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## Media, Minority, Visibility: Gurbet Roma in a Virtual World

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**Special Issue**

**Mediterranean Network  
Publics and Citizenship.**

Civic engagement, political participation and  
cultural practices in the social media landscape  
in the Mediterranean area

Stefania Manca - Maria Ranieri  
Editors



RiMe 15/1

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### Indice

Luciano Gallinari <i>Di Storia e Social Media</i>	5–6
Stefania Manca – Maria Ranieri <i>Editorial</i>	7–9
Afef Hagi <i>La naissance du mouvement antiraciste tunisien: nouvelles pratiques militantes à travers les réseaux sociaux. Une étude qualitative</i>	11-32
Sami Zlitni - Fabien Liénard <i>#TNelec: les élections législatives en micromessages</i>	33-51
Tiziana Chiappelli - Federico Trentanove <i>The role of social media in Maghreb after the Arab springs between migrants and associations: the case of Boukhalef (Tangier, Morocco)</i>	53-79
Maria Ranieri - Francesco Fabbro <i>Primavera Araba a Primavalle. Un'esperienza di educazione ai media e alla cittadinanza nell'era dei social network</i>	81-99
Juan Bautista Martínez Rodríguez - Elisa Hernández Merayo <i>Medios de comunicación y nuevas prácticas ciudadanas de adolescentes y jóvenes</i>	101-116

Zoran Lapov

117-140

*Media, Minority, Visibility: Gurbet Roma in a Virtual World*

## Media, Minority, Visibility: Gurbet Roma in a Virtual World

Zoran Lapov  
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### *Abstract*

Amidst various thematic areas, sociocultural issues have proved to be an integral part of the topics commonly discussed by Roma navigators. Based on empirical research, this work observes the phenomenon among Gurbet Roma native to Kosovo and Macedonia. On one hand, the paper delves into the feelings experienced by Roma in relation to social media and to their practical application in Romani (micro-level); on the other hand, it explores social media being employed as a tool of cultural, linguistic, and spiritual promotion of Roma communities (macro-level).

### *Keywords:*

Roma people, minority, language, religion, virtuality, visibility.

### *Riassunto*

Tra le diverse aree tematiche, le questioni socioculturali si sono rivelate una parte integrante degli argomenti comunemente trattati dai navigatori Rom. A partire da una ricerca empirica, il fenomeno è stato osservato presso i Rom Gurbeti originari del Kosovo e della Macedonia. Da un lato, l'articolo sonda i sentimenti provati dai Rom nei confronti dei social media e della loro applicazione pratica in romané (livello micro); dall'altro, esso esamina i social media impiegati come strumento di promozione culturale, linguistica e spirituale delle comunità Rom (livello macro).

### *Parole chiave:*

Rom, minoranza, lingua, religione, virtualità, visibilità.

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1. Target Community: Southern Gurbet Roma. - 2. Language Issues: Contacts, Influences, Vitality. - 3. Religious Environs of Gurbet Roma. - 4. From a Virtual Allurement to a Globalised Visibility. - 5. Gurbet Romani enters Virtuality as a "Religious" Language. - 6. Virtuality as a Pedagogical Space. - 7. Southern Gurbets and Religion: What Virtual Suggestions? - 8. Instead of Conclusions. - 9. Bibliography. - 10. Curriculum vitae.

### 1. Target Community: Southern Gurbet Roma

The community addressed by this work is commonly known – in the field of Romani studies – by the name of *Gurbet Roma*<sup>1</sup>. The community is defined by its linguistic (Gurbet Romani) and territorial (Western Balkans) boundaries traced by scholars, meaning that not all of Gurbet Roma recognise themselves as “Gurbets” or “Gurbet” Romani speakers. On the basis of this definition, four main branches have been identified: 1. western Gurbet (Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro); 2. northern Gurbet (Vojvodina); 3. eastern Gurbet (Serbia); and 4. southern Gurbet (Kosovo, Macedonia, South Serbia; the Macedonian branch being known as *Džambas Roma*)<sup>2</sup>. In this panorama, southern Gurbets are one of those communities that do recognise themselves (at least partly) as Gurbet Roma by using the term *Gurbét(or)a* (pl) as a part of their self-designating ethnic references.

Gurbet Roma constitute an important segment of Romani population on few levels: they form a substantial part of the general picture of Balkan Roma communities; moreover, the cluster of their linguistic varieties is one of the largest Romani language families in the Balkans, diffused traditionally in the western half of the Peninsula coinciding with the former Yugoslav territories.

Many components of Gurbet Roma (especially those native to Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia) are nowadays dispersed out of their native territories. Following general migration trends of the former Yugoslav population, many Roma opted for departing too: their decision was prompted by socio-economic (since the late 1960s) and political crisis (1980s), as well as by the armed conflict (1990s) – thus, they have turned from citizens into economic migrants, refugees, and displaced persons<sup>3</sup>. Some of them re-entered their native regions, but the most of Roma emigrants have stayed abroad, chiefly in various EU countries. Many of them do not even consider the possibility of repatriation or investment in their countries of origin, vis. the former Yugoslav republics. Such a stand makes them invest in their lives in “new” contexts: and this is actually where their virtual meetings took a “new” shape too.

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<sup>1</sup> Z. Lapov, *Vačaré romané?*; Idem, “Les Roms Gurbets”, pp. 154-177; Idem, “I Rom portatori del sincretismo religioso”, pp. 121-122; Idem, “L'univers musical d'une communauté romani”, pp. 160-183.

<sup>2</sup> Z. Lapov, *Vačaré romané?*; Idem, “Les Roms Gurbets”, pp. 154-177.

<sup>3</sup> Z. Lapov, *Vačaré romané?*



## 2. Language Issues: Contacts, Influences, Vitality

Often multilingual, Roma are familiar with the linguistic diversity of the given context: though being their first choice, Romani can be blended with other languages, usually beginning from the local majority language. As a result, the repertoire of Indo-Aryan extraction is sprinkled with words whose roots are to be sought in diverse contact languages Romani has been in touch with.

