

**NAME OF THE PROJECT: *Folkloristic, ethnographic and dialectological research of Roms and Sinti in North Rhine-Westphalia (Köln, Düsseldorf, Duizburg, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Wupertal)***

**Program area:** Folklore, Ethnologia, Dialectologia

**Regions of research:** North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

**Time of realization of the project:** 15 march 2016 / 15 march 2017

**Email:** [petrovskitrajko@yahoo.com](mailto:petrovskitrajko@yahoo.com)

**Coordinator:** Dr. Trajko Petrovski

### **The strategy and description of the research activities in the project**

The focus of this project is on folkloristic, ethnographic and dialectological research of Roms and Sinti in North Rhine-Westphalia. The research will be realized in the cities of Köln, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Wuppertal, and it will take two years.

The oral lore is the mother of literature. By folklore we are meaning the verbal creations of wide masses that reflect their lives in its various manifestations. The word Folklore is created by Folk= people, and Lore= meaning. In literary translation it means: peoples knowledge, peoples wisdom.

Folklore is a complex subject and has many aspects. We meet folklore in the cities, the villages, in the families. The Romani folklore contains songs, stories, legends, anecdotes, musical instruments, dances, customs, children games, nicknames, traditional holidays, Romani traditional food, traditional clothes, and certain crafts, such as the blacksmiths from India to Europe.

The program activities will start with a collection of the empirical material for ethnocultural identity. We will register the Romani folklore (songs, stories, legends, anecdotes, etc). And ethnographically, the emphasis will be on the observation and study of wedding customs, religious customs, and the structure of the families. From the field of dialectology we will register Romani dialects in North Rhine-Westphalia, that is, the Gurbetian, the Arlian, Kalderian, Lovarian, and the Sinti dialects.

Our field research will register the actual condition of the ethnocultural tradition and the dialects of the Roms. We will make audio and video records that will be documents and sources of research. This folkloristical, ethnographical and dialectological material will be analyzed in the context of the subject of the research, classified and systematized.

We point out that this is pioneer scientific research of the Roms in North Rhine- Westphalia. We are expecting that realization of this project will give us significant results, and knowledge of many aspects of Romani traditional cultural heritage in North Rhine-Westphalia. We are also hoping that the results of this project will be significant for further comparative scientific studies. From the field of Romani ethnology we will study the weddings, religion, rituals, the celebration of the holiday Erdelezy (St. George' Day), within Romani families in North Rhine-Westphalia.

The third segment of the research project will pay attention to the Romani dialects in Düsseldorf, Köln, Essen and Duisburg. The approach to dialectology as a part of the linguistic science of language, are the dialects, and speech patterns. The term dialect is commonly understood as a part of a wider linguistic whole and serves as communication amongst people of a certain collectivity, territorially or socially limited.

Romani language originates from the ancient Indian languages and is manifesting typological closeness with Middle Indian and New Indian languages. Romani language, which is represented by various dialects, is usually separated between Vlachs and the Non-Vlachs group. In the Vlachs group belong Gurbetian, Lejahian, Kalderian and Lovarian dialects, while in Non-Vlachian dialects belong the dialects of Greek-Turkish Romani as Arlian and the dialect of the Sinti, which are dialects of the Roms in Germany.

The goal of our dialectological field research of Roms in North Rhine-Westphalia is to collect characteristics of the Romani language and dialects, by their folklore (songs, stories, anecdotes, and legends. The results of this will be of great significance in preparing the study of the Romani dialectology that contains various texts in dialects of Roms in North Rhine-Westphalia. They will be useful to the needs of the linguistic institutes and faculties, and for further comparative linguistic and ethnological scientific studies.

The research of Romani dialects will contribute in providing information about their placement and existence. In the framework of the research project, for the students of ethnology at the Institute of Ethnology, Universität zu Köln together with Professor Michael Bollig, I will organize seminars and scientific workshops of traditional culture of Roms (*History of the Romani peoples, The culture of the Roms*) in Köln, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, and Wupertal, to promote the Romani traditional culture and language.

## **Goals of the research**

The goal of the project is to conduct research and analysis of the folklore, ethnographic data and the language of Romani immigrant communities in North Rhine- Westphalia. The most expressive and

vital element in Romani folklore is the music and poetry, as traditional symbols that are special and significant. The idea of studying their cultural heritage in multicultural society might contribute to overcoming mutual differences and bringing closer communities that are living in North Rhine-Westphalia. That is possible by knowing each other's culture, representing one's own culture, which will have positive influence on the surroundings they are living in. Representative results of the research will be united in studies that we hope will be a base for continuing research, in the direction of finding scientific explanations of social phenomena of Roms in North Rhine-Westphalia. The users of the texts will get a clearer picture of the actual social moment of the Roms. These studies will be one kind of guide in studying this segment of multicultural Germany. This project will attempt to illuminate the Romani perspective on migration through a comparative investigation that will be based in Romani communities and in Romani homes.

## **Project activities**

The research will be conducted in North Rhine-Westphalia (Köln, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Essen, Wuppertal) at the following levels:

- The field research, will be handled by myself (Prof. Dr. Trajko Petrovski), and an assistant. We will collect and document Romani stories, legends, anecdotes, and customs.
  - Decoding and selecting folkloristic and dialectological material.
  - Explanation of the material as a result of the data from the fieldwork.
- \*Organizing seminars or workshops during the period of the project in Germany.

We expect significant results from this project, because collecting of Romani folklore, ethnographic and dialectological materials will provide empirical material (wedding customs, religious songs and rituals, Romani dialects of the Arli, Džambazi, Kovači, Gurbeti) that will contribute to preserving Romani cultural heritage, tradition and language, and will help Romani integration into German society.

## **Plan, dynamics and organization of the research**

### **Phases of the research**

The objective of the research is analysis and identification of Romani folklore, wedding customs and rituals, religion with special accent on customs of Muslim Roms in Düsseldorf, the structure of Romani families and research of dialects of the Romani language found in North Rhine-Westphalia.

The first phase of the project consists of a careful calendar plan in observing events and to organizing contacts for the data collection in the fieldwork.

The second phase is the decoding and analysis of the collected folklore, observed family and social events, and language materials of the Roms in North Rhine-Westphalia.