human flesh everywhere. He told his wife to bake the meat, and she obeyed. She took the meat, baked it, cut off a piece and threw it in the ashes. He came home and grabbed her, so she would eat the meat with him. She said: “I cannot eat any more, I have eaten already.” He threatened her: “If you have not eaten, you will end up like your sister.” She said: “I have eaten.” He ate the meat and called out: “Where are you, meat?” The meat replied: “I am in the ashes.” The night came, and they went to sleep. Once the girl was asleep, he laid his head on her breast and sucked all her blood. In the morning he put on other clothes and went to the rich man again. Once more the rich man nailed the skin to the door. He said: “I shall give my youngest daughter to one who tells me whose skin this is.” The Haždrano also took her with him under the rock.

When they arrived home, he said: “Wife, bake the meat; I will come to eat then.” She baked it and cut off a piece. A bitch passed by. Quickly she laid the piece of meat before her. The bitch ate the meat. The Haždrano came home and asked her: “Are you going to eat with me?” She answered: “I cannot eat; I have eaten already.” He threatened her: “I will ask the meat. If you have not eaten, you will suffer your sisters’ fate”. While he ate, he asked the meat: “Meat, where are you?” The meat replied: “I am in a warm stomach.” The Haždrano said: “You

COLLECTORS, THEIR IMPETUS AND METHODS

III. 4

Since the second half of the 19th century, a considerable number of Romani tales has been collected and published by non-Romani scholars. To name but a few, John Sampson collected the tales of the Welsh Rom Matthew Wood and published more than 50 of them in the "Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society" at the turn of the centuries; Franz Xaver von Miklosich collected tales in the Habsburg lands and had them published 1874 and 1878 in Vienna; Carl-Herman Tillhagen compiled the book of Johan Dimitri-Taikon's stories first published in 1948; the Hungarian Sándor Erdész published the tales of Lajos Ámi in three volumes in 1968; Rade Uhlik collected tales in Yugoslavia from the 1930s to the 1960s; Mozes F. Heinschink began to record Romani tales in the 1960s; etc.

Thus "outsiders" put down in writing the traditional textuality of the Roma. Apart from some anti-Romani biased scholars, especially in Germany, Austria and Hungary, the impetus

of the collectors lied and still lies in a general fascination for Roma and is accompanied by great mastership in Romani and a vast knowledge of the Romani way of life. The romanticism which accompanied at least many of the 19th century "gypsyologists" has long since given way to a modern understanding of otherness.

Yet there has been a general problem with collecting tales. Stories told in natural narrative situations often differ from tales which (non-Romani) collectors had Romani storytellers dictate to them, in unnatural circumstances. This was understandably noticed by contemporary collectors, and from the 1960s on tales have been recorded to tape. Milena Hübschmannová, and perhaps most notably the Austrian Romist Mozes Heinschink, achieved great naturalness in their recordings. Heinschink's 800 hours of tape recordings likely present the most extensive collection of Romani oral tradition in the world.

džal mo dad teharin te thol po muj, tu de ke leste kaj patrin.« I čirikli dja murti i patrin ano muj, indarda la ko barvalo. O barvalo d'ilabda la thaj bičhaldla sa gači aščeren te maren-pe e haždranosa. Von d'ele te maren-pe lesa. O haždrano sahen mudarda.