In their original environs, Gurbet dialects find themselves in contact with Romani and non-Romani languages. Their northern branches (Vojvodina, northern Serbia) live along with Romani varieties of *Kalderash* and *Lovari* type, as well as with diverse non-Romani languages – Serbian, Rumanian, Croatian, and Hungarian (to mention the most diffused ones). Going south, other languages gradually make their entrance into the cluster of communication possibilities: *Arli* Romani becomes important as from the central Balkans southwards; another variety that southern Gurbets are acquainted with (esp. in Kosovo and north-western Macedonia) is *Bugurdži*. At the same time, Slavic languages (Serbian, Bosnian as used by Bosniaks, Macedonian, Bulgarian), Albanian, and – historically speaking – Turkish, take more space in central and southern Balkans.

On a par with other Balkan languages, Romani has incorporated a number of words loosely defined as Turkisms<sup>4</sup>: a good deal of these are actually Arabisms and Persianisms, mediated – in a historical time period – by Turkish in their transition to other languages. The chronological formula of the process would be roughly the following: Arabic → Persian (admitting the possibility of Persian-to-Arabic middle step) → Turkish → Albanian, Bosniak (or else Slavic language) → Romani.

The contact that southern Gurbets have experienced with the speakers of *Arli* Romani varieties deserves few more lines. Broadly speaking, *Arli* dialects predominate throughout the territories of central and southern Balkans. A glance at the sociocultural history of Roma communities in the Balkans will help us better understand the phenomenon which has brought about a row of sociocultural implications among local Roma communities: given their long-time presence in the Balkans, *Arli*Roma are regarded as “indigenous” by non-Roma population; they entered in a closer contact with non-Roma populations; the most prominent Roma exponents (sociocultural, political, religious) came out from this community first; *Arli* Roma have a longer writing history; accordingly, the first edition of the Koran was also produced in *Arli*<sup>5</sup>; finally, *Arli* dialects are

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<sup>4</sup> V. A. Friedman, “Toward Defining the Position of Turkisms in Romani”, pp. 251-268.

<sup>5</sup> M. Serbezovski, *Kur’ani*.

preserved by the lyrics of Romani songs, being these varieties the overriding linguistic choice of singing repertoires among Roma in central and southern Balkans (touching also Roma singers whose mother tongue is other than Arli). All in all, the Arli linguistic variety has been granted a certain level of prestigiousness, being one of the most used and recorded expressions of the Romani language in the Balkans.

Other varieties came out more recently to be employed in a written form by their native speakers, and to become one of the possible media for the promotion of Romani culture. As far as various Gurbet dialects are concerned, their diffused usage in mass media became a reality in the late 1970s.

This was the picture up to the 1960s, when some first groups – mainly Bosnian Roma – started emigrating, followed by migrations of other Yugoslav Roma (with an outburst in the 1990s), which has brought about a further expansion of their linguistic varieties to central, western and northern Europe. As a consequence, the territory of Gurbet dialects has taken much larger contours going far beyond the boundaries of their original regions, being Gurbet speakers spread today throughout the European Union.

Due to historical sociocultural circumstances, as well as to the policies addressing sociocultural inclusion (or exclusion) of Roma minorities, their mother tongue finds itself in different states of vitality, both home and abroad. While being affected by fragility or even extinction in some contexts, Romani proves to be vital and productive in other cases. As for the contribution from migration experiences, these have even helped the Romani language prosper in some realities being the spectrum of opportunities to promote their sociocultural and linguistic diversity larger in some migration contexts than in their native lands.

### *3. Religious Environs of Gurbet Roma*

Roma do not defer from other people in managing their spiritual legacy. As in other societies, members of Roma communities are variously exposed to religious feelings that can be expressed in different ways and to different extents. Accordingly, the scale of possibilities comprises: strictly religious persons, families or even communities; individuals or groups whose religiousness rests on a certain number of elements; those who are nominally religious; plus secular individuals or groups of people. Thereby, when talking about religious Roma, we have in mind those who declare themselves as such no matter what is the level of their actual involvement. It is not only about depicting the context, but about approaching the topic of the paper: the said

aspects are relevant as they occupy an important place in online Roma discussions.

Various Roma groups espoused various faiths, and refer to the religion they belong to in order to get answers regarding their personal, family and community life. Due to historical and sociocultural fluctuations, Roma in the Balkans are generally split up between Christians and Muslims, including further options. Many of Roma groups in the south-eastern Balkans are Muslims who are, moving north and west, gradually replaced by their Christian counterparts<sup>6</sup>. As for the Western Balkans, Roma are mainly Muslims in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Montenegro, south-eastern Serbia, Kosovo, and Macedonia – the said regions welcome good portions of non-Roma Muslim population too, which is particularly important in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia; this means that in the rest of the Region, namely in central and northern Serbia, Vojvodina, Croatia and Slovenia, Roma belong to Christianity. These maps reflect historical dynamics and state formations that produced such a socio-demographic segmentation and territorial distribution between religions as it was in force over some five centuries now. Inner migrations have brought about changes, but this picture can be adopted as a traditional distribution of Roma population by religion in the Balkans.

Islam was introduced to the Balkans by Osmanli Turks as from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards<sup>7</sup>. Vestiges of the phenomenon are recognisable at many levels: lifestyle, traditions, language, aesthetics, arts, architecture, religion, philosophy, etc., being the impact of Islam (as a culture) particularly strong in those regions where the Ottoman domination was more present. As for religious environs, the beingness of Islam implies inner subdivisions, hence the main Sunni and Shiite branches are represented along with Sufi, or rather dervish oases, that can be found in various corners of the Region.

Southern Gurbet Roma have found themselves in this setting: namely, the cultural contours of the community shape an example of minority Islam being superposed over the set of Balkan sociocultural patterns which has benefited from exchange with Mediterranean, Pannonian, East European and Near Eastern cultures. Besides, a good part of Roma groups in central and southern Balkans, including the community of southern Gurbets, belong to dervish(i.e. mystical) orders of Islam<sup>8</sup>. Being under a strong impact of the local sociocultural

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<sup>6</sup> Z. Lapov, *Vačaréromané?*; Idem, “Les Roms Gurbets”; Idem, “I Rom portatori del sincretismo religioso”; E. Marushiakova – V. Popov, “Roma Muslims in the Balkans”.

<sup>7</sup> E. Marushiakova – V. Popov, *Ciganite v Osmanskata imperija (Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire)*.

