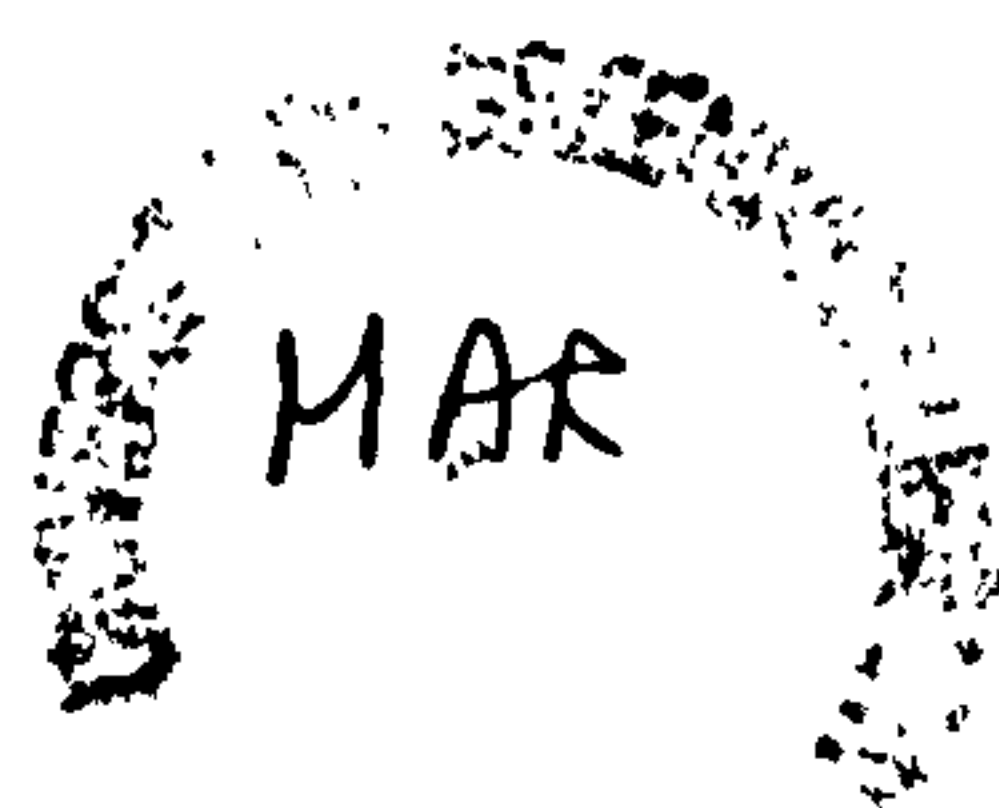


“No Promised Land”
History, Historiography & the Origins of
the Gypsies

submitted by Adrian Richard
Nathanael Marsh in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy awarded by the University
of Greenwich London

November 2008



iii. Acknowledgements

COMPLETING THIS BOOK HAS REQUIRED the sustained and collective engagement of many people, and the support of many more during the process of writing. My thanks must go primarily to my supervisors, Professor Thomas A. Acton and Professor Emeritus Angela V. John of the University of Greenwich in London, who have gone a great deal beyond the formal relationship between candidate and supervisors to become mentors, friends and 'family'. I must also thank Dr Wendy Bracewell and Professor David Kirby who first set me on the path to 'modern historiography' and introduced me to the investigation of narratives of ethnicity, identity and nationalism in history and to questioning the writing of history itself. To Dr Peter Siani-Davies, Professor Norman Davies, Professor Geoffrey Hoskins, Dr Martin Rady, Dr Roger Bartlett, and Caroline Newlove at SSEES, Dr Ben Fortna at SOAS and Dr Kate Fleet of the Skilliter Centre for Ottoman Studies Cambridge University, I would also like to extend my thanks for their patient instruction of me as an undergraduate and post-graduate student, and their encouragement of the various, and sometimes unusual paths that my inquiries took during the years I studied with them.

Many other eminent scholars and researchers have informed my work and encouraged me; Professor Yaron Matras at Manchester University, Dr Norma Montesino at Malmö Högskola (at the time), Dr Christina Rodell-Olgaç at Södertörns Högskola, Dr Hans Lejdegård at Uppsala University, Dr Karin Ådahl, Director at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII), Dr György Peteri and Professor Birgit Sawyer at Trondheim University, Professor Elena Marushiakova and Professor Vesselin Popov at the Sofia Studii Romanī, Professor Barbara Harrell-Bond at the American University in Cairo, Dr Karl Nylander (former Director at the Swedish Research Centre in Rome), Professor Alan Duben, Dr Ayhan Kaya and Nese Erdilek at Istanbul Bilgi University, Dr Eminé Onaran Incirlioğlu at Bilkent University Ankara, Dr Suat Kolukirik at Ege University, Izmir, Dr Sonia Tamar Seeman at the University of Texas at Austin (with whom I was privileged to conduct fieldwork during summer 2007) all of whom I would thank and express my gratitude for their patient understanding, support and the opportunity to present my work and aspects of it at various points. My thanks also go to my examiners, Professors Ian Hancock and John Dunne for clarifications during the exam.

The research that I have undertaken during the course of writing this book has been financially supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council, (in the UK), the Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul (and in particular, the General Consul Dr Ingmar Karlsson and the Consul

Annika Svahnström), the Open Society Assistance Foundation in Turkey, the British Council in Turkey, the Council of Europe and the University of Greenwich in London. I am very grateful for their support in carrying out the various projects that, whilst not all directly connected to this book have nevertheless informed its development and outcomes.

All scholarship, and historical research in particular relies upon access to libraries and I would like to thank the Director and staff of the SRII library (where much of this book was written), Ms. Eva Nylander at Lund University Library, Serdar Katipoğlu at Istanbul Bilgi University Library, the librarians of the American University in Cairo, Trondheim University Library, Malmö Högskola Library, the British Library in London and the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh. Their assistance and technical advice has been of enormous help, particularly as I have been a visitor to almost all of these.

My thanks to family and friends who have encouraged, supported, listened to, 'put up with' and sometimes cajoled me into continuing when I have been most despondent can only reflect here the debt I truly owe them; thank you Neil Darby, Stephen Spencer, Özhan Önder, Bertil Videt, Dirk Nieuwboer, Hege Irene-Markussen. To Ingeborg Stensrud, Fred and Maja Taikon, Karl and Eva Nylander, Johnny Strand and Baiba Veldre, Belinda Acton, Paul and Felicity Bonel, all of whom have provided sustenance and much-needed comfort thank you. In particular Johnny and Baiba, Karl and Eva were very kind whilst visiting Sweden, Belinda Acton, Paul and Felicity Bonel in London, providing places to stay often for extended periods. My family, Keith and Clare Marsh, Valerie Marsh, Nichola Scale, Joanna Marsh-Willis (who proof-read this text), Laura Marsh and Rosie Marsh have been and continue to be the 'safe haven' from which I have set out on these journeys, whilst Nezihe, Faruk, Muhterem, Gamze and Ali Kula have made me one of their own, *çok teşekkür ederim*. To Arzu Olcayli-Marsh, *seni seviyorum aşkim birtanem*.

This book has been written during a period that has begun to see the development of a consolidated Romanī Studies in Turkey and to those who have been part of this I would also extend my gratitude. To the friends who set up the original Istanbul (later International) Romanī Studies Network, Ana Oprişan, Dr Udo Mischek, Dr Müstafa Özunal MD and Dirk Nieuwboer, thank you. I would also thank Elin Strand for her contribution to our work together in London, Stockholm, Malmö, Istanbul, Sofia, Cyprus, Cairo and in general during 2002-2005.

Finally, the loss of Dr Leslie Collins and Professor Lindsey Hughes of SSEES, both much too young, deprives me of the opportunity to thank them as teachers, mentors and much-loved friends.

Leslie taught me to see the Ottoman Empire as an inheritor of Byzantium, and challenged me to think beyond the overly-schematic and reductive notions such as ‘the Turks’, ‘Islamization in the Balkans’, ‘the Asiatic mode of production’ and to question every assumption made by others and myself. He also shared his vast knowledge about central Asian nomadic peoples and their impact upon Europe, his love of 18th century English poetry (Samuel Daniel in particular), jazz from the 1950’s and 1960’s and was the only lecturer I knew who would demonstrate an Avar cavalry charge, at full volume and speed in the lecture room. Lindsey taught me to understand that history can be ‘read’ in icons, buildings, statuary, city plans and laundry lists and it was with her that I first found the Gypsies in history (the *Skomorokhi* or minstrels of Muscovy, many of whom were Roma). More than any others, their encouragement and their belief in me enabled me to achieve what I had never thought possible and they remain, as they always will the inspiration behind this and all my academic work. My hope is that they would have been pleased with it...

iv. Abstract

THIS BOOK EXAMINES THE QUESTIONS of how Gypsy ethnicity, identity and history are interlinked in the context of examining various contested narratives of origins and migration. The text is itself a series of narratives and counter-narratives that engage in a self-critical, deconstructive analysis of the underlying assumptions hitherto presented in many, if not most of the previous scholarship regarding the origins and identity of the Gypsies, with particular focus on the contextual and radically contingent nature of all such texts. As such, the primary examination is an historiographical and theoretical consideration of the questions surrounding Gypsy ethnicity and identity, as they are embedded in competing versions of historical discourses claiming authenticity and authority.

The dissertation also considers to what extent the production of historical knowledge – contested and contingent as it must be – is affected by those who produce it from within and without the Gypsy community or communities themselves. The construction of historical narratives of journey, undertaken by Gypsies, Roma, Travellers and Sinti themselves, is a relatively recent phenomenon in academia and this dissertation reviews this development in a survey of literatures as they particularly relate to debates on origin, ethnicity and identities. Most especially, this survey examines the production of literatures in Turkish scholarship, as related to the underlying conception of the book arguing for a re-examination of Romanī historiography from east to west, rather than the ‘traditional’ Orientalist and Europecentric perspectives deployed by much of the previous scholarship. Aside from few monographs, the history of the Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic has received scant attention to date.