Pale disave d'ivesa avili jekh phuri čofi thaj mand'ol afo ko barvalo. Vov phušol e phura: »Si tu khaj čhave, phurije?« Voj vačarda: »Si ma efa čhave.« Phušla la: »Dali si von džuvde?« I phuri vačarda: »Va!« Vov vačarda: »Phurije, te dža te phuše ée čhaven savo zanato si len.« Voj vačarda: »Va, te le mand'e deš metre poxtan, tapale te phušav me čhaven.« O barvalo dja la poxtan thaj voj d'eli čhere. Voj suvol jekh gad. Avol o čhavo o baroder, phušol la: »Kase suve kav gad?« I dej: »Tuče, foke.« Phušol le voj: »Savo zanato si tu?« Vov: »Jekh dumukh čalavav, deš kat kula čerav.« Voj vačarda: »Tuče suvav o gad.« Avilo o dujto čhavo. Voj phušla le savi buči džanol. Vov: »Čhav mo kan paši phuv, me džanav so čerdol ani diňa.« O trito avilo, vačarda: »Katar o maj baro učhipe čalavav e strelasa e sape, mudarav e bilačhen, a e lačhen ni mudarav.« O štarto džanol te astarol ane va e manuše katar o maj baro učhipe. O pandžto vačarol: »Me kaj prastav so do dakikond'e, sa e diňa phirav.« O šovto vačarol: »Me džanav te čorav e manušestar, putrav e vudara, a vov naj te hačarol ma.« O eftato vačarol: »Me džanav kana o manuš avol taj pijol khaječe džene, me ikalav le lestar andar o muj, a vov našti hačarol ma.« I phuri la pe čhaven, d'ele ko barvalo. Vov vačarda: »Te džan te ikalen me raklja katar o haždrano. So sem pharo gači galbeja ka-dav tumen.« O maj cikneder vačarda: »Amen našti akana te ikala la, kaj vov si amaro pharnavo. Pale disave, d'ivesa ka-ikala la.« D'ele-tar.

Tuj džan po drom, vačarol o baroder ječe phralese: »Čhu éo kan ani phuv.« O phral vačarda: »Te prašta sigate se o haždrano čhuta po šoro te pijol la. Ani lindri tuj sovol vov

are my wife now." But he didn't know that the meat was in the warm stomach of the bitch. He was sure that the meat was in the stomach of the girl. In the morning the girl washed her face. She could communicate with nightingales. She couldn't find paper and used leaves instead. She cut her finger and wrote a message in blood to her father: "If you don't rescue me, I am going to die. My two sisters have been murdered." The girl said to a nightingale: "By the time my father has washed his face, you will have given him this leaf." The bird put the leaf in the beak and delivered it to the rich man. He read it and sent out many soldiers to fight against the Haždrano. They fought against him, but he killed them all.

Some days later, a poor, old woman came and begged for flour from the rich man. He asked the old woman: "Do you have any sons?" She said: "I have seven sons." He asked her: "Are they alive?" She said: "Yes!" He said: "Old lady, go and ask your sons what talents they have!" She said: "Well, if I get ten meters of rope, I will ask my sons." The rich man gave her the rope, and she went home. She started sewing a shirt. The oldest son came and asked her: "For whom are you sewing this shirt?" The mother answered: "For you, hold your horses!" She asked him: "What talent have you got?" He: "I strike once with a fist, and a ten storey tower appears." She said: "I am sewing the shirt for you." The second son came. She asked him what he could do. He answered: "I put my ear to the ground, and I know what is going on in the world." The third came, and he said: "I can shoot an arrow from the highest height and kill a snake; it is the evil ones I kill; I never kill the good ones." The fourth could stretch his hands out from the highest height and catch a human. The fifth said: "I run so fast I can travel the whole world in two

TALE-TELLING IN EUROPE

III. 5

Telling tales and listening to it was one of the favorite pastimes of all people in Europe up until the 1930s. In some regions, for instance of Hungary, in the 1950s there were still vespertine gatherings in winter, when no agricultural work had to be done.

Most of the time one after another short tale or anecdote was told, and only rarely longer tales were appreciated. But when, for instance, the women were stripping feathers or peeling maize, there was need of skilled tellers, who could entertain the audience for hours and increase the willingness of the villagers to participate.