<sup>8</sup> Z. Lapov, *Vačaré romané?*; Idem, “I Rom portatori del sincretismo religioso”; T. Petrovski, “Dervish Rituals and Songs Among Muslim Roms in Skopje”. See also G. Mandel, *Storia del sufismo* and Idem, *La via al Sufismo. Nella spiritualità e nella pratica*.

landscape, Balkan and Islamic elements are overlapped in the culture of this community, hence the knowledge of original Islamic precepts is not always available<sup>9</sup>. And indeed: the sources of Islamic tradition in their hands have passed through various cultural, social, linguistic, and other filters. To boot, the community finds itself in touch with other traditions (mostly Christian), which is affecting their culture and community life to various extents. The type of Islam practiced by southern Gurbets was basically inherited from local Albanians and Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaksi. e. *Bošnjaci*)<sup>10</sup> who had adopted their faith from Turks in the past centuries. Lately, however, the situation has taken new switches as some community exponents have learnt Arabic, which enables them to have a direct access to the sources referred in this language.

Before broaching the issue of Roma as religious persons, it is essential to understand their status in the given social context. The question “*what was the share of Roma in religious leadership?*” calls for a few words about their condition in the Ottoman Empire. The relevant literature informs that Roma, like other communities, were subject to a specific tax system in conformity to their trades and lifestyle. Despite their generally low status as *Çingeneler* (Gypsies), the segment of Muslim Roma – on a par with other Muslims – was accorded a more favourable treatment if compared to other religious groups<sup>11</sup> (see Marushiakova, Popov 2000). This, however, did not entail their immediate access to all of the possible benefits, and far less to important positions in religious hierarchies.

Roma themselves remind as it was unusual, even difficult for various reasons, to find a Romani preacher, or other religious figure, up to some 20 to 30 years ago – these positions, as for the Balkan Muslim scene, used to be held by people coming from other communities, mostly Bosniaks, Albanians, and (earlier in time) Turks. Similar circumstances could be observed among Christians, both in the Balkans and beyond. What is relevant for the present discourse is that members of various Roma communities have begun to take part in religious life, not only as worshippers, but as spiritual leaders too. This tendency is not always favourably judged, and may – at times – entail inner divergences, for instance between Sufi tradition, Balkan Islam, and possible new trends; even so, it is more often accepted than rejected by religious communities, especially in the scope of alternative, mystic or differently definable fractions, such as Protestant orders, as for Christians, and Sufis, as for a Muslim milieu.

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<sup>9</sup> Z. Lapov, “Jezik, teritorijalnost, pripadnost – stazama romskih identiteta”, pp. 729-768.

<sup>10</sup> In local Slavic languages, the population is called *Bošnjaci* (plural of *Bošnjak*).

<sup>11</sup> E. Marushiakova – V. Popov, *Ciganite v Osmanskata imperija (Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire)*.

#### 4. *From a Virtual Allurement to a Globalised Visibility*

Mass media are not a new phenomenon among Roma: throughout Europe and beyond, Roma individuals and groups have relied on mass media since decades now, especially on “traditional” tools of mass communication such as journals, books, recorded music, radio and television broadcasting, films etc.<sup>12</sup>.

In the attempt to stay abreast of changes and novelties, Roma have not been immune to the alluring universe of virtuality: in fact, virtual waves raging from cell phone facilities (e.g. SMS writing) to web tools have inundated their everyday life, taking Roma users to new levels of interaction. Internet – as the most representative virtual device – has made a massive impact on the Romani being. Result: emails, chats, blogs, video channels, textual materials, photo galleries, and other ways of virtual exchange, offered by the Internet as a communication platform, are daily used by numbers of Roma visitors. And the boom of the last ten to fifteen years – counting pages loaded with music numbers, family celebrations, rituals, love messages, comments and remarks, greetings and blessings, talks and conversations, comical sketches, politics, and other contents – calls for a mention. Having inseparably entered their lives, telecommunication with its endless possibilities led Roma to interface with the globalised world and to become a part of its population – concisely: Roma have got globalised.

A crucial aspect in this process is that mass media have helped Roma affirm their political and cultural rights which is highly important in the battle for their minority status, either in the contexts where it has been recognised or not. In those European realities where Roma people are recognised as citizens and minority, their condition is announced by means of web pages of regional and national institutions: joined in diverse organisations, Roma avail themselves of the same space to assert and promote their citizen and minority rights<sup>13</sup>. In the realities where their status is still waiting for a political acknowledgement (e.g. in Italy)<sup>14</sup>, Roma – often backed by human rights supporters and related organisations – use the Internet as a platform to spread the information about

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<sup>12</sup> See A. Friedman, “The Romani Language in the Republic of Macedonia: Status, Usage, and Sociolinguistic Perspectives”, pp. 317-339; Idem, “The Romani Press in Macedonia: Language and Perspective”, pp. 175-191. D.W Halwachs, “Language planning and media: the case of Romani”, pp. 381-401; Idem “Linguistic Diversity, Dominated Languages and the Internet: The Case of Romani Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace”, pp. 272-281.

<sup>13</sup> V. Novoselsky, “The Role of Internet in the Empowerment of Roma Nation”; Idem, “The role of media in the process of implementation of Roma National Integration Strategies”; “The Role Of Communication And Information In The Affirmation Of Roma Cause”; O. Galjus, “A Media Guided by Our Own Hand”.

<sup>14</sup> Z. Lapov, “Romset Sinti en Italie. Une histoire de non-reconnaissance”.

their current predicament as a non-recognised minority with the hope to realise their dream of becoming a part of the “recognised” society someday.

At the same time, mass media, especially web facilities, have been a significant vehicle of sociocultural change in Roma communities. Individuals and organised groups make an extensive use of them to this purpose. Numerous are web pages presenting the activities pursued by Romani and mixed cultural associations, NGOs, political parties, clubs, networks, enterprises, and other organisations, engaged in promoting Romani language and culture.

Among historical electronic resources, the *Patrin Web Journal* (hosted by GeoCities, <[www.Geocities.ws](http://www.Geocities.ws)>) occupies a special place in the Romani virtual world (<<http://www.geocities.ws/patrin01/>>)<sup>15</sup> Dedicated to Romani culture and engaged in extending awareness on Roma's wish for an active sociocultural and political participation, the page features publications addressing topics ranging from history, politics, rights, minority status, Romani activism, legal issues to culture, traditions, literature, education, theatre, and so on. Besides, it offers access to additional links. Once on the Page, readers are welcomed by *Patrin* in English, and two Romani varieties – Vlax (of *Kalderash* type) and Sinti – as follows:

Welcome to Patrin, dedicated to Romani (Gypsy) culture and history and to extending awareness of the continuous Roma struggle to achieve and maintain dignity and freedom. Patrin is a learning resource and information centre about Romani culture, social issues, and current events. To Roma the world over, we send the message: we will remember!