Moreover, the dissertation focuses upon the Turkish lands to argue that the historical experiences of Gypsies in this region are of critical importance in understanding the development of both European Romanī histories and in acknowledging the flawed basis for the universalist conceptions of European Roma identity and political mobilisation, as they are now articulated. In this context, the importance of Islam in the origins and history of the Gypsies is stressed in the text.

This theoretical framework underlies the interweaving narratives that make up the latter sections of the text, a reconsideration of the sources for early Gypsy history that posits an alternative narrative. Whilst openly acknowledging its contextual and contingent nature, I present this as a plausible solution to some of the problems of origins, especially for the Dom Gypsies of the Arab, Persian and Turkish lands and the Lom of Turkey, Iran and central Asia. The recapitulation of the linguistic

arguments regarding Romanī origins I undertake in this book from a historiographical perspective, challenging the preponderant use of historical ‘evidence’ as merely a background to certain linguistic assertions, in an effort to ‘ground’ these in historical contexts that support such argumentation, before excising that which appears insupportable.

V. CONTENTS

i. Title	
ii. Declaration	3
iii. Acknowledgements	4
iv. Abstract	7
v. Contents	9
vi. Glossary of particular transliterated words and letters	11
vii. Byzantine, Armenian, Muslim dating: a guide	11
Preface	12
Introduction	14
<i>1. Historiography</i>	
1.1 Historiography: History, Ethnicity & Identity	26
1.2 The “Grand Narrative” in Romanī historiography	33
1.3 Stout hearts and sturdy footwear: the Gypsy Lore Society	45
1.4 Gypsies, history and the problem of time	60
1.5 Language-change, loan-words and war	70
<i>2. Who are the Gypsies?</i>	
2.1 Who are the Gypsies? Identity and influences in Romanī Studies	74
2.2 “...the strumming of their silken bows...” the legend of Bahram Gūr...	84
2.3 The origins of the Romanī connection	93
2.4 The interpolations of Colonel John Staples Harriott	95
2.5 <i>al-Zutt</i> and the <i>Lūlī</i>	100
2.6 “Strong and valiant men”; the Hephthalites	103
2.7 Harriott, history and historiography	108
<i>3. India, Islam & the Dom</i>	
3.1 The origins of Domarī in the Umayyad Khalif’a	109
3.2 Arabic as a military koïné	115
3.3 <i>al-Sind</i> , <i>al-Hind</i> and <i>Rādjputana</i> in 8th century	118
3.4 The Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd Caliphates: the Hindūs into Dom	124
<i>4. Ghaznā & the origins of the Rom</i>	
4.1 Koïnés and cavalry charges	128
4.2 <i>Ghulāms</i> , <i>mawlā</i> and ‘ <i>abīd</i> ; the enslavement of Hindūs	134

4.3 “Speaking to the scribes, talking to the troops...”	141
4.4 State and structure: palace and chancellery in the <i>ghazī</i> emirate	146
4.5 The ideology, military organisation of the Ghaznāvid state and the Hindūs	150
4.6 The Ghaznāvid campaigns in India: <i>ghazawāt</i> and <i>razzias</i>	160
4.7 The city as theatre; Ghaznāvid culture & literature	167
<i>5. The Saldjūkids</i>	
5.1 The Saldjūkids, Armenia and Byzantium	169
5.2 Mas’ūd b. Mahmūd and the fragmentation of Ghaznāvid authority	172
5.3 “...no sultāns greater ...than the kings of the house of Saljuq...”	178
5.4 The irruption of the Saldjūks into Armenia	185
<i>6. The Byzantine Empire; the origins of the ‘Egyptians’</i>	
6.1 The collapse of Byzantine Anatolia 1071 CE – 1176	191
6.2 Taxation, Gypsies and status in the Byzantine Empire	198
6.3 Magic and Romitōi in Byzantium; the construction of ‘Gypsy’ identity	204
<i>7. The Ottoman Empire</i>	
7.1 Ottomans and Gypsies	213
7.2 Gypsies in the late Ottoman Empire	218
<i>8. Conclusion</i>	
8.1 Time, narratives of journey and the writing of Gypsy history	233

Bibliography

vi. Glossary

of particular terms, transliterated words, letters and their sounds, as they are used in the text

‘i’ similar to the English sound ‘er’

‘ī’ as in ‘ee’ in ‘easy’

‘ç’ as in ‘ch’ in ‘church’

‘c’ as in ‘j’ in ‘jam’

‘ş’ as in ‘sh’ in ‘shout’

‘ā’ as in ‘ah’ in ‘chart’ and ‘castle’

‘ğ’ as a silent or ‘soft’ letter ‘g’ that lengthens the preceding vowel

following the usage of the Encyclopaedia of Islam:

‘Amīr’ rather than ‘Emir’

‘Sultān’ rather than Sultan

‘Ghaznāvid’ rather than Ghaznavid/Ghaznawid

‘Saldjūk’ rather than Selcuk

‘Jhāt’ rather than ‘Jat’

‘Hindū’ rather than ‘Hindu’

‘Romanī’ rather than ‘Romani’

‘Domarī’ rather than ‘Domari’

‘Zutt’ rather than ‘Zott’

‘Khalif’a’: the trusteeship of the umma, entrusted to the successors to the Blessed Prophet Muhammad, the first four of whom – Abu Bakr (632-34 CE), Omar (634-44 CE), Othman (644-56 CE) and Ali (656-61 CE) – are known as ‘Rightly Guided’ Khalifs

‘ghazwāra’ holy war, prosecuted by ‘ghazī warriors’

‘dar ūl-Islam’ the House (or Abode) of Islam, as opposed to ‘dar ūl-Harb’ the House of War (i.e. non-Muslim territories)

vii. Byzantine, Armenian, Muslim dating: a guide

BCE/CE before common era/common era (previously BC/AD)

The Byzantine Empire dating system “since the year of Creation”; i.e. 1000 CE = 6,509 YC

The Armenian Era begins 554 CE; i.e. 1000 CE = 449 AE

Islamic dating begins with al-Hijra (622 CE); i.e. 1000 CE = 390 AH

Preface

"The only good is knowledge, and the only evil is ignorance..." Herodotus 'Histories' (1862)

THE 10TH AND 11TH CENTURIES were a period of crucial importance in the history of the Gypsy peoples. In this book I will argue that over approximately 200 years (from ca. 977 to ca. 1200 CE) the captive Hindū soldiers and servitors that were incorporated into the Ghzanāvid Empire of Mahmūd ibn Sebūktigīn developed a lingua franca that lies at the basis of modern Romanēs and Urdu, before being thrust into a westward trajectory by the defeat of the Ghaznāvids at Dandānqān in May 1040 CE (see Bosworth, 1973:241-68), to emerge as the 'Egyptians' of the Byzantine Empire at the close of the 11th century (see Fraser, 1992:45-59). Their identity came as a result of a series of confluences that brought interest in magic in Byzantium to a particular height at the time of their earliest arrival, with the collapse of eastern Asia Minor and the loss of these lands to the Empire bringing insecurity and the need for reassurance that enabled the 'Egyptians' to exploit an opportunity that came to define who they were, as fortune-tellers and diviners, agents of the 'exotika' (*Gr.* See Tomkinson, 2004). Such an identity and its relationship to notions of magic and sorcery have lain at the basis for perceptions about Gypsies into modern times. This book attempts to examine the circumstances and conditions in which these developments took place.

This book also examines the question of the presence of Gypsies in the Ottoman commonwealth as the successor to the Byzantine Empire, and the relative absence of critical scholarship regarding them therein. The economic and social position of the Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire underwent significant changes during the period of modernisation and reform known as the Tanzimat, that brought conceptions about them into the orbit of wider European notions concerning the Gypsies, and was part of the Orientalisation of the Ottomans, with which the Ottomans engaged themselves particularly under the renascent Kahlif'a ideology of Abdul Hamid II (1878-1908 CE), as regards those they perceived as irreformable and backward, such as the Kurds, the Arabs, the Druze, the Maronites and the Gypsies. This process was an aspect of the Ottoman attempt to resist the discourses of colonialism and imperialism and establish a coeval model of Islamic civilisation, by subjecting others to the process of 'nesting Orientalisms' (Bakic-Hayden, 1995).

These notions were at the core of an original conception of this book as a work of history, a conception that has changed dramatically over the course of its production. As importantly this book is now also a contribution to the debate about the writing of Romanī history or histories and suggests that the concerns of mainstream historiography over the past twenty-five years or so, have

largely been ignored by Romanī Studies scholars who have not confronted the implications of the questions raised by the work of Hayden White and others regarding the pursuit of history, questioning “the content and the form” or the deconstruction of the ‘grand narrative’ (White, 1987:26-57). I question the underlying tropes that have been consistently used in the writing of Romanī history and raise the questions of how and who this has been written for. The heart of this book is now an examination of how narratives of the origin of the Gypsies relate to different historiographical agendas. In passing, this throws light upon how we can develop a transcendent rational agenda, which can develop a progressive humanitarian perspective because it problematises the explanations of inequalities of power and oppression, rather than taking them for granted as nationalist historiographies (and Romanī nationalisms) do. Inevitably this means the history of the Gypsies, as it is presented in the book is cast in terms of a succession of historiographies responding to the historical succession of agendas.

