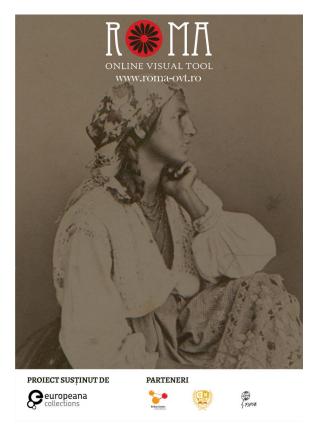# Europeana Research Grants

Final Report

A visual tool for the display of the visual representations of the Roma of Romania in the 19th and 20th centuries in the Europeana collections: between stereotypes and truthfulness

Source: Poster of the project, *Gypsy Woman*, by Carol Popp de Szathmari, undated, The Romanian Academy Library, Public domain.

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On the basis of the research supported by the "Europeana Research grant Program 2017", we created a web visual tool, which includes the pictorial and photographic representations of the Roma minority of the Romanian territories, as they appear in the Europeana collection in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the 27th of April 2018, the webpage www.roma-ovt.ro, which is an abbreviation for Roma Online Visual Tool was launched at a workshop organized in Bucharest.

The key research questions that guided our investigation were:
- How was formed the societal image of the Roma through staged photographs and visual arts' (drawings, paintings) representations in the 19th and 20th centuries?
- How does the stereotypical image of the Roma influence the current stigma and marginalization?

Our web tool was imagined as an answer to these research questions using depictions of the Roma from the Europeana website and some additional sources, and grouping the *Images* (http://roma-ovt.ro/en/galerie/) into six categories (Regions, Chronological, Photography, Art, Source, Individual Portraits, Group Portraits, Documents) which could clarify the differences between contexts and representations (women versus men, certain regions versus others, etc). Along with the images, we included on the web platform a *Theoretical Overview,* which details how the Roma history in modern Romania was articulated as a story marked by marginalization and stereotypes. The overview of the Roma minority includes a geographical and chronological perspective, as historical Romania comprises six territorial & cultural regions (Bessarabia, Bucovina, Dobrudja, Moldavia, Transylvania and Wallachia), each with its particular influence on the Roma's image highlighting the contextual distinctions. Moreover, the timeline also includes the most important events that marked the Romani history. So visitors can have more details about the specific context of a certain image they see in the Image gallery.

The roma-ovt.ro web platform uses primarily images from the europeana.eu collection to illustrate the argument we put forward; that is, that the Roma stereotypes in Romania developed during the last two centuries also through artistic depictions. To be more specific, the project team started by a thorough search for the images of the Roma in Romania using some key terms.[1] The first searches, using Roma or Romi (in Romanian) did not return the images we needed as they are indexed by the original sources using the more problematic terms of Gipsies/Gitan/Țigani.

The Roma OVT web platform currently has 193 entries (http://roma-ovt.ro/en/galerie/), out of which 184 are images and 9 are documents. The paintings, drawings, photographs, graphic art and any other materials regarding the Roma of Romania since 1800 that we found on the Europeana website were analyzed and divided

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[1] Romi, Roma, Romania + Gipsies, Romania + Gypsy, Romania + Gipsy, Romania + Zigeuner, Romania + Gitan, Tsigan(s), Țigan/i, țigănci/ țigăncușă (Roma girl), Șatră (gipsy tribe), caravană (caravan), laie (group of nomad Roma), cort (tent), cai (horses), or using crafts and professions spoitor/i (house painters), căldărar/i (boiler makers), aurar/i (gold washers), ursar/i (bear leaders), lăieși (camp Roma), lăutar/i (musicians), costorar/i (mowing makers), ciurar/i (sieve makers), chivuță/țe (woman house painter), coșar/i (chimney sweep), sobar/i (stove makers)

into categories with sub-categories.[2] Because the images hosted by Europeana didn't cover all the categories equally, we searched additional sources for other examples. Out of the 184 images, 135 are from the europeana.eu website and 49 from other sources. Most of these additional images are part of a well-known Romanian photo archive, developed during the 1930s-1950s by Costică Acsinte and recently rediscovered (www.colectiacosticaacsinte.eu). We included further images from the Austrian National Library and from the German Federal Archives.

The project supported by the Europeana grant has allowed us to start this research, which we want to develop further by integrating relevant additional materials with visual depictions of the Roma both historically and contemporary.

Dissemination of the findings:
- Social media presence: Facebook Page (https://www.facebook.com/Roma-Online-Visual-Tool-466219207126114/), Twitter account (https://twitter.com/roma_ovt) and Instagram account (https://www.instagram.com/roma_ovt/).
- interview given by Caterina Preda, coordinator of the Roma Online Visual Tool, to Europeana: https://bit.ly/2v4FHKM.
- Workshop to launch the project on April 27th 2017 at the Matei Basarab National College in Bucharest together with our partners (the "Policy Center for Roma and Minorities" and the Department of Political Science (FSP) - University of Bucharest.
- May 10th, 2018, Dan Drăghia participated with a poster (https://bit.ly/2wWEupH) and a short description of the Roma OVT project at the "REACH Opening Conference – Resilient Cultural Heritage and Communities in Europe" in Budapest (10-11 May 2018), which opened up further possibilities of collaboration with ERIAC.
- May 2018, Caterina Preda presented the project at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Bucharest to BA and MA students and to the undergraduate students of Carleton College (USA) who participated to an off-campus program at the Department of Political Science (FSP).

The project's website can be visited at the address: www.roma-ovt.ro.

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[2] Most of the images included in the gallery are photographs (http://roma-ovt.ro/en/images_cat/fotografie/), with Carol Popp de Szathmari for the 19th century, and Willy Pragher for the 20th century holding the most images. There are fewer paintings and drawings in the gallery (http://roma-ovt.ro/en/images_cat/arta/) and most of them are from the 19th century.