Romále! Phralále! Patrin si katéando Internet te phenél le gadjéngépeamaríkultúra. Von kamprimisarénaménmáshkarlénde maj lashés te zhanénvórtakonsamthaj sar si amarótrájo. Atúnci amé musáj te dasvórba le gadjéntsapeaméndeajkadiáamaróglásokamavélashundó. Amé trobúl te sam maj pachivalé le gadjéNDARAJ te arakhás amé pemishtimáste. Kadeá amé shajavás maj zuralé. AshénDevlésa! But baxtajsastimóstuménge!

Rom! Prale! Patrinhi-lokáte an u Internet te penélap u gádjepre i márikultúra. Jon dikén-le apméndefédar te djanénamishtókunhamuntharhi-lomaródjibén. Mu te rakrá mit u gádjepreméndeuntkjákemarishtímavel-li shundí. Mu te va érligedarunkamlédar fun u gádje. An kajáshíkta amé va zorelédar. Chéna mit u BároDével! But baxtuntsastibéntuménge!

The welcome is concluded by an exclamation inviting Roma to arise jointly for their rights: *Sa o Roma phrala, Opré Roma!* (All Roma brothers, Roma Arise!)

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<sup>15</sup> *The Patrin Web Journal*- Copyright © 1996-2002 by the Patrin Web Journal. All Rights Reserved. All articles are copyrighted by the Patrin Web Journal or their respective authors.

Another important example is given by *Roma Virtual Network (RVN)*, hosted by Google Groups. Along with other information, the Page provides: Roma News on Facebook, On-line Calendar of Romani Events, Directory of Links to Roma Websites, and LinkedIn connection.<sup>16</sup> As stated by its promoters,

Roma Virtual Network (RVN) is a public grass-roots initiative whose activity is closely connected with such international organizations as European Roma Rights Center (ERRC), International Romani Union (IRU) and the European Roma Information Office (ERIO). It is aimed to provide the international Romani community and friendly non-Roma organizations and individuals with useful information on Roma issues in variety of languages via the Internet. Since July 1999 the activity of RVN actively helps facilitate the cooperation and exchange of information within Roma organizations and individuals, between Roma and non-Roma organizations and individuals and also between Roma civil society and official institutions. It relates with the variety of Roma-related political, cultural, economic and social issues on local and international levels. It is aimed to support the improvement of the Roma situation in Europe and other regions of the world.

The outlined achievements were followed by further conquests: the use of virtual tools has led Roma communities to expand to novel sociocultural, linguistic, political, and else horizons. Underpinned by its transnational dimension, the phenomenon has further facilitated the communication between Roma individuals and communities. Most importantly, by reaching new frontiers of their social and cultural life, Roma gained a new globalised visibility.

##### *5. GurbetRomani enters Virtuality as a "Religious" Language*

Allowing their visitors to cross "realities", virtual landscapes put Roma navigators into contact with further experiences, cultures, faiths, and language choices have not been indifferent to sociocultural fluctuations nor technological inventiveness<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Roma News on Facebook (<<https://www.facebook.com/roma.virtual.network>>), On-line Calendar of Romani Events (<[http://www.my.calendars.net/Roma\\_Network](http://www.my.calendars.net/Roma_Network)>), Directory of Links to Roma Websites (<[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Romano\\_Liloro/links](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Romano_Liloro/links)>), LinkedIn connection (<<http://hu.linkedin.com/in/romavirtualnetwork>>).

<sup>17</sup> D.W Halwachs, "Language planning and media: the case of Romani"; Idem "Linguistic Diversity, Dominated Languages and the Internet: The Case of Romani Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace".

Traditionally, southern Gurbets used to reach their spiritual knowledge by means of the languages spoken by nearby Muslim communities, namely Albanian, Bosnian, Turkish, or Arli Romani (though not spoken in the Balkans, Arabic or its fragments are used in prayers, sayings, songs, or else language domains). In this scope, particularly gripping is the linguistic mosaic that devotional singing is permeated with, being Sufi chants (*ilahije*) performed in any of available “Islamic” languages: ranging from Turkish and Arabic to Albanian and Bosnian, performances have lately landed in Romani.

The recent history saw a growing number of learned people among Roma, which has implied new prospects of enlarging people's knowledge, including the overcoming of professional and linguistic frontiers. The phenomenon, that was rather parallel with the expansion of virtual opportunities, has further entailed the admittance of Roma representatives to formal religious milieux. As a result, Roma people were granted a new visibility resting upon two processes in combination: the presence of religious figures – preachers, pastors, imams, sheikhs, etc. – emerging from the rows of Roma believers, whose beingness has been fostered by resorting to the potential of social media.

Meanwhile, materials in various languages have become more available thanks to a continuous increase of virtual reality. What is more, the multilingual reality of virtual meetings provides its users with additional possibilities of polysemy and multilevel synonymy relying on a varied language assortment. Along with this process, Roma's multilingual skills are invested in the field of virtual communication, while new languages are being learnt by individuals or groups which brings English, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, or else languages closer to the linguistic and sociocultural experience of Roma people.

Due to this novel knowledge, the access to original sources of spiritual tradition is far more open, which gave rise to online excerpts from sacred scriptures (of any faith) integrated with translations and interpretations in Romani<sup>18</sup>. Since Romani has become another language used as a medium of religious transmission, southern Gurbet has also found its place among “Islamic” languages. Virtual materials in southern Gurbet can be combined with Arli writings or rather “contaminated” by elements coming from Arli dialects or other languages. Withal, community members have become regular guests in

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<sup>18</sup> Romani translations of religious texts was a reality existing even before virtual facilities had been introduced and expanded. With this regard, we would like to recall TrifunDimić's work including translation of Christian scriptures into northern Gurbet. See T. Dimić, *Đili pe điljende*, and Idem, *Nevo sovlahardo čidipe*.



the field of virtual interaction, hence “pure” Gurbet texts are no longer a novelty<sup>19</sup>.