Since all these historiographies, except the anti-history of synchronic anthropology are built around accounts of origin (even those that purport to deconstruct such accounts), there is a particular emphasis on the exegesis of the 7th -13th centuries drawing upon a range of area studies. I have undertaken these in the pursuit of understanding particular problems that relate to the debate around origins, including the Dom Gypsies of the Turkish, Persian and Arab lands as they are frequently ignored or cursorily treated in most Romanī Studies literature. I also attempt to posit an explanation for the division between the Lom and the Rom, in the catastrophic collapse of the Baghratīd Armenian kingdoms in 1064 CE at the hands of the Saldjūkids. I conclude with a summary of the main points of the book and the arguments it contains.

I hope that this study will likewise serve as an introduction to some of the wider debates in history and historiography, and how these might relate to the writing of Romanī histories. I also hope that the examination of Gypsies in the Islamic lands, in a historical and historiographical context, will provide an introduction to groups of Gypsies inhabiting what has been, and to some extent remains terra incognita in the wider discipline.

Introduction

“Perhaps what I’m saying is not true, but it may be prophetic...” Jorge Luis Borges ‘Theme of the Traitor and the Hero’ in ‘Fictions’ (1962)

THIS BOOK BEGAN AS AN ATTEMPT TO INVESTIGATE the social and economic position of Gypsies in the late Ottoman Empire (1789 CE – 1923 CE). The principal approach was one that I had absorbed from reading the secondary material regarding Gypsies, my own experience of living with and amongst Gypsy, Roma and Traveller peoples and applying the knowledge acquired from study of the Ottoman Empire and eastern European history at undergraduate and master’s degree levels, as a student at the School of Slavonic & East European Studies and the School of Oriental and African Studies, both then part of the federated University of London. I had envisaged that an attempt to combine a thoroughgoing analysis of demographic and statistical materials together with what might be regarded as a ‘traditional’ historical approach relying upon periodisation and a strict chronology, would bring the ‘story’ of the Gypsies from the least well documented parts of their history to light, in an informative and useful addendum to the body of material examining the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller peoples in the context of mediaeval and early modern Europe. In this frame of mind, questions of origins, ethnicity and identity were best left to sociologists, ethnologists and anthropologists, and the matter of Romanī, Domarī and Lomavren linguistics was one that be effectively dealt with by experts far more knowledgeable than I.

This entailed the questioning of sources that by and large, were already in the public domain and translated into modern Turkish or English, by scholars and historians, such as Kemal H. Karpat’s *Ottoman Population 1830-191: Demographic & Social Characteristics* (1985), Justin McCarthy’s *The Arab World, Turkey & the Balkans 1878-1914: a handbook of historical statistics* (1982), and Stanford J. Shaw’s seminal work on Ottoman populations (1978). The economic picture was one that I hoped to introduce through the analysis of Ottoman Gypsy occupations, in the context of referring to the work of Michael Palairt (1997), Donald Quataert (1994), and other economic historians working in the field, most especially of course, Halil Inalcik (1994). The culture of the late Ottoman Empire, its views about the minorities living within its territories and the particular development of Ottoman Orientalism, were something that I had intended to portray and critique using the work of Edward Said (1978), Cemal Kafadar (1995), Usaama Makdisi (2002), Asli Çırakman (2002), and Gabriel Pitterberg (2003), amongst others. The overall perspective that I had initially formulated (following Angus M. Fraser’s observation that in the Ottoman Empire “they [the Gypsies]... were left pretty much unmolested by western European standards”; 1995:175) was

one that suggested the Ottoman Empire had been a place of some degree of tolerance, or at least benign indifference towards the Gypsies in what has been termed “the classical period” (İnalçik, 1973), and this had been undermined by increasing European influence throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries by pervasive notions about Gypsies that entered Ottoman discourse, an aspect of the debate about the impact of European influence upon the lands of the Sultāns and the question of reforms. The numbers of European and most especially western European folklorists and ethnologists that had come to the Ottoman lands in the later imperial period, had carried with them the seeds of a scientific racism that had imbued much of their own work, framing the kinds of questions that were conceived of and the perspective through which the Ottoman Gypsies became viewed (see Sardar, 1977 for a discussion regarding the impact of scientific thinking from Europe upon the Muslim world).

This Orientalist paradigm had come to be associated with a positivist school of sociology that had dominated Turkish research (and to some extent, still deeply influences it; see Sardar, 1979:668-70) and analysis in the social sciences. This, combined with an increasingly negative view regarding all minorities in the late Ottoman commonwealth (most especially the Christian millets; see McCarthy, 1997:204-209), led to a significant deterioration of the social position of Ottoman Gypsies, I thought to conclude. The notions of propriety, always a point of contestation during upsurges of religiosity during the rule of various sultāns, also influenced the view of Gypsies as indifferent Muslims and Christians, mostly nominal in their adherence to Islam or to Christianity for that matter, under the revivalist Khalif’a ideology of Abdul Hamid II (1876-1908) in particular (Karpat, 2001; Stoddard, 1922:37-75; Blunt, 1882:48-90). At points the Sultān actively intervened in the prohibition of Ottoman Gypsy dancers touring abroad for example, on the grounds that it would be a shameful exhibition that would encourage negative European views of the Empire (Derengil, 1998:62). Thus Gypsies were alienated in a way that reflected European notions about them in the context of an Islamic religious world-view, and embedded in a discourse about definitions of the ‘Other’, in the developing Ottoman Orientalism, coterminous with prejudices about the Arabs, Kurds, Druze, Maronites and various other minorities seen to be alien, different, disloyal and ultimately irreformable. This was a significant change from the so-called classical period, pre-Tanzimat (the period of reform that begins in the 1830’s and ends with the accession of Abdul Hamid II, though the efforts of other sultāns, in particular Selim III in the 1790’s should also be seen as part of the programme; see Shaw, 1971), and profoundly European influenced Empire, where Gypsies had a place in the complex ethnic and religious mosaic that was Ottoman society, or

so I had conceived of arguing.

In order to establish the context for Gypsy populations in the late 19th century, it was necessary to explain their historical presence and arrival in the Ottoman lands. The most recent scholarship relied almost solely upon information gleaned from Byzantine records by George Soulis in his article from over forty years ago (1961:141-165), consistently referred to by authors since (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:11-21; White, 2000; for examples), with reference to very few other primary sources. The documents cited by Soulis and others following him seemed to describe a picture of Romanī presence in the Byzantine lands from as early as c.1056 CE, but aside from one rather cryptic indication in a commentary upon an obscure ruling at the Council of Trullo, itself in 692 CE, little else elaborated upon this date. As to any indication as to how the ancestors of Romanī people may have reached the Byzantine capital, the suggestion was only slightly made that their passage was facilitated or hastened by the advent of the Saldjūks in the region, beginning about the Armenian year 467 AE/1018-19CE, though little historical argument had been delivered to support such a notion. Alternatively, the predominant narrative suggested that the migration of those we call Gypsies could be traced through references to the Persian lands and the groups known as Lūrī or Lūlī, following Col. John Staples Harriott of the Bengal Infantry (1830:518-558; see Minorsky, 1986:816-819; Grierson, 1889:71-6). Despite a significant lexicon that is apparently derived from Armenian in modern Romanī, Domarī or Lomavren, little investigation had been made to suggest how and where these ancestral Romanī peoples may have come into contact with the language or people of Armenia, or under what circumstances such a lexicon could have been acquired, other than suggestions regarding a Romanī sojourn in the Armenian lands (Dr. Vardan Voskanian has developed the most thorough scholarship regarding Armenian Gypsies and what is described as Lomavren, or a ‘secret language’ to date; see 2003:169-80). Likewise, the context for the acquisition of numerous Greek terms in modern dialects of Romanī has not been especially investigated by scholars, but asserted without a more detailed suggestion of the context of time and place. Though perhaps the consideration of this context could only ever be speculative, it might still serve to illuminate the possibilities surrounding how Gypsy identities came into being, and under what pressures or factors there might have been at play.

The earlier Indian connection has been much vaunted, both as part of the continuing scholarship associated with the political emancipation of Romanī and other Gypsy peoples, and as a topic of inquiry in and of itself. The contested nature of an Indian connection notwithstanding (see Mayall, 2004:119-125), the majority of scholarly opinions and the evidence of linguistic research does

accept this as primary in the discussion of the origins of the Romanī, Domarī and Lomavren-speaking peoples, and it has been incorporated into the notions of self-identity for a large number of Gypsy groups (see Matras, 2005:53 - 78). What is less clear is the process by which the ancestors of modern Gypsy communities left India, or were forced to leave and how they came to be a migrant communities in territories far removed from any “homeland”. The discussion of the role of the 11th and 12th century Islamic Turko-Afghan dynasty of the Ghazāvids in early Romanī history has proved the departure point for much of this book (Hancock, 2006:81-2; 2002:10, 13-14 and Fraser, 1995:28) regarding the state, organisation and campaigns into Hindū and Ishmaīlī India. The pivotal role of the Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznā (998-1030 CE), has been examined closely here, as I have attempted to draw out a narrative that looks in more detail at the circumstances whereby groups of Hindūs and Ishmaīlīs became part of this Islamic power-state, and how they may have been identifiable with the ancestors of the Romanī people, at least in part. Other scholars have chosen to focus upon what they see as the more negative aspects of Mahmūd and the Ghazānid impact upon India; indeed, the more ‘Hindutva’ of the contributors to the Roma Virtual Network insist upon the calamitous effects of these Ghaznāvid incursions (“Hindutva is not a word but a history”; see Savarkar, 1949), and in effect follow those who ascribe to the pre-eminence of Hindū civilisations in the sub-continent and refute the so-called Aryan invasions in favour of an indigenous origin for these (Thapar, 2000b:15). They are often deeply antithetical to Muslim and Christian influences and impacts upon the history of India and the region (Thapar, 2000b:16), and demand that these be treated as “black days” in Rroma history (see Roma Virtual Network, 2007 and responses, 20th December). Some reconstructed narratives of early Roma history have been profoundly influenced by this highly politicised notion (see Courthiade’s 2007, “Short Chronology of Rrom’s History”, posted to the Roma India group, 20th December), and the growth of modern Hindū nationalism in India since 1948 - in many ways a parallel to the development of Rroma nationalism and the International Romanī Union (Rroma in this context is a term that reflects a particular identification that might be said to emphatically assert an ethno-linguistic notion of identity over cultural or other attributes; see W. R. Rishi, 1995 for a counter argument to this use by “neo-linguists”). The questions surrounding the impact of Hindutva ideology upon Romanī identity and politics has not been part of the discussion of origins, to the best of my knowledge, but the implications of this are I would argue here, important in the construction of Romanī identity and ethnicity.