However, tale-telling mainly was an art of the rural proletariat, of the workers, and not of the rural or urban establishment. And, while undoubtedly practised at home, too, in public it was the art of known, skilled tale-tellers. These were men who travelled a lot in their early days and acquired a repertoire of 100 to 200 tales. They were shoemakers, tailors, woodcutters, hired fieldworkers, construction workers, seamen, fishermen, or miners. They learned at work, at the military, or in jail – everywhere they had company.

si bidžanglo.« Kana pašile ko bar phušol o maj baroder: »Kaj san tu kaj putre o vudar, a te na džanol khoni.« Vov putarda o vudar. Kana von dije andre, jekh phral ikalda e raklja andar o muj haždranosko, a čhuta lese i bura pajesa. Gaja o haždrano pijol paj. Kala našen. O haždrano džungadilo, prastol pala lende. Kov phral čhuta po kan ani phuv thaj vačarda: »Eketa-lo, pašol.« Jekh phral čalada dumukh, čerda jekh kula, dine andre, bešen. Avilo o haždrano, našti peravol i kula kaj voj sa čerdi andar zurale khula. Te avola katar o bař, peravola la. O haždrano dja vika avral. »Pharnaveja, te putre mand'e jekh xuxoři so suvako kanoři te dikhav e raklja adž ekh drom.« Jekh phral putarda jekh ceřa o vudar. O haždrano crdla la peste thaj vazdla la upre ani havaja. Okova kaj čhudol strela ni mand'ol te čhudol. Vačarda lese: »Čhud, bre!« Vov čhudla. O haždrano pelo, a okova jekh phral astarda e raklja ane va.

E phral d'ele ko barvalo, inđarde lese e raklja. O dad phuřla la: »Kas ka-le čhejene?« Voj vačarda: »Ka-lav akale kaj astarda ma ane va.« Voj řa le, d'ele thaj čerde baro abijav.

III. 6

This tale was told on March 23, 1962, by then 37-year-old Ramo Bejtula, a Gurbet-Romni from Urořevac, Kosovo. Rade Uhlik wrote it down in shorthand.

The tale combines different "types of folktales" as they are collected in the publication by Aarne/Thompson (AT) of the same title. The first part complies with the type of tale "The Louse's Skin" (AT 621); the middle part reminds of "Redemption through the Youngest Sister" (AT 311-I-II) and the last of "The four Daedal Brothers" (AT 653-II-III). Each of these types is common all over Europe and so are the single motifs which can be found in AT as well.

Gurbet is a dialect of the Southern Vlax dialect group. Some of its characteristic features found in the text are: the third person pronouns "vov", "voj", "von"; the possessive "munro" "my"; loan verbs are adapted with "-isar-"; copula 1st SG "sem" "I am"; future tense in "ka" or "k"; negation in "in" or "ni", and "-ej" in "dej" "mother"

(The tale was originally published in Heinschink et al. 2006, pp. 10-19.)

minutes." The sixth said: "I know how to steal from people; I open doors and nobody notices." The seventh said: "I know how to do the following: If somebody is devouring a human, I can pull them out of their mouth again, and they don't notice." The old woman and her sons went to the rich man. He said: "Go and save my daughter from the Haždrano. I shall give you as much gold as I weigh." The youngest said: "We cannot get her out now, because he is our Parnavo, our blood brother. In a few days we will get her out." And they left.

Then they hit the road, and the eldest said to one of the brothers: "Put your ear to the ground." The brother replied: "Let us run fast, because the Haždrano is laying down his head on her breast to suck her blood. In his sleep, while he is dreaming, he is unconscious." As they came near the rock, the eldest asked: "Where is he who opens the door without anyone noticing?" He opened the door. When they went in, other brother pulled the girl out of the mouth of the Haždrano and stuck a barrel in his mouth, so the Haždrano drank water while the others escaped. The Haždrano woke up and chased them. The one who could hear well put his ear to the ground and said: "He is coming closer!" Other brother struck with his fist; a tower appeared, and they went in. The Haždrano arrived, but he wasn't able to tear it down because it was made of solid mud. If it had been made of stone, he would have knocked it over. The Haždrano shouted from outside: "Parnavo, blood-brother, make a small hole, as small as the eye of a needle, so that I can see the girl once again." One brother opened the door a little. The Haždrano took the girl and they went high up in the sky. The one who could shoot an arrow didn't want to shoot. One of them said to him: "Now shoot!" He aimed. The Haždrano fell down, and one of the brothers caught the girl with his hand.