Such a state of affairs has stimulated further sociocultural and linguistic adaptations. First of all, a particular religious terminology was moulded inside the Romani language: as for the southern Gurbet variety, its religious vocabulary pullulates with words of Arabic and Persian (less Turkish) origin prevailing in some spheres upon the relevant Romani segment, which is due to a stronger Islamic legacy of the former, and its usage in the languages of other Muslim communities. Another aspect, commonly accompanying the survival of minority languages, is to be reckoned: when no Romani word exists to depict a particular concept, Romani speakers resort to other languages in order to fill up the gap. Sometimes, semantic nuances are supplied by both Romani and borrowed lexical funds; some others, the verve of Romani language inspires the creativity of its speakers to coin words and expressions destined to be used as synonyms or semantic variants of the concerned religious terminology of non-Romani origin.

Finally, the importance of materials produced in Romani, as well as of the language itself, is being emphasised by the qualifier “*romano*” in combination with other elements. This operation yields locutions such as *romanó dérsi* (Romani lecture) or *romané dérsora* (Romani lectures) to introduce lectures in Romani, especially on religious matters; or *romané ilahíje* (Romani devotional songs) to introduce, instead, devotional Sufi chants in Romani.

## 6. *Virtuality as a Pedagogical Space*

As emphasised by community exponents, virtual reality in Romani is charged of a specific pedagogical mission: it brings into being a new support to women, children and elderly people, as well as to the less-schooled regardless of their sex and age. Community members not speaking a mainstream language have access to information in their mother tongue now. Statements of that kind are referred to those women and men who have not been privileged to embark on formal education, and to the children who are in the stage of learning the majority language and have, thanks to Romani web pages, the possibility to both study in Romani and keep their language alive.

A crucial point is that jumping into virtuality helped spreading the use of writing and reading in one of those many societies which had made a little use

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<sup>19</sup> While web pages made by and for Muslim Roma are mainly composed in Arli and Gurbet varieties, pages made by and for Christian Roma are available in various Romani dialects, such as Kalderash, Lovari, Gurbet, Sinti, etc.

of these skills up to some decades ago. Before going any further, it is essential to remind that Roma are not an “oral society” par excellence that would be characterised by “oral culture” as its exclusive property. Put differently, while the orality marked the history of the globe, literacy, not to say a diffused literacy, entered the scene quite recently; besides, the orality, as taught by W. Ong (*Orality and Literacy*), has survived across centuries, and accompanied the existence of most of societies. Even in those sociocultural contexts that could boast of having the writing as a distinctive trait of their beingness, diffusion and intensity of the phenomenon should be determined and observed within a set of well-defined parameters: to what degree literacy was widely employed in the given context?, and who had the access to the skills of writing and reading? We are not referring here to the last fifty years or a bit more, when literacy has seen a progressive expansion, but to the centuries of human existence.

All told, mobile phones and especially Internet possibilities have unbeatably enhanced writing and reading throughout the world, and Roma have not been excluded from the process. However, not only Roma entered the virtual world, but their language with the myriad of varieties did so as well<sup>20</sup>.

Offering potentials and instruments for languages to be used in their written and oral forms, social media prove to be important actors in language fixing and preservation, involving the processes such as diffused application, renovation and rejuvenation. Fresh stimuli coming from social media contribute to further lexical and semantic enrichment: while virtually interacting, people are given a chance to learn new words (and languages!), and to enlarge their lexical fund. Impacts of the operation are visible on two levels: while a part of the vocabulary is deep-rooted, including revitalised lexical segments, a part is being made of new entries and adaptations, along with the possibility of synonymy and additional semantic connotations. In practical terms, using text, video and audio posts empowers Romani speakers to renovate and fix their language with a new vigour.

Nowadays, one can switch on an electronic device, enter a web page and study Romani language, consult information in Romani, collect and analyse linguistic data – everything is there, at hand, and unfailingly accessible to anyone who wants to approach Romani language. Accordingly, Internet pages provide the interested with a plenty of materials in Gurbet varieties. Apart from academic data, written and oral information available in Gurbet Romani comprises songs, poetry, narratives, daily news, politics, EU documents, religious subjects, ethnographic records, comments, correspondence, and other contents that can

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<sup>20</sup> D.W Halwachs, “Language planning and media: the case of Romani”; Idem “Linguistic Diversity, Dominated Languages and the Internet: The Case of Romani Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in Cyberspace”.

be found in vast and multifaceted gamut of online topics. Besides, specific terminologies are developed in some domains and fixed by means of the Internet: this way, recurrent titles, sayings, locutions, aimed at formulating verbal expressions in a “virtual way”, are now indelible elements of a virtual idiom.

What is more, these elements are travelling now all around the Globe enabling virtual users to communicate on a planetary scale. This is to say that the pedagogical mission pursued by the worldwide virtual reality contributes also to fostering socialisation processes and sociocultural positioning of Roma people in a globalised world. The assortment of virtual possibilities supports the Gurbet Romani in building up its position among written, hence preserved languages of the world.

### *7. Southern Gurbets and Religion: What Virtual Suggestions?*

As Muslims, or rather dervishes, several among southern Gurbets will insist on looking for a “Muslim” answer to their doubts and questions. Islamic explanations are sought both in the lines of sacred writings or other forms of tradition (Quran, Sunnah, Hadiths), and in the intervention of a *derviši* (Sufi mystic), *šéjo* (spiritual guide and head of a Sufi order), *hódža* (religion teacher), or else personality. If the former are assumed as tools providing guidance on how to deal with a particular issue, the latter are their living voices who are referred to in their capacity of experts. In practice, spiritual representatives of the community are often invited to perform duties (e.g. to act as judges in various matters) that go beyond their spiritual purposes: thereby, these personalities happen to be regular guests at important community – both spiritual and secular – events.

Thanks to social media, these moments are now widely accessible: events can be watched in real time (Skype facility) or in a post-production version (video posts). And while offering their contents, Romani pages make use of any form of virtual communication in order to make sociocultural life closer to community members regardless of their location in the given moment.

In the worldwide virtual scenario, religious groups did not miss the chance to find a place for their religion-related purposes. Similarly to analogous personalities in non-Romani environs, Roma spiritual leaders embraced virtual spaces as a communication platform: they are addressing now their followers from a pulpit enriched with online texts (oral and written), images, video materials, hyperlinks, non-verbal elements, and any other of possible virtual utilities.

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Let us see now what contents can be found in Romani web pages devoted to religious matters. Following my interests, I have focused on the programmes promoted by members of the southern Gurbet community, plus some made by Arli Roma. Many times, it feels like the very first source was offered in Arli version to be subsequently handed down to the Gurbet context: the main “traitors” of this sequence are Arli words that occasionally remain unchanged or happen to be adapted to Gurbet morphology in texts and discourses produced in Gurbet Romani. This is due to the fact that written materials on religious matters were first produced in Arli, hence transferred to other Romani varieties.