The investigation of the Indian ‘origins’ of the Gypsy peoples needed more than the replication of rhetoric asserting such, particularly in the wake of challenges to this notion from the post-modern

scholarship of what has become known as the 'Dutch school' (Willems, Cottaar, Lucassen, 1998; van de Port, 1998; Duijzings, 1997). These and others (see Belton, 2005, Mayall, 2004) have sought to 'de-exoticise' the Gypsies through arguing for a complex understanding of the processes of identity formation that challenges the ethnic basis of much of Romanī Studies scholarship; a position that seemed confirmed by my experience of carrying out field research amongst the Zabaleen and Dom communities of Cairo in 2000. Here a group of hereditary, Coptic Christian garbage collectors that inter-married with the nearby Dom communities appeared to be emerging as a distinct ethnicity, a Gypsy-like or indeed 'Gypsy' (according to local ascription) community (see Marsh, 2000). The Ottoman Empire during the classical period also seemed to provide evidence that the primary mechanism for the development of identities was through occupation, in the socio-economic organisation of the Ottoman polity. The modern group identities of Sepetçi, Kalayci, Bohçaci, Demirci (Bakset-weavers, Tinsmiths, Pedlars and Blacksmiths) and others in Turkey and elsewhere in the region, clearly drew upon this inheritance in the formation of 19th century sub-ethnic identities, and pointed to the importance of socially constructed notions of bounded communities. The 'Dutch school' (see Acton, 2004:98-116 for a comprehensive epistemological critique, and Matras, 2005:53-78 for a linguistic challenge), broadly argues Gypsies emerged as a result of changing social and economic circumstances in 16th and 17th century western Europe, and shifting intellectual perceptions in the 18th rather than the migrations of groups with 'Oriental' origins. This is essentially an argument regarding the social construction of Gypsy ethnicity from groups of marginalised and criminalised peoples who became vagrants and 'masterless' men and women as a result of changing Poor Law regulations and shifts in concepts of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor', and as threats to a "well-ordered society" (Willems & Lucassen, 2003:283-304). At the time of beginning this study, the notions of a socially constructed identity in such terms seemed promising and offered an explanatory paradigm that appeared to address some of the contradictions and seeming confusion that surrounded the questions of Gypsy identity, and definition of the basic question of 'who are the Gypsies?'

Yet the attempt of Willems and Lucassen to incorporate the situation of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire and pre-colonial India through a comparison of the mechanisms of exclusion in the presence or absence of a "well-ordered" society, raises a point they seem reluctant to define; was Ottoman society strong, centralised and well-ordered or, following Barkey (1994), was it de-centralised and apparently weak, though actually effective at neutralising opposition through incorporation of dissident elements? That ambiguity demonstrated an inadequate understanding of Ottoman social

organisation (common to others in Romanī Studies such as Zoltan Barany, 2002:23-48, 83-111). Their description of Ottoman society as ordered "...differently from Western Europe... Instead of local civic communities within a common judicial system, Ottoman villages and cities were organised into millets with religion as the ordering principle..." clearly ignores the vast corpus of civil law as promulgated by the sultāns, kanuni and the legal codes that were administered by the kadis or religious judges, both of which were regarded as part of the complex common judicial system applicable across the Empire, whatever local custom and practice additionally entailed (Willems & Lucassen, 2003:302). This undermined their previous position of a late 18th century establishment of Gypsy ethnic identity as a result of literary 'fabrication' by stating "Gypsies were the only category that was constituted on an ethnic basis" (also patently incorrect as even a cursory reading of the Ottoman population records will show; 2003:305). The chance to explore those ideas and measure them against the more 'traditionally ethnic' accounts has become a more central theme of this book than originally intended, partly as a consequence of the debate that has continued in Romanī Studies on the questions of ethnicity and identity sparked by the Dutch scholars, and partly as a result of the direct fieldwork undertaken in support of this inquiry, in Turkey and the region, where these questions are perhaps more contested than anywhere else in the world. The initial attractiveness of the social constructivist approach foundered in the face of both, and the realisation that in an attempt to deconstruct the ethnic 'grand narrative' of Roma ethnic identity, becomes its own 'grand narrative' of modernist and post-modernist identity construction. The application of what might be described as 'Fish's razor' (the problem of making any present historical assertion on the basis of arguing that all previous historical claims are radically contingent and vulnerable to deconstructive analysis of the assumptions upon which they rest; Fisher, 1989:304), highlights the problem and I suggest that the Dutch social constructivists are the conceptual step-children of 19th century Gypsy Lorism.

In pursuing an investigation of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire, I was concerned that the discussion about the migration of Gypsies into western Europe has often relied upon a notion of flight from the Ottoman Empire's rapid expansion as a matter of course (see the discussion in Fraser, where he details the various accounts of the origins of the bands that arrived in western Europe in the early 15th century and only one mentions the Turks as responsible for driving out the Gypsies from their lands, whereas the other accounts all suggest the Saracens i.e. Syro-Arabians, as the 'push factor' in this migration; Fraser, 1995:60-78; Daniel, 1984:28). The consideration of the historical context of such migrations had initially led me to question whether the primary motive for the western

European arrival of the Gypsies was in fact the Ottoman advance (a process that had been taking place for over fifty years in the Balkans and was almost certainly complete by the time of the second battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389 CE), or whether there were other factors involved, connected with the interregnum in the Empire following the defeat of Bayazīt Yildīrīm (“lightning”; 1389 – 1402 CE) at Angora (modern Ankara) and the re-imposition of feudal Christian rule for a period (1402 – 1444 CE) that almost exactly coincides with the arrival of the Gypsies, led by their counts and dukes, in western Europe. The prospect that such an alternative perspective might offer opened new avenues of inquiry related to the question of slavery and the relationship between Gypsies and the feudal lords of the Balkan lands, especially as such a discourse feeds all too neatly into predominantly nationalist conceptions of the period of eastern European kingdoms defending themselves against the infidel (the ideology of the *antemurale Christianitatis*, the ‘bulwark of Christendom’; see Norris, 1993:258; Schäuble, 2006:1-14; Šubel, 2006:1-9), a common trope from Serbia, Croatia, Hungary, Poland and the Vatican during the mediaeval period and revived in the conflicts of the Balkans during the 1990’s.

Modern conceptions of Gypsy ‘trans-national’ European minority identity are predominantly articulated around a confessional adherence that is principally Christian and increasingly evangelical (see Strand, 2001). In this sense, the notion that the majority of Gypsies were historically Muslim and not Christian both challenges the more Hindutva minded, and Pentecostal identifying modern Roma identity. This is an uncomfortable position for some (at a Romanī Studies short course in Istanbul, 2006, one of the participants remarked that he understood what I had presented in terms of the arguments for the importance of Islam in Gypsy history and that the majority of Gypsies had been predominantly Muslim in the past, he could even accept the notion of many of the traditional practices that I had argued were Islamic and not Indian in origin, but he didn’t like it). The concomitant idea of the historical flight of the Gypsies from the Muslim “terrible Turk” is much more appealing to modern Romanī (and European) politics than the notion of small groups removing themselves in the chaos following Ottoman collapse, from the possibility of enslavement by Christian princes with a desperate need for labour in their war-ravaged domains. The discussion in this book began to move from one that I envisaged as attempting to investigate and contemplate the context of such developments, within the cycles of events that we might describe as Ottoman history, to one where the questioning of the sources had become a broader interrogation of the relationship between the variant narratives and history or histories.

Since these early departure points, the circumstances in which this study has been written have

forced me to reconsider almost every point that I began with. My relocation to the Turkish Republic (and confrontation with Turkish nationalist, ethno-centrist historiography in contrast with Eurocentric historiography) and Istanbul in particular has meant that the entire perspective of this book has shifted, literally eastwards. The many encounters with modern Gypsy populations in Turkey and elsewhere in the region (Egypt, Bulgaria, Cyprus) has occasioned major alterations in how I have conceived of what was once a rather dusty exercise in exploring the documentation related to the late Ottoman Empire (tax and population registers, military cadastres and reform edicts), to one where the actual stories of people's ancestors, the patterns still discernible in social and economic organisation and the living heritage of these communities (to say nothing of the actual diversity of these that remains a fact in Turkey) has profoundly altered the original plan. During the course of this work, not only geographical shifts have encouraged changes in conception, but the experience of teaching Romanī Studies courses in various places has born fruit from discussions and debates with students, other scholars at conferences and seminars, and has also had a profound impact upon how I have attempted to answer their questions of me. Research itself has been a primary motor for this change and in this respect, the opportunity to carry out extensive research in the field amongst the many and various Gypsy communities of Turkey and elsewhere in the region has frequently forced me to reconsider what I have 'known' about the subject, often resulting in new lines of inquiry and shifts in emphasis that would not have been apparent otherwise.