The brothers went to the rich man and brought the daughter back to him. The father asked her: "Which one will you have, daughter?" She said: "I will have the one who caught me with his hand." She chose him; they went and had a big wedding.

JOHAN DIMITRI TAIKON

III. 7 (see Lundgren/Taikon 2003)

Johan Dimitri Taikon (Bollnäs 1879 - Högalids 1950), also known as Miloš, a Kalderaš-Rom of Sweden, most probably is the best known Romani storyteller in the world. This is thanks to the publication of his stories and tales in 1948 and (along with a description of his dialect of Romani) in 1963 which, besides of a wider public, influenced both Romani linguistics and research on folktales.

Johan Dimitri Taikon was born and has died in Sweden but spent most of his time until 1906 abroad. He travelled the Balkans, Poland, Finland, and has been to Italy, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Norway, but most extensively he travelled Russia. His last 30 years he spent in Sweden in his family of coppersmiths, carnies and musicians, and engaged in issues relating Roma.

His son Alyosha recalls: "Daddy was a great storyteller. He certainly knew as many stories as a year has nights. [...] Daddy told stories in a lively manner with gestures. We young ones believed that everything had actually happened, that he himself had met the man who was the child of a horse and that it was our own dad that had cheated the priest of the money. [...] Dad could not read, he had all the stories in his head. He leafed through them there in his mind like a book, to and fro in time. No one knew more about our family and the travels of our people than Dad. That was why he was called in to judge when Gypsies quarrelled and wanted a court hearing."

PEDAR O MULE

(le Julius Horvathistar)

Agun o Roma, kada valako merlahi andar o Roma, upri boxta džahahi, hos agun nana, kaj len sar akan asaj kher hi, kaj len ande šaj čin, na. Agun ando khera le sina upre borim, na. Taj hat akor o cile Roma cam avnahi, te t'akor bešahi odoj sa.

Akor kesdinahi te molinahi taj akor odole muleske mindig loj upro ača činahi, amen ojs fačuvča na džanahahi, soske lenge loj upre čin, na? Mint oda na džanahahi vaš soste, hot oda afka sin, te le mule ule taj ande len hanen, kaj len upro ar them loj te ol. Mint akor oda amen na džanahahi. Taj sako avrijal le phukavlahi, na. Taj use sako Romende oda avrijal hi, adaj sar us'amende adaj le sina, adaj loj lenge upre činahi, a münčen lenge upre činahi, hate srastune loj, na, lenge upre činahi upro ača. Entveder, kaj le lenge kuj te likernahi vaj o kola papal phenahi, kaj len ando ar them loj te ol. Taj afka sina taj akor molinahi taj akor pinahi hojt. T'akor hojt rixtig hojt fa obšidinahi le mulen usi boxta, na. Ačonahi duj di len majstns o Roma agun len boxtalinahi, na, kada valako merlahi, taj akor hojt oda afka sina, sar akan.

Palo mule tumenge phukavav, sar sina, kada mro bači use mande sina, kada mulo. Mro bači avral, kada mulo, avral ande pumari vora mulo, t'akor ande le legede, t'akor ando vodro ganc mulo. Taj pal ek, duj masek sune diklom pal leste. Sojahi taj na, na sojahi rixtig, rixti na sojahi! Uprosefkar esbe lijom, sar valako mro va – mro va teli pernica sina, taj tato sina ando vodro, taj koja – ham uprosefkar sar mro va esbe lijom sar use mande lo sina taj mro va aun astarča taj leskero šudro va mange aun astarča, sar le esbe lijom leskero va. Taj phenča mange: "Ma dara", phenča, "na kerav tuke ništa na", phenča, "čak dikav, sar tuke džal taj so keres", phenča. Taj mindig, kada dživlahi mro bači, phenlahi mange, asaj rupune loj le sina, na. Taj vaš odola

ON THE DEAD

(told by Julius Horvath)

We used to hold a death watch if one of us Roma died. Back then there was no house where you could bring the dead to. They used to be laid out at home, where all the Roma came together and sat together the whole night.