*Individuals, organisations, territories.* Thanks to particular individuals and organisations, Roma communities have entered the expanses of virtuality, and Romani has found its place among world languages. Emerged from the same fields, religion-related web pages are named after their founders or other relevant personalities, organisations running them, localities, or else (e.g. *Studio Mubarek, Kadiri, 12 Tarikat, Islamsko Romani Dawetsko Organizacija – IRDO-Belgija*, etc.)<sup>21</sup>. In some cases, virtual production seems to be more developed in those Gurbet communities which emigrated to the European Union (e.g. Belgium, Germany, Italy, etc.) – this is particularly the case for Kosovo Roma, a number of whom fled their native land due to the armed conflict in the 1990s. In other cases, web pages are created by Roma individuals and groups in their native countries, as well as in connection with their fellows living abroad.

*A dual-purpose space.* Internet is used as a dual-purpose space offering a platform for both religious contents and relevant comments. On one hand, a visitor can enter the Internet to experience preaching and praying (*namázi, falipé*), customs and rituals (*adétora*), interpretations and commentaries on Koranic suras or precepts (*tefsíri*), lectures and debates (*dérsora*); on the other hand, s/he can read, hear or add comments and remarks.

As for the latter, they reflect individual or collective attitudes towards the posted issue: while some praise the contents, other define them “fake”, “not good”, or performed “in a wrong way.” Criticisms – involving disapprovals, rebukes, quarrels – are targeting the use of dirty words, swearing, drinking (alcohol), eating (improper food) up to ritual practices (e.g. Sufi self-piercing or even chanting). In this scope, sermons on how to be “a good believer” occupy a special place. According to the tenets of any religion, it is inadmissible to be partly or half-religious. Proposed by Roma bloggers, the discourse raises

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<sup>21</sup> 12 Tarikat, <<http://12tarikat.webs.com/hadise.htm>> (2015, April 10).

discussions between believers and unbelievers, believers and less believers, as well as between diverse spiritual affiliations.

Let us take part in this interaction for a moment. The following is a segment of the comments referred to a religion-related lecture uploaded to YouTube<sup>22</sup>:

Vov cerol lafi an okova citol o kurano subhanallah; o kurano kana si ni troma te cere lafi prala; eselamu aleykum mo pral. Isvinisar ama naj lace kana co kanika kana gilabol o kuran hem jek dersi bask. ja muk samo o dersi ili samo i sura taro kuran.

(He is talking while reading the Koran, Subhan-Allah [=Glory to God]; when there is the Koran, you should not talk, brother; peace be upon you, my brother, excuse me, but it is not good to put someone to read the Koran and to lecture at the same time, put either a lecture or a sura of the Koran only.)

This one is a praiseful comment instead:

We Sellam Alljekum Pralla O Allahi Te Nagradil Tut Inshollaa Ko Dzeneti Te Dja Sa Ce Familijasar Se Vallaha Butt Laco Dersii Sii Sa Tacno Lafora Si Tu Se E Jaka Hohadon Valahe We Sellam Alljekum!

(Peace be upon you, brother, may Allah, His willing, reward you and all of your family with paradise, as this is, by God [=really], a very good lecture, your words are all right as the eyes can be mistaken, by God [=really], peace be upon you!)

***Explanatory and educational contents.*** This sector provides the concerned with a row of elements defining one's *modus vivendi* as a Muslim: advices, suggestions, teachings, interpretations, as well as opinions, appraisals, judgements, and criticisms fall within the scope of this field, along with merely religious discourses, preachings, sermons, and alike as a separate segment. One of the most recurrent formats is that of *dérsi* (lecture, lesson, seminar), backed by instructional texts and videos. A *dérsi* may address interpretations (and translation) of suras or ayats, episodes from the Koran or hadiths, life experiences, including instructional suggestions (texts and videos) on how to perform ritual ablution prior to prayer, how to pray, how to read and interpret an Islamic precept, how to conduct a ritual, treat one's own family, treat women, follow the "good way" in one's life, etc. All in all, it is about the contents explaining how to behave as a good person, how to be a good believer, a good Muslim, meaning how to lead a good Islamic life.

***Lecturing as a method.*** Thematic *romané dérsora* (Romani lectures) take hints from the Koran and other sources of Islamic tradition so as to arrive at the present and earthly reality. This way, good and evil (as a concept) are analysed

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<sup>22</sup> The quotations are given in the form they were posted online by their authors.

along with good and bad deeds so as to teach how to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate in a Muslim's life. Some recurrent topics are: *sadaka* ([material or spiritual] charity, alms), Hajj (pilgrimage [to Mecca]), Ramadan (month of fasting), women and their condition, episodes from hagiographic narratives talking about prophets or other important personalities, etc.

In order to illustrate the sector, we present the titles of some lectures in Gurbet Romani as found online: *Sar te lachardol amaro hali* (How to improve our condition), *Mangen tumen anoanav e Allaheso* (Love each other in the name of Allah), *Kibri i bari godzi* (Kibri – Arrogance), etc. To complete the linguistic miscellanea, let us see some titles of *romane dersija* (Romani lectures) in Arli variety: *Ki Medina Hadz* (Hajj to Medina), *O grupe ko islam* (The groups in Islam), *Kotar i daj hem o dad* (About mother and father); and in Bugurdži (variety rather close to Arli Romani): *O Rojba e Allahiske* (The weeping for Allah), *O Meribe Pengaberisko Muhammedisko* (The death of the Prophet Muhammad), and alike.

Lectures and teachings are introduced by brief presentations, as for instance: *Save sevabora si e islamsko domacine kaj pire platasa hranil pire familja* (What rewards does earn a Muslim head of the family who feeds his family with his salary) – offering an introduction to the lecture titled *I nagrada kaj icare ce familija* (The reward for providing for your family).

**Traditional knowledge.** Another category of teachings, aimed at acquiring knowledge by means of the Internet, is given in the form of hadiths, sayings, quotations. Being hadiths<sup>23</sup> an important part of this knowledge, some examples (source: <<http://12tarikats.webs.com/hadise.htm>>) in Gurbet Romani are reported herein<sup>24</sup>:

O Imam Alija R.A vacarda: O godjaveracoldjuvdocak pala o meripe a godova insano kajodbil si mulo cak ano djuvdipe. (Imam Ali R.A [=May God be pleased with him] said: The intelligent [man] stays alive even after his death, while the man who refuses [advices, suggestions, etc.] is dead even in [his] life.)