The developing and dynamic exposure of the Turkish Gypsy groups to other European Gypsies and the European Roma awareness of the position and situation of Turkish Gypsies, has also played a major role in re-conceptualising the parameters of this study, as an exercise in viewing things from the "other side of Europe" (the title of the 2nd International Romanī Studies Conference in Istanbul, Bilgi University 13-15 May 2005). The notion of addressing the other half of the story of Gypsies in Europe, first suggested to me by Angus Fraser in 1998 at Professor Thomas Acton's inaugural lecture at Greenwich University and 'pulling' attention and scholarship eastwards has been behind the majority of my work ever since. It was behind the motivation to co-organise two series of Romanī Studies seminars and the first two academic Romanī Studies conferences in Istanbul (the first at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 10-12 April 2003; see Marsh & Strand, 2006), publish articles, research reports and an edited collection of works primarily dedicated to Gypsies in Turkey. The research projects that I have been engaged in over the previous six years have been focussed upon extending that knowledge and presenting it to the wider field of Romanī Studies,

firstly as a doctoral scholar and more recently as a researcher for various projects funded by institutions such as the Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul (together with Elin Strand), the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation, British Council in Turkey, the UK's Economic and Social Research Council, and the European Roma Rights Centre (together with their local partners, the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and the Edirne Romanī Association). All of these have made me aware of much wider issues than those that are frequently afforded to historians engaged upon research and the influence of these projects upon the developing positions that I consider, are manifold. The extension of these parameters has also been a consequence of some re-considerations of the fundamental questions of early Gypsy history and my attempts to answer the questions of how and why the Gypsies came to be.

These aspects are, I would continue to argue essential to understanding the arrival of groups of Gypsies in 15th century CE western European territory, and in seeing the development of what were an 'eastern' people, forged in the complex milieu of 11th century CE (4th century AH) Sunni Islam, Armenian Miaphysitism and Byzantine Orthodoxy. Attempts to locate the Gypsies in the cultural and historical context of the 'west' are fundamentally flawed by failing to acknowledge the importance of Muslim military and social organisation upon the earliest history of the Gypsy peoples and in this context, the assertion that Gypsies are a European people is problematic (see Hancock, 2006:70; Fraser's 1992 monograph is part of the "Peoples of Europe" series, though in this sense the definition is more catholic since monographs about the Mongols, the Goths and the Armenians are also included in this series; Morgan, 1986; Heather, 1996, Redgate, 1998). Concern to respond to the criticism of post-modernist scholarship that Romanī Studies has merely observed socially isolated, marginal groups and exoticised them with an Orientalist identity, may lead researchers to the position of too-readily refuting the 'eastern' origins of the Gypsies, without problematising the dualist essentialism of such definitions of 'east' and 'west'. This book attempts to both investigate these notions, and to 'map' some of the parameters of discussion regarding a critical historiography for Romanī Studies and outline what might be further questions for investigation into the processes of all identity formation.

In this sense, the present book is a very long way from where it began both conceptually and historically, and the considerations I have been forced to undertake have also meant a major shift in thinking about the very validity of the undertaking, as I had originally conceived of it. I began as a historian looking to find data about a particular group in a certain time period through an investigation of the sources, an archival exercise preponderantly concerned with questioning the

texts. As such, this was perfectly within the ‘traditional’ bounds of the discipline and certainly in line with standard methodology in historiographical terms. Comments from my supervisor, Dr. Thomas Acton that historians represented under-theorised sociologists were met with frank rejection on my part, an insistence that history (or perhaps History) should stand apart and be seen as an entirely legitimate discipline in its own right. Through the process of writing and researching for this study and others that I have undertaken, I now recognise that Dr. Acton was right in this (as in so much else), and that modern historiography has indeed sought to question the very foundations that History is built upon, with profound implications. If historians are to practice their craft (to paraphrase Marc Bloch:1954), then the notions of history as objective, concerned with facts and data and a patient ‘archaeology of the past’ can no longer be held to be self-evident. The challenges of post-modern inquiry and the post-structuralist considerations of language, discourse and culture have to be met and some answers to the questions White (1989:293-302) put forwards; how do we as historians deal with the material we choose and select, the interpretation we place upon it and the framework that we place around our very conceptualisations? In Romanī Studies, such considerations remain the untested ground of scholarship (though arguably part and parcel of other historical enquiry some time ago). The impact of scholarship that seeks to address some of these questions in the context of identity and ethnicity for example is frequently charged with its relationship to the wider political considerations of Roma rights and emancipation or equality. This relationship is problematic, as it both seems to empower those seeking to establish authenticity as a means of securing rights in the context of nation-state minority policies, yet undermine the notion of reliability as it appears to subvert scholarship to the requirements of a political agenda. These considerations are something that I have tried to investigate in part of this book, when looking at methodological and theoretical foundations, in the first section.

In some ways this study maintains a broadly ‘historicist’ (in the Hegelian sense of the word), or perhaps ‘new historicist’ structure (see Veaser, 1989:ix-xvi; White, 1989:293-302; Fish, 1989:303-16) in attempting to ‘map’ chronologically the periods of early Gypsy history through Ghaznāvid, Saldjūk, Byzantine and Ottoman epochs, and seeks to present some suggestions as to the context of the development of Gypsy identity and ethnicity, in Chapters 3-7. However, I have tried to avoid the use of an objective ‘third voice’; these discussions are presented by me as possibilities that may go some way to illuminating the processes at work and would certainly fall into the category of “unwarranted speculations” (Schama, 1991). The entire book is in this sense a construction, what Jonathan Swift once described as something that contained “a great deal more plausibility than

truth” (Stott, 2007:264), in that it argues explicitly that previous narratives are contingent and therefore subject to deconstructive analysis of the assumptions that underpin them (and that such assumptions have been suppressed or elided in order to maintain the illusion of veracity and objectivity). I also argue that such an approach contains a tension, in that these previous narratives rely upon exclusion and ‘forgetting’ and thus can be seen as conscious misrepresentations, but that such a position is implicitly undermining as it creates its own exclusions and treats all narrative as suspect (Fish, 1989:303-16). I have taken particular chronicles as my point of departure (mostly texts relating to the Ghaznāvids and Saldjūks from Islamic authors) and emplotted a narrative around them that may, or may not present a different understanding of the circumstances surrounding the processes of ethnic identity formation (to use the notion of emplotment from White, 1975) from a perspective that seeks to draw attention to my own basic contention; namely that the early history of the Gypsies is intimately bound with Islam and the various power-states that it produced during the first one-thousand years of its history. Such a perspective underlies the very nature of this inquiry, and certainly underpins the notion that it is impossible to understand the various manifestations of linguistic, social and cultural expressions that are associated with the Gypsy groups in the world without understanding this Islamic past. Such reverse teleology is again part of the broader and now questionable assumptions of history as ethnicity, and it is with profound misgivings that I am continuing the time-hallowed processes of seeking the present understanding of the ethnic community in a narrativised ethnic past. I have no solution to these problems, other than to relate these concerns and acknowledge that as a historian, history is what we choose it to be through our very interaction with what we investigate, to clearly outline here what those choices may have been and with what biases they were made and suggest that the metacritical questions that I pose about narrative may shift to normative constructions of the narrative itself in the process.

Beyond the more traditional approach of chronology and periodisation that I present, I have tried to raise the questions of theory and methodology in a more discursive and self-critical consideration of the study and the practice or research amongst the Gypsies in general, in particular the question of Romanī history writing. I have placed this at the forefront of this study in order to attempt to unsettle what might be a far-too-complacent rendering of the history of the Gypsies, even if I have sought to elaborate upon questions that seem to me at least, to have been little considered in the process of developing and constructing a plausible account (though one that is clearly not ‘true’ in the sense that Borges or Swift suggest above). These considerations may serve to contextualise what is an ongoing process or series of processes of thought, and may be less than satisfactory in

providing new knowledge rather than presenting further questions. It is my intention that they serve to constructively critique my own position (and that of others) that offers apparent certainty. In this, I am profoundly influenced by the great American historian of European and Native American encounters Calvin Luther Martin (1993:3-4), who openly admits that "...words. I have grown increasingly suspicious of them... and am growing increasingly distrustful of what I myself have been saying..." To attempt to use the discourse of western European scholarship and research to describe peoples and places, to bound together cultures and concepts that were very different, encounters and understandings that were conceived of with other languages and another metaphysic is to impose a vastly different story than that told by those whose experiences I have purported to convey here. The Gypsies in this story may well become "...the victims of illusions produced by words" as Marcel Detienne suggests (1986:26) and as a people, the Gypsies in all their variety and differentiation are the most victimised of all groups that have been fashioned by the words and illusions of others...

1. Historiography: History, Ethnicity & Identity

*“The dust of many crumbled cities
Settles over us like a forgetful sleep,
but we are older than those...”*

Celal ad-Din Rumi (Mevlana)

HISTORY IS IDENTITY, the primary means of acknowledging sameness, membership of the group and difference from others. It is always established, whether in part or wholly, through the sharing of a narrative of origins, of journeys of migration, or anti-migratory narratives of autochthony, and of ‘present’ as related directly to ‘before’. Shared origins in the heart of northern Europe for a number of peoples, such as the Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, English and Germans may be acknowledged historically or archaeologically, but it is the trajectory of the narratives of journey from this point, both geographically and conceptually, that begins the discourse of identities and ethnicities for these peoples. There is no “geography of significance”, as Maja Frykman (2005) has called it, in defining this as a common point for the Swedes, the English or Norwegians; in fact these narratives of journeys are frequently and positively anti-diasporic in their conception of origin. There is no appeal to the “folk-wanderings” of proto Anglo-Saxons, Jutes, Svea or Göta as a building block of common identity, no attempt to create a sense of commonality, whatever the linguistic connections that patently indicate otherwise. Instead, notions such as the “cradle of Sweden” or dates (1066 CE in England), are treated as axiomatic in the narrative of identity. Ethnicity, as a central component of identity, is frequently established through what Siân Jones has called a process of “archaeology” (1997; see also Sonia Tamar-Seeman 2006), the attempt to demonstrate the existence of direct lines of inheritance from the present-day group to the past occupation of territory, and a common culture, echoes of which are to be found in the artefacts and cultural expressions of the modern ethnos. Again, notions such as the “ancient Britons” - the Eцени, Brigantes, Trinovantes or other pre-Roman groups, or the Cwen or Kväner (a minority group in northern Sweden and Norway, that frequently adopt a counter-narrative to the Saami assertions of indigeneity in the Swedish case, arguably due to land-rights issues; for arguments concerning indigeneity see Onsmann, 2004:7-19), become integral to interpretations of modern ethnicity and to a direct lineage with an ethnicised past (thus effectively ethnicising all social, economic and political issues and actually undermining social equality within the discourse of equality of opportunity).