First they began to pray, and then they always placed money on the eyes of the dead person. We were children, and we didn't know why they did that. We didn't know it was done so that after they had died and been buried the dead would have money in the underworld. We didn't know it then. Besides, everybody told us a different story. And it is different with different Roma. Here they put coins on the eyes; there they placed notes on them either to close them or to give them money to take it with them in the underworld. So it was. And then they prayed, and later they drank. They really said goodbye to the dead at a wake. Back then most of them stayed two days if somebody died.

Of the dead I want to tell you, and how it was when my uncle visited me after he had died. He collapsed outside, in the yard of his house. They brought him in, and he died in bed. One or two months later I dreamt of him. I slept, and I didn't sleep, no, I couldn't sleep right. All of a sudden I felt that somebody had taken my hand – my hand was under the duvet where it was warm – suddenly I felt his hand as if he were near me, touching me with his cold hand. And he said: "Don't be afraid. I won't harm you. I'm just looking after you and want to know how you are, and what you have been doing." When he had been still alive, my uncle had always told me that he had copper money.

HOSPITALITY AND FIELD WORK

III. 8 (Mozes F. Heinschink, unpublished passage of an Interview conducted by Michael Teichmann in 2007)

"As for hospitality: When I review my field trips one thing keeps fascinating me. My journeys to the Roma on the Balkans, in Kosovo, Turkey, Bulgaria, lead to some villages where the bus went to, but didn't go back. And I went to the Roma and I said: "Now, here I am." Essential prerequisite, of course, is language ability. As a stranger, you are welcomed there, it happened to me a 50 or a 100 times: The people don't know you at all, but you are their guest for the night. Your feet are being washed. This is no longer

practised, but until 20 years ago it was. Your feet are not being washed in a symbolic way, like, for instance, the Pope's in Rome. It is a ritual of hospitality that I have highly enjoyed. Imagine you are a complete stranger and you are invited and your feet are being washed and you are attended to. This is not conceivable with us. I have experienced it again and again. Most of my recordings originated in such a way."

mindig khelavahi le, mint phenahi: "Mro bači, de mange adala loj." Taj mindig phenlahi: "Te mujom, mro čau, šaj tu adola loj les", phenlahi, "adala tre hi. Tri muam iste len tuke del adala loj." Taj pal odola loj sune diklom ando suno, kada lo use mande sin. Phučlahi mandar mro bači, phenča: "Dija tuke tri muam odola loj, so me tuke mindig phenahi, hot tre hi?" Taj mra muamake oda phukavahi račaha, ham na pačani mange. T'akor mro bači ari alo račaha, oča alo us'amende taj oda o genau o glajxi lake phukača, sar mange mro bači phenča ando suno, te leske phučla lestar, te mange mri muam odola rupune loj dija.

Oda hi te akan meg mindig, kada – so mri daj taj mro dad mulo taj kada – mindig, kada mange šlext džal vaj nasvalo som taj valaso, mindig adaj hi le, taj mindig hi le adaj taj kada hi man problem vaj valaso, mindig on adaj hi taj mindig tröstinen man.

Taj agun na pačahi, hot o mule šaj mange sikan. Ham o mulo naštig tuke ništa kerel, mint te sikal pe tuke, oda sikal tut, te tut kamla taj koja dafia pe tut mindig sikal pe, o mule. Taj dafia na pekal niko te daral, hot o mulo valaso kerel lenge. Taj sako mereš pal al uso pro nipo taj dikel, so keren taj so koja. Vašajnlx mindig hi le adaj lafka.