O Imam Hassan R.A vacarda: O lacopitanjevredilupash o godjaveripe. (Imam Hassan R.A [=May God be pleased with him] said: A good question counts a half of intelligence.)

O Muhammedi S.A.S vacarda: 3 buca si kaj si lace: o baripespirtoso, te ponasitulacecibasa, hem te avol tu sabri ano pharipe. (Muhammad S.A.S [=May God honour him and grant him peace] said: There are 3 good things: the

<sup>23</sup> *Hadith* (< Arabic): along with the Koran, Hadiths constitute a religious and judicial basis of Islam. Hadiths are given as a collection of data on the Prophet Muhammad's life (tradition) and teaching (sayings), preserved in the form of sayings, advices, suggestions, recommendations and deeds as uttered or done by the Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>24</sup> The quotations are given in the form they were posted online by their authors.

greatness of the spirit, a good use of the language, and patience while facing a difficulty.)

*Festivities and rituals.* Thanks to online video projection, events and happenings of any kind are likely to be accompanied by video recording now, which makes them more accessible and immediate. In fact, a number of lectures posted in Internet are both typewritten and video-recorded. Along with music numbers, amusing accounts, family feasts etc., video displays include religion-related contents such as: chanting, prayers, festivals, rituals (e.g. *sunet* – circumcision celebration, or *zikri* – a mystical practice)<sup>25</sup>, and alike.

*Purist trends.* Purist trends seem to be materialised in the field of festivities and rituals more than in others: how to be a good believer, i.e. Muslim, if non-Muslim feasts are being celebrated and non-Muslim rituals performed? Among others, this is one of the recurrent online questions. It is about cultural heritage that Roma (in this case) adopted in the Balkan environment in touch with other cultures: it calls for tidying up “our” Islam from Albanian, Bosnian, Slavic, i.e. Balkan ingredients, as well as from Romani traditions, i.e. those which are perceived as such. This attitude, where existing, is particularly aimed at Saint George’s Day (*Đúrdan*, *Đérdan*, less *Erdelézi*), and New Year’s day (*Vasilíca*, 14 January), two extremely important annual celebrations of Roma throughout Balkans regardless of their religious orientation. In more radical instances, it is also about cleaning Islam from Sufi elements that would not be in line with the principles of a strict Islam, hence likely to mislead a believer from a good path. Many Roma belonging to the southern Gurbet community actually do not share this view and keep, or at least mix, their form of Sufism inherited in the Balkans with elements coming from other Islamic traditions. Whatever their preferences might be, Roma use the Internet as a platform to handle these issues and to impart their knowledge about the subject, to suggest one or another way of dealing with, and to call up one or another tradition if necessary.

*Islamic medicine and the notion of miracle.* Islamic medicine in the form of *hijama*<sup>26</sup> was also introduced to virtual Roma visitors. It is about the methods of healing and restoration from illness as being connected with faith. In other words, the experience of healing is sometimes explained in terms of “divine healing”, and perceived as a fact of believing, which puts the phenomenon in connection with divine intervention. On these grounds, healing would be gained by believing (worship) and by calling upon God (prayers). By this, the

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<sup>25</sup> *Zikri* (< Arabic) – a form of devotion: a Sufi mystical practice of rhythmic repetition of the name of God or his attributes.

<sup>26</sup> *Hijamah* (lit. sucking) is traditional Arabic medicine consisting in cupping therapy (wet cupping), where blood is drawn by vacuum from a small skin incision for therapeutic purposes.

notion of miracle is introduced. The subject finds its place amid multiple topics featured by Romani web pages. For the sake of illustration, one of them is introduced by the title (in Serbian) *Islamskamedecina - Hidzama*, followed by an opening sentence in Gurbet Romani: «El hamdulilja katar o allah kaj mukla e meletonendje amaneti amare pegamberese Muhamed sws te sastol leso umeti katar o nasvalipe» (Al-ḥamdulillāh [=thanks be to God] for having entrusted the angels with a task for our Prophet Muhammad sws [=May God honour him and grant him peace] so that his people may recover from illness).

*Islamic films.* A particular niche is opened to the so-called “Islamic films”, that is video materials (films, film fragments, serials, clips, etc.) on Islamic themes, produced in various nations (India, Pakistan, Arabic countries, Balkan countries) and languages (Arabic, Turkish, Urdu/Hindi, or other), hence translated into Romani in both dubbed or subtitled versions, and uploaded to YouTube or else video channel. Just to mention that the same fashion has been observed in other communities, including so Christian Roma, as well as non-Roma people of different faiths. As a matter of fact, cinema is one of those media that mesmerised the worldwide audience thanks to its immediate communicating power combining image and word. And the Internet just helped its mission.

#### *8. Instead of Conclusions*

Roma navigators are exploring the net far and wide, and using it for all of the possible purposes: cultural, social, political, educational, economic, linguistic, religious. In this paper, a particular attention was paid to the last two aspects, linguistic and religious. In the same light, the paper will be concluded with few examples of religious texts, posted online in Romani, which makes them simultaneously a valuable linguistic material. The following are only examples, hence being not representative for a broader panorama of Romani web pages devoted to religious matters: the contents presented herein are primarily selected with the goal of illustrating the use of virtual space by Roma so as to meet their spiritual and linguistic needs in a globalised world. The examples are reported in their online versions, and accompanied by necessary remarks on the context and their linguistic specificities.