Identity and ethnicity are then history, the narrative sum of the series of past events ascribed to particular groups, and given legitimacy through the “major... democratic contest” of defining culture, in what Edward Said (2004) described as “a disputed history of identity”. In a way that

clearly transcends notions of identity and language as the fundamental nexus of identity, or a common culture, shared religion or other criteria, history as it is constructed in narratives of origins is the major conceptual framework for identity and ethnicity.

Is there a Gypsy history? A record of a whole series of past events associated particularly with people defined by themselves as Romanī, Dom, Lom, Travellers (or a plethora of other associated terms), or more often by others, as Gypsies? The question may seem one that is self-evident to those scholars and researchers working in the field of Romanī Studies, but I would suggest here that it is a necessary one, essential even, especially in the context of who produces this research and scholarship, who it is produced for and why. A great many words are written purporting to describe, define and delineate what is suggested are histories of the Gypsies (and thus establish legitimacy through the past, or series of contested pasts), sometimes by Romanī authors themselves (although most frequently not), but as the poet David Morley writes, these are "...haunted by falsehood from the start ...Fiction was the poached life-history of travelling folk" (Morley 2007). We might take this as a leitmotif, as we concede that what is presented as research about Gypsy peoples, what has been "poached" from them, in fact is more likely to be the record of contact between Gypsies and non-Gypsy people with their imaginative re-construction, or fiction they define as "Gypsies... [with their]... fantasies and longing for disorder" (see Malvinni, 2004: 23; van de Port, 1998; Okely, 1983). In this 'history', we can find a record of racism, the mechanisms of misconception, prejudice and exclusion and attempts to construct narratives of journey as an explanatory device for discrimination (thus justifying the criminalising of mobility in sedentary nation-states and of course, promoting the dominant trope of Gypsies as 'wanderers' or purposeless travellers), an exoticised and orientalist version of groups of people who have actually been in proximity to others for centuries, mostly through the experience of sedentarism. The idea of Gypsy identity being confusing or indefinable is posited with very little comparison to any confusion of other identities (the question of ethnic identity in any other group is rarely pursued in this context), yet we may trace 'Egyptian' identity to Constantinople from the second half of the 11th century (see the many repetitions of the story of the Atsinganoi at the court of Constantine Monomachus c. 1050, in literature about Gypsies, originally from the Life of St. George the Athonite written in twelfth century Byzantium; Peeters, 1922:102-104), arguably earlier than the establishment of 'English', 'Swedish' or many other European identities. The variation in origin myths that have abounded from quite early periods, have ascribed the most banal or bizarre of explanations to the ethnogenesis of Gypsy people (see Mayall 2004; Hancock 2002; Fraser, 1992 for discussions of these). Words

then are not to be trusted, are fictions as Calvin Martin suggests (1993:4). History and historical research is "...a discourse... cultural, cultivated, fabricated and thus ultimately arbitrary..." (Jenkins 1995:12), a way of delineating the parameters of discussions about, in this case identity and ethnicity, and ultimately access or restriction.

The notion of Gypsy history is one that is not secure though, academia has not always been accepting of the legitimacy of such (much as other areas of study have been 'ghettoised'). The 'establishment' in this instance might be defined as Historians, academic practitioners of writing History, and in ways similar to those contests that have marked the definition of other "hidden" groups in Sheila Rowbotham's seminal phrase (1972; see also Tebbutt 1998 for a recent example in Romanī Studies), Gypsy history has been frequently suggested as 'missing', 'lost' or 'forgotten' (in the sense that the establishments of hierarchies of history "...forcefully excludes what it does not embrace"; Terdiman, 1989:227). The idea that Gypsies have little history has been extremely influential, and is behind some of the misapprehension of non-Gypsy peoples about them. Ian Hancock (2001:10) notes what he describes as "...the vague understanding of Romanī origins..." and other writers have implied ambiguity (Fonseca 1995), or Gypsies as being without legitimacy, through this lack of history (see Beck 1986, for his discussion of this as an aspect of perceptions by non-Gypsies and researchers in Romania during the Soviet period). In contradistinction to other histories, conceived of as the absent object of inquiry and signified by their remaining fragmentary traces, organised (produced) by professional historians, archaeologists, archivists, librarians and academics (according to Tony Bennett's analysis of the "historical past"; 1990:22), the Gypsy 'past' is a lack of history behind, as Hancock (2001:2-6) argues, the ability of non-Romanī people to ignore or leave out Gypsies from many aspects of society, "in the absence of a well-recognised history and clearly understood ethnic identity". Here we might suggest Brian Belton's phrase of a people outside of the empire of written words, as apposite (Belton, 2005b; see below).

Historical research however, may be argued to be irrelevant to some Gypsies themselves in this context. To know the family lineage, the relationships between groups and the status of those relationships, whether cordial or antagonistic, might be what is important though frequently absent from the kind of research that concentrates upon resolving 'problems' or 'challenges' to social inclusion. To know whose family one's own ancestors once travelled with, or married into, these things may have meanings; and the idea of an abstract record of the events stretching back into the past, as a symbol of collective identity, seen to be of the non-Gypsy world (as Monica Kalderas of the Romska kulturcentret i Malmö [Romanī Culture Centre of Malmö] told me on one occasion in

2004). This is the language of nationalism, of imagined homogeneous communities tied to territories, of conceptions about when towns, farms, rivers, mountains and valleys stop being one's country, to become "one's un-country" (le Guin, 1980:211). In the perspective of national identities, what is Gypsy history? Is it a pan-European or even pan-global history? The demand for understanding the past of particular groups, through constructing narratives of ethnicity and identity is part of a discourse of resilience and authority, of claims to resources or rights based in linguistic conceptions charged with non-Gypsy notions of place and even time. The intellectual constructs of many non-Gypsy scholars are those that are employed in an attempt to encompass experience and events that are without the socio-cultural matrix of the academics and researchers producing research reports about Gypsies (as an imaginary construct), for the most part. Those of us writing history should be constantly mistrustful of what we say, what we describe as we seek to elaborate the fragmentary glimpses of Romanī people set down in non-Romanī records, as we construct a narrative of events that links movement with meanings, time and what has transpired. Our desire to make a coherent picture of the past, one that we can refer to when faced with demands for explanations as to who, where and how is, in its very inception, an acceptance of the legitimacy of such logic, to implicitly acknowledge the notion that authenticity relies upon demonstrable chronologies, maps and recorded 'evidence'.

Yet, are we in danger of creating a new kind of essentialism, one that suggests that this process is flawed and fraught because it has been produced by non-Gypsy people to non-Gypsy conceptions and must be re-written by Romanī scholars to be authentic and legitimate? The debate between scholars in the recent past has clearly been contested over this ground and there are suggestions that in the interests of the Romanī emancipation movement and political activism associated with securing rights for Romanī people, this is the case (see Matras, 2002:193 - 209). The notion of Romanī history itself is an exclusivist approach, one that presupposes a unique Romanī perspective that can be discerned from others at points in the past, elucidated from documentary evidence and textual sources. For an historically non-literate population for the most part, this is a position that is clearly open to question. The perspectives of those who recorded the encounters with Romanī peoples historically are the dominant ones, even when they are directly quoting Gypsies themselves, as in Andrew Boorde's 1547 *The Fyrst Bake of the Introduction of Knowledge...* or Lionardo di Niccolo Frescobaldi's account of meeting Gypsies in the Morea, in 1384 (1818:72-3). Gypsy historiography hasn't yet addressed the textual implications of the writing of that history, as it simply relies upon a nomological or narrativistic approach (frequently both), whatever the

underlying ideological position of the authors. Scholarship about Gypsies is almost always produced by ‘outsiders’, non-Gypsies and many works have been instrumental in defining much that we accept as the bedrock of Romanī history and culture. Others have been significant in defining what many regard as the propagation of stereotypes and anti-Gypsy prejudices (see Arnstberg, 1998; Svensson, 1993) and their critics have challenged and highlighted this aspect of their works (Montesino, 2002; Hazel, 2000; Strand, 2001:195 - 199). To challenge racism and discrimination, is it inevitable that an essentialism based upon equally exclusive notions of belonging be created, or a counter-narrative of ethnicity and identity be constructed?

If the record of the past that exists is one that largely misrepresents this experience for Gypsy people, is there a corpus of Romanī historiography that addresses these misconceptions and misconstructions? Increasingly the presentation of Romanī histories is one that is being undertaken by Gypsies themselves, and there is a body of work that we can define as Romanī historiography being added to those narratives of Gypsy people recorded and interpreted by non-Romanī authors, especially around key recent historical episodes such as the experience under Stalinism, or Nazi atrocities against Roma and Sinti in occupied Europe (see Lewy’s controversial 2000, *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*, where he argues that Gypsies were not targeted by the National Socialist regime on the same basis as the Jews and Hancock’s earlier counter argument from 1989, *Jewish Responses to the Porrajmos*). The debate over the use of the term “porrajmos” or more frequently “O Baro Porrajmos” – the Great Devouring – has meant that some activist Roma in Sweden have adopted an alternative to the term “porrajmos”, which they consider to be extremely sexually offensive, using instead the phrase *Sa o Mudarimós* or *Sa o Mudaripén* “the final killing”, which they consider more accurate in conjunction with a reconsideration of the mechanisms of exclusion, or what they term anti-Romaism. Hancock has cogently argued for the continuing use of the former term upon linguistic bases; (2006a:53-7).