Taj agun na pačahi ada koja, hot ada šaj afka ol, hot on šaj pal an taj šaj tröstinen man vaj šaj mange phukan. Taj mindig upre mande auf pasinahi, mro nipo akan sar sina. Akan pačav le, agun na pačahi ada meg.

Because of this money, I had always pestered him for it shouting: "My uncle, give me this money!" And he had always said: "When I die, my child, you can have that money. It belongs to you. Your aunt has to give it to you." It was the money I dreamt of when he came to me. My uncle asked me: "Did your aunt give you the money I always said it belonged to you?"

In the morning I told this to my aunt, but she didn't believe me. But then my other uncle came and told her exactly the same. My uncle had asked him as well if my aunt had given me the copper money.

It's like that even to this very day: if I'm doing badly or if I'm ill, then they are always there to help. When I'm hard up, or if I am in trouble, they are close by to comfort me.

In former days I didn't believe that the dead may appear to me. But the dead can't harm you, because if they appear to you it means they love you. That's why they appear often to you. And that's why nobody has to fear the dead. And everybody loves to go back to their people to see how they are. Probably they are among us all the time anyway.

However, in former days I didn't believe that they may come back and comfort me or tell me something. But they have always watched over me, my people. I didn't use to believe it, but today I am convinced of it.

III. 9

This text was told in 1999 by Julius Horvath, a Burgenland Rom. It was recorded by the Romani-Project and originally published in Halwachs et al. (2000), pp. 160-165.

In addition to the fact that it is in a (non-Vlax) Central Romani dialect and thus complementing the Vlax-tale above, this text was chosen for several reasons: Firstly, it is a typical mulo-story (presented as true and featuring a "mulo"). Secondly, not only does Julius Horvath tell the story, but he also says something about the tradition of wakes and the role of the "mule". Thirdly, it becomes clear that with regards

to the Burgenland Romani group, the corresponding traditions are on the decline or have been abandoned completely. Yet the mule still continue to play a role in the life of the people. Therefore, in contrast to other tales mulo-stories are still told.

Burgenland Romani belongs to the Southern Central dialect group. Characteristic features found in the text include the form "sina" for "he/she was"; third person pronouns "ov, oj, on"; demonstratives in "ada"; imperfect in "-ahi" and loss of final "-s" as in "va" "hand".

NALAČO SUNO | NIGHTMARE (by an unknown Xaladytka-speaking singer)

Na dža, pšala, dr'ada drom,
Don't go, brother, on this journey,

Nalačo suno dikhjom,
I had a nightmare,

Nalačo suno dikhjom,
I had a nightmare,

Bokhalo me vígijom
I went hungry.

Trin jov šagi progija,
He went three steps,

Palal vístrelo šund'a,
Heard a shot behind him,

Umarde mir pšales,
They killed my brother,

Umarde les, čorores
They killed him, the poor.

Geja daj les te rodel.
Mother went to look for him,

Te rodel peskre čaves,
To look for her child,

Saro sveto progeja,
The whole world she searched,

Ne čaves joj na latxja.
But did not find her son.

E čaves joj na lathja,
She did not find her son,

Joj lathja leskre gada,
She found his clothes,

Joj lathja leskre gada,
She found his clothes,

Sare sís jone rata.
They were full of blood.

Umarde les, umarde!
They killed him, killed [him]!

Umarde mire čaves,
Killed my son,

Umarde mire čaves,
Killed my son,

Umarde les došale!
Killed him shamefully!

This song was recorded by Lev Tcherenkov in a village near Briansk, Central Russia, in the early 1950s; unfortunately he does not give any information on the singer, except that he or she spoke Xaladytka Romani.

Xaladytka belongs to the Northeastern dialect group of Romani; characteristic features found in the text include: third person pronouns "jov, joj/jej, jone"; 3rd SG past in "-a" as in "jov progija"; and "pšal" for "brother".

III. 10 (The song was originally published in Tcherenkov/Laederich 2004, pp. 758-9.)

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