In the myriad of Romani web pages that might attract our attention, the case of a Christian Roma community from Chile is rather interesting. This introductory



sentence takes us to the web page titled Bible.is (source: <<http://www.bible.is/>>)<sup>27</sup> featuring four Romani varieties, namely: East Slovak Romani of Carpathian branch (quoted as: Romani, East Slovak - Romani, Carpathian), Baltic Romani (Romani, Baltic), Sinti (Romani, Sinti), and Vlax (Romane, Vlax). The latter is further specified as “Chilean Vlax Version (CVV)”: it is about a Chile-based community whose language, employed in online religious texts, curiously resembles western Gurbet. Interestingly, its audio version reveals a clear Hispanic influence in pronunciation; besides, the transcription has also been adapted to the Spanish, and not to the international Romani phonetics. For this occasion, we opted for the initial passages of *The Gospel According to Luke*:

Lukaseki 1: 1 But llene mangle te ppenen ando Pisipe sa e ezgode kai o Del cherda maskar amende, 2 isto gia sar ppendelen amenge gola kai ande gua vreme sea kote ta kai pomozisarde te ppendol e porouka. 3 Glamno Teofilo, i me rodiem sa prezomaia sar kana lie te llan angle gala ezgode ta avila mange sukar te pisiulen chuke isto gia sar nakkle, 4 te sai pinllare o chachipe katar so sikade tut 5 Kana o Erodes saia charo katar e Judea, saia iek popo kai ikkardola Zakarias, kai saia iek katar e llene e Abdiaseke. Leki romi ikkardola Elisabet, ta i voi saia katar e vicha e Aaronoki. 6 E li dui sea chache angla o Del ta cherena sa prema e zakonura ta niko nasti dosarela len katar niso. 7 A len ni saia len minone, soke e Elisabet nasti achela ppari, ta e dui sea but ppure 8 Iek llive kana avilo o vreme te cheren po rado angla o Del e llene kai sea popura e Zakariaseke, 9 Ta gia sar sea sikade e popura, esvirisarde maskar pete ta likisto o Zakarias te del ando santuario katar o cher e Devleko te ppabarel o taimano. 10 Ta kana ppabola o taimano, sa e llene molinape avri<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup>About Bible.is - Launched for the iPhone in June of 2010 with just 218 languages, Bible.is now features 1606 languages and is available on the web and for both iOS and Android devices. Originally only functional in English, the app is now fully localized for a growing number of languages including Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Portuguese, French, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, and Russian (source: <<http://www.bible.is/about>>).

<sup>28</sup>LUKE 1: 1 «Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught. 5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. 8 Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of

To illustrate Islamic religious texts in Romani, we present two examples of hadiths as narrated by Abu Hurairah, one of the most notable hadith narrators. The Romani texts<sup>29</sup> quoted herein are taken from the web page introduced by the following title in Serbian: *BudjeneIslama u NasimSrcima*<sup>30</sup>. Every passage in Romani is accompanied by a Serbian version, both being rendered in a simplified writing with characters exempted from particular diacritical marks.

#### Example N° 1:

HADIS 2: O Ebu Hurejre r.a. prenosil kaj e Allahesko Poslaniko vacarda: “O Uzvisime Allah vacarol: “O manus irile odbijil Man, a kova naj lese dozvoljeno, o manus vredjil man, a kova naj lese dozvoljeno! Odbijil man kana vacarol: O Allah naj te stvoril man paljem sar so stvorisarda man angluno drom! A angluno stvoripe e manusesko khanci naj khanci phare katar o dujto ceripe (stvoripe)! Vredjol man kana vacarol o manus: E Allahe si le chavo! A Me sem Jek, thaj sem utociste (than garadimase) sar savonese! Ni bijandem hem najsem bijando thaj khonik nastil manca te avol jek.” Biljezil o Buhari thaj o Nesai<sup>31</sup>.

#### Example N° 2:

HADIS 10: O Ebu Hurejre r.a. prenosil kaj e Allahesko Poslaniko savs vacarda: “O Uzvisime Allah vacarol: O Post si mungro hem Me lese ka nagradiv. O manus kaj postil mucol po cefi (marako) hape, pice Mo sebepi. O Post si štit. O manus kaj postil si le duj momentora kana radin le: O iftari kana cerol hem kana ka arachol pe pire Gospodaresa. I frima katar lesko muj drago si e Allahese, maj

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incense)». Source – Romani version: <http://www.bible.is/RMYCVV/Luke/1/D>, English version: <http://www.bible.is/ENGESV/Luke/1/D>.

<sup>29</sup> Translations into Romani by ImerKajtazi; Source: Hadis 2: [https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=126119290849964&story\\_fbid=450735538388336](https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=126119290849964&story_fbid=450735538388336); Hadis 10: [https://hrhr.facebook.com/permalink.php?story\\_fbi=451313531663870&id=126119290849964&stream\\_ref=5](https://hrhr.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbi=451313531663870&id=126119290849964&stream_ref=5).

<sup>30</sup> *Awakening of Islam in Our Hearts*, 2014. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Budjene-Islama-u-Nasim-Srcima/>.

<sup>31</sup> Abu Huraira narrated: «I heard Allah’s Messenger saying: “Allah, the Glorified, says: “The son of Adam disbelieves in Me though he ought not, and he abuses Me though he has no right for that! As for his disbelieving in Me, it is his statement that He will not be resurrected as He was created, though his recreation is easier to Me than the first creation. As for his abusing Me, it is his saying that Allah has a son, but I am the One, the Everlasting! Neither I have begotten nor have been begotten nor do I have any match.» Hadith reported by Bukhari and Nasa’i. Sources for English version: <http://ahadith.co.uk/>; <http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/hadith/muslim/027-smt.php>.

drago katar o miris misk." Biljezin Buhari (Malik, Muslim, Tirmizi, Nesai thaj Ibn Madždže)<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Abu Huraira narrated: « I heard Allah's Messenger saws [peace be upon him] saying: "Allah, the Glorified, says: Fasting is Mine and I reward for it. The fasting person has left his pleasures, his food and his drink for My sake. Fasting is a shield [against sins]. There are two occasions of joy for the fasting person: one at the time of breaking his fast, and the other when he will meet his Lord. The smell coming out from the mouth of a fasting person is better in the sight of Allah than the smell of musk.» Hadith reported by Bukhari (Malik, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i and Ibn Majah). Sources for English version: <<http://ahadith.co.uk/>>; <<http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/hadith/muslim/027-smt.php>>

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10. *Curriculum vitae*

Combining contributions from anthropology, linguistics, pedagogy and intercultural studies, Zoran Lapov, PhD, pursues his research work on cultural diversity, identity dynamics, intercultural relations and mechanisms of social inclusion/exclusion in relation to minorities and migrations. Along with teaching activity and participation in research projects, Lapov's work is best reflected in his numerous publications, including the books *Vácaré romané? Diversità a confronto: percorsi delle identità Rom* (2004), and *Dinamiche identitarie: multilinguismo ed educazione interculturale* (2001, with G. Campani), and articles e.g. *Našardi Bori and her Stories: Framing Elopement in a Romani Community* (2013), and *Intertwining Patterns of Social Positioning in Indo-Muslim Communities* (2013).