What are the problems of a Romanī historiography? Clearly, a consensus over terminology might be one as suggested by the example above. What are the issues that confront researchers and scholars writing Gypsy history or histories, at present? The notions that practitioners of history writing have attempted to address, particularly as a result of the challenges from post-modernism, post-colonialist theories and subaltern studies that challenge the legitimisation of a conceptual framework for professional historical enquiry itself, have been almost absent from many of the recent works engaged with Romanī history (Incirlioğlu’s critical engagement with Foucault’s concept of heterotopia, is an example of research that has attempted to address wider conceptual

issues, 2006:191-201; see also Seeman 2006). Post-modernism itself has been challenged by some historians (see Domanska, 1998:173, when she suggests “I am grateful to post-modernism for many things, especially for giving me an alternative apprehension of the world in terms of difference and continuity rather than binary oppositions, but I am tired of ontological insecurity and epistemological chaos. I need order. I miss metanarrative.”) As Thomas Acton has often remarked, post-modernism is actually its own metanarrative premised by the acceptance of notions of pre-modernism and a modernity that has been superseded (Acton, 2004:103).

As David Mayall notes in his study of Gypsy identities, this may be less a lacuna on the part of those writing Gypsy history, and more to do with the relative absence of historians in Romanī studies, until recently (2004:26). It can be said Romanī Studies scholars have frequently ignored that the notion of history (Guy, 1975: 203). The works of Gypsy history that have been published have often reflected a perspective that might be described as “alarmingly a-historical” (Mayall, 2004:26) and at worst as an exercise in myth-making, yet the process of historical writing in general is one that has encompassed much of the latter in the development of national histories (I am reminded of Konrad Bercovici’s statement that “...every historian has lied when telling the story of his [sic.] own people, and lied again when telling the story of another...”, 1928:7). The shift away from colonial and imperialist narratives of the 19th century, to a post-colonial, critical historiography that has been concerned with issues of representation - or its lack - and the subaltern ‘voice’ (‘history-from-below’ in 1960’s Britain, for example; see *Past & Present*, 1952- and *History Workshop Journal* 1976-, for lively debates on the changing nature of history writing from Raphael Samuel, E. J. Hobsbawm, Lawrence Stone), has been one that hasn’t effectively answered the questions raised by dramatic changes in political complexity in south eastern Europe, for example. As Milena Dragicevic Sesic (2005) has argued, the discourse of diversity in the region, fostered by historical inquiry of the previous three decades, international organisations and others in an attempt to address the results of the conflicts of the 1990s, stands in direct opposition to ethnic-based cultural policies and national cultures. The significant others in this context are the neighbouring Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, and Rumanians, but Gypsies are also part of the narratives of ethnicity throughout the Balkans as van de Port (1998; see also Stewart 2002a:185 - 190) has shown, frequently as the ultimate ‘other’ against which ethnic identity in any of these instances is measured or ‘forged’.

There are then, a number of issues to be addressed by Romanī researchers producing Gypsy historiography. Can these be seen differently for Romanī writers of Gypsy history, as opposed to

non-Gypsy authors? Here I have tried to reflect upon aspects of the writing of Romanī history as an example of research and representation in a historiographical context, and argue the case that there are a number of significant issues to be addressed by Romanī researchers themselves. The first is that Romanī history is being produced differently by Romanī and non-Romanī authors and that it is being defined through practice, whilst the debates concerned with questions of what history is remain largely outside the purview of scholarship in Romanī Studies. I am suggesting here that there are apparently competing demands between Gypsy activism in the political sphere and the desire to construct coherent narratives of ethnicity, identity and history in the interests of addressing inequality, and the concerns of researchers attempting to examine the historical or contemporary experiences of Gypsy peoples. There is a relationship here, and the question is one of complement or conflict. I would suggest that the necessary engagement with the theoretical implications of modern historiography, for Romanī history writing, are ones that must be undertaken, as part of the shift towards a more critical Romanī studies. This shift is one that the Romanī writers of Gypsy history may be best placed to undertake, for reasons I shall discuss below.

1.2 The “Grand Narrative” in Romanī historiography; from the “Great Trick” (*o xanxanó baró*), to “We Are the Romanī People” (*Ame sam e Rromane dzene*), and the Roma writing of Romanī history

“I am bound to tell what I am told, but not in every case to believe it...” Herodotus ‘Histories’ (1862)

FROM ANGUS M. FRASER’S SEMINAL 1992 HISTORY OF THE GYPSIES, to Ian Hancock’s 2002 monograph, lies not only a temporal separation, but a paradigmatic shift in the approach to the writing of Romanī history. The metanarrative or “grand narrative” (to use Lyotard’s term, 1979: xxiv-xxv), of Fraser’s chronological progression has been refashioned by a differing conception of the structure (“O Teljaripe: The Move Out of India”; “O Aresipe: Arrival in Byzantium & the West”; “The Buxljaripe: Out Into Europe”; Hancock, 2002:vii - viii), with a positive emphasis on the perspective of Gypsy people themselves, by a Romanī author. Fraser’s broadly thematic approach (“Pressure of the Gyves”; “The Approach to Avernus”, 1992:v-vi) describes a more ‘traditional’ historicism and maintains the fiction of the objective voice, reflecting something of his attitudes as regards aspects of various notions of origins for example, and his characterisation of the movement of Gypsies into central and western Europe as ‘The Great Trick’ (*o xonxanó baró* as Fraser renders it, though this is actually incorrect – *o xaxaimos baró* should be the phrase, as Hancock suggests; pc. 2008. Acton has indicated that this is derived from Borrow, though Fraser does not acknowledge this; pc. 2008). This, Fraser suggests, was “the greatest trick of all... played on western Europe in the early fifteenth century” (1995:62). This strikes a chord that is echoed elsewhere in the work, one of stereotypical roguish mendacity when it comes to claims made by Gypsy people about identity or belonging, throughout the whole of the recorded history of the Gypsies. Though this is not the place for a review of the volume, the underlying trope is one of ironic scepticism, and the text is emplotted as a heroic but tragic metanarrative, clearly defining the resilience and resistance of Gypsy peoples in the face of almost overwhelming oppression and suppression. The link with resilience and therefore authenticity is, however, slightly contradictory in view of the sceptical position adopted in Fraser’s analysis. Hancock’s approach is a post-modern narrative by contrast, where the author stands firmly in the text in a dialogue with the reader (see the Introduction, where he writes that the book is a way “...you can get to know more about us and our culture, history... and aspirations”, 2002:xvii). The connection with resilience and authenticity remains, but the text is intentionally didactic and makes no attempt at preserving a fictional third voice - the text demands that the reader engage and align himself or herself with it. Elsewhere Hancock presents the reader with his own intellectual processes and developments in his thinking,

“...in my earliest writing I supported a fifth-century exodus from India, and accepted the three-way Rom-Dom-Lom split; I no longer do” (2006:69), in contrast to Fraser who dispassionately suggests about the debate over origins for example, “so there we have some interesting coincidences” (1992:31).

The challenge of the post-modernist Dutch school (Willems, 1993; Willems, Lucassen & Cottaar, 1998, for examples), has forced a recapitulation of the arguments about origins and identity that, to some extent were left open by Fraser’s scepticism (see Acton 2006:11). Ian Hancock’s recent work has sought to define the question emphatically, and has brought strong reactions from the social historian David Mayall (2004:223-224), and more particularly, Yaron Matras (2004:53-78). In his review article (2004:199-209) he challenges Ian Hancock’s claims to present a convincing case, and argues instead that activism, rather than scholarship, is the driving agenda in this recent discussion of origins and identity. Thomas Acton’s response in Roma (forthcoming), suggests that the arguments are in the nature of “classic positivist” debates, familiar in Romanī Studies since the arguments of W. R. Rishi (1976), began to represent the modern kshatriya (Rajpūt warrior) position.

The notion of a military origin of the Gypsies is of course nothing new; Sir Richard Francis Burton KCMG, writing on a number of occasions (see Burton, 1898:215-7, for the most definitive presentation of his arguments) suggested this from the 1840’s onwards (as Hancock has himself made clear in a recent posting to the Roma Virtual Network in July 2007) and others followed for the next sixty years to repeat or develop this. W.R. Rishi’s own discussions sought to draw new inferences from some surprising connections between Panjabis and buffalo milk for example (1975). The writing of Romanī history remains a contextual, and highly contested arena, where the discourse of “authenticity” and “resilience” jostles with that of “social isolates” and “marginality”. Scholarship and activism are contrasted as two opposing poles, with the engagement in one argued by many as compromising the other (see Mayall 2004:5-8; and Matras 2004:62-78; 2002:206). In this sense, Romanī ‘self-writing’ (to use a phrase from a 2005 symposium at Umeå University’s Department of Modern Languages), can be seen as the necessary corrective to *gadjé* (non Gypsy) derived scientific criteria, and positivist notions of objectivity. In this context, Gypsy researchers’ positions are very similar to that of other writers from minority ethnic backgrounds; it is the assumption that the activist agenda is always to be identified at the heart of the argument, the inability to stand ‘objectively’ above the debate. The problem that such a position also embodies (in that any attempt to pursue objectivity is seen largely as the product of an exterior, or unrepresentative perspective that cannot adequately supply us, the readers, with an insight from a

genuinely ethnic voice), is of course the flip-side of this particular counterfeit - in the sense that notions of scientific objectivity have been undermined by the successful critique of post-modernism - coin.

In the wider Romanī political movement, the ‘traditional’ approach to the history of the Gypsies has largely maintained its teleological narrative, through the tropes of journey, persecution, and the need for redemption through political and social emancipation, delivered by non-Gypsy institutions (European Union, Council of Europe, Organisation for Security & Co-operation in Europe and the Open Society Institute), as mobilised by Romanī activism, and influenced by research reports and academic studies. Web-sites dedicated to the dissemination of information about the Roma of Europe, frequently include varieties of historical background that continue to reflect the emphasis on mobility and marginalisation (see the web-site of Patrín as an example). Contemporary music and dance, as an aspect of the reproduction of what one might term popular Romanī history, constantly refers to the “Roads of the Roma”, or the “Thousand Year Journey” (see for example, Eriksen & Dreisziger, 2004), reinforcing the separate nature of Romanī experience through alternative narratives of journey, or counter-structures of community governance and self-regulation, with collections of music by the “Gypsy Queens” or “Kings”. Conversely, these seek to integrate this cultural expression under the general category of “world music”, again as an alternative to ‘mainstream’ (non-world?) music. The possibility of Romanī music that expresses more “conventional” forms, such as the Mozart, Brahms and Liszt played at concerts by Robbi Lakatos or Gabor Boros’ ensemble, finds only a limited market, whilst those musicians who work in a more nationally-defined genre, such as Swedish dance-band music, are not recognised as Romanī or Gypsy at all (despite the fact that very many of the dance bands’ personnel are Resande, or Travellers). The extreme example of this is in the situation of English Romanichals, whose musical heritage has become almost wholly absorbed as “folk music” since the latter was re-fashioned in the 1960’s, and English Gypsies now often identify closely with American country and western music. This form of Romanī presentation as an expression of historical experience has become detached, de-contextualised to the extent of being unrecognised as such in the Swedish and English contexts. The particular descriptions of the shifting relationship of Travelling peoples from rural to urban communities, as a consequence of industrialisation and urbanisation, are now taken to be part of the overall narrative of population dislocation and (frequently) emiseration, in the restructuring of these nation-states during this process. In these examples, the research undertaken into these musical forms leaves aside such considerations (Scottish research by contrast, under the auspices of

Edinburgh University's Centre for Scottish Studies, has an unrivalled archive of recordings from Gypsy-Travellers singers such as Belle Stuart and many others). Sonia Seeman has argued that contemporary Gypsy music in Turkey, produced by the Romanlar themselves, is both responsive to and reflective of the non-Roman "iconic stereotypes" that emerge in the struggle for control over representations of the 'Gypsy' (Çingene in what is considered to be a pejorative term), in what she suggests is a fluid "...contingent, negotiable and contestable ...relational and conjectural rather than essential" process of establishing Gypsy cultural identities (see Seeman, 2006: also Marsh and Strand, 2005:12 - 16).

In the purveying of popular ideas of the Romanī past, the imaginary Gypsy, and his/her connection to "the wild" or exotic, maintains its hold on both the European conception of Gypsy people, and the understanding of how they came to be. The current prejudice and discrimination displayed towards Gypsies in Europe utilises this discourse in order to mobilise the notions associated with it, underpinning stereotypical representation through the media of feckless, irresponsible parasites. The portrayal of Gypsies in historical terms is significantly undercut by reference to de-legitimised "travellers". A great deal of scholarship and research reports that are published engage critically with this discourse, arguing for a rights-based approach that ultimately challenges some of the conceptions surrounding notions of social inclusion and citizenship, especially as these are frequently ethnicised across social, economic and political factors further marginalising Gypsy communities. The representation of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers in scholarship is as many-faceted as the research itself, but the current plethora of texts that focus upon social inclusion is less an indication of the needs of Gypsy peoples themselves, and more a reflection of where it is possible to gain funding for scholars and what kind of research is being commissioned. In this context, the production of scholarship is always an aspect of those producing it, not those about whom it is produced. These many representations have a clear impact upon how people perceive Gypsies, and how Gypsies perceive themselves more and more. As Acton has suggested, the solidity of a rights-based model of research (such as that pursued by the European Roma Rights Centre) stands in stark contrast to the smoke-and-mirrors that are preferred by many researchers and scholars, the essentially nationalist notions of social inclusion and citizenship (2004:114).

The epigram from Mevlana Celaladdin Rumi at the head of this chapter leads me to the consideration of Romanī identity in methodology and research, and suggests one of the principle phenomena that appear in these, namely the construction of Gypsies in the imagination of the observer. Like beauty, the image of the various peoples described as Gypsies is frequently to be

found in the eyes of the beholder. The repetition of various attributes of Rom, Dom or Lom (or the various ethnonyms by which groups are described as Travellers) that are the subject of research (Lom and Dom appear all too infrequently in what is a predominantly Eurocentric discipline; for examples, see Hanna, 1982; Vardan Voskanian, 2003:169-80), concerning all manner of behaviour that is defined in ethnic or cultural terms (both of which are often thinly disguised alternatives to the less acceptable term race), is another. To the extent that these represent consistent methodological concepts applied or implicit in research and scholarship, they are the dust of Mevlana's "crumbled cities", or as Italo Calvino might suggest, the "imaginary cities" that academia has in the past, and continues in the present in some cases, to construct as the sites for their interpretations of who and what are Gypsies (1978). Within these carefully (or not so carefully) built edifices, Gypsies are positioned, assigned the role of players in the drama of symbolic action that constitutes the attempt to portray an understanding of their lives. This is 'smoothed' over almost inevitably to ensure a degree of consistency (and those of us engaged in field research will know that contradictions are worth a great deal more than smooth consistency) and provide what are in the end, a series of conclusions often designed to demonstrate the necessity for conclusions, interventions or strategies almost always defined by a wider socio-cultural and institutional context, what Acton has recently termed the "[...] shifting and uncertain sands of 'citizenship' and 'social inclusion' policies" (Acton & Marsh, 2008; see also Acton's critique of the general approach and in particular, the UNDP 2002 report *Avoiding the Dependency Trap*, Acton, 2006a:30-33). In more concrete terms, research often seeks to identify Gypsies according to an a priori set of criteria – frequently based upon previous academic research – before proceeding to observe the group, interview and collect data and subsequently establish a framework in which to construct narratives of ethnicity and identity with the prerequisite elements of music, dance, language, religion, and cultural practices.

Other aspects often make their appearance in research, such as the notions that Gypsies represent a social 'problem' (or more euphemistically, a series of 'challenges') in terms of integration and what might be described as the citizenship or social inclusion paradigm (see the numerous reports considering this conception of the issues from largely uncritical [of the conceptions of social inclusion and citizenship] perspectives), such as this objective from the Government of the Principality of Asturias: "To approach real situation of gypsy [sic.] community, its needs and their deficiencies... in order to jointly define proposals for the social incorporation of gypsies and to move from the social exclusion to the real citizenship..." (Government of the Principality of Asturias, 2006). The questions that underlie this kind of research are about how well or poorly

Gypsies 'fit' into non-Gypsy societies (with the concomitant notion that there is a homogeneous society against which they are measured and evaluated; see the work of Swedish ethnologist Svensson, 1993; its critique in Montesino, 2002, and its antibook in Hazel, 2000). There is also a clear concern about control of movement and migration, and in much research the question of crime and its relationship to Gypsy communities is at the heart of the inquiry, frequently viewed through the prism of statistics and quantitative data, or the distinctive gaze of the state (see ethnologist Arnstberg, 1998, and the critique by Strand, 2001:195 - 199).

The particular consideration here is how we as researchers, both Gypsy/Traveller and non-Gypsy/Traveller, choose to portray (or sometimes betray) the communities and individuals we are working amongst and how, in the context of academic research, we as a community of scholars and researchers confirm, create or refute the prejudices, stereotypes and misconceptions that exist about Gypsies, through our [mis] representations. In the sense that research, as I suggested above has a very direct bearing upon knowledge and understanding, and ultimately policies and practices (and more important, government spending, NGO budgets and philanthropists' donations), the responsibility of researchers is one that is often treated lightly, though mistakenly so.

Representation through research is the primary means by which other researchers and academics, international and national policy-makers, advocates and activists perceive the peoples we describe as Gypsies, as if they were in fact real, and not the interpretation of the researchers who depict them in the pages of theses and reports, in many cases debating over the representations as if they were in and of themselves, a totality. These representations take the place of the actual people and come to stand for them as symbols or sometimes ciphers for a series of notions (often graphically reinforced through accompanying photographs, reifying individuals even further "...in picturesque discussion with Roma and Dom in tea-houses, tents and elsewhere", in what Acton has recently remarked as "...a diversionary post-imperialist indulgence." Acton and Marsh, 2007), related to the overall trope (metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy or irony, of which the dominant tropes in Romanī research tends towards synecdoche and metonymy) and emplotment (a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse) being used by the writers – the frameworks by which the research has been formulated (White, 1978).

What are the assumptions present in our research that we use to emplot our narratives, and the tropes that we construct? Clearly the Gypsy as metonymy in the social sciences imagination of much research is the major trope – in the case of the work of van de Port for example (van de Port, 1998:6-7), Gypsies are understood to stand for 'wildness', 'licence' and a people 'unbounded' by

what are perceived to be the conventions surrounding behaviour in the ‘majority’ society, in this case the Serbs of Novi Pazar. Van de Port is, in this instance, using the trope of Gypsy as a means of examining Serbian people, emplotting his work through a narrative of the tragi-comic and post-modern satire. In many cases, the use of the imaginary Gypsy is a device to examine the non-Gypsy, to actually explore the psyche of the gadje. The 2002 UNDP report so deftly critiqued by Acton referred to above tells us more of the conception of police officers, social workers, local government administrators and UNDP researchers as to who they perceive as Gypsies and what they understand or actually assume to be the criteria for defining them, than it does about Gypsies as individuals and communities experiencing the particular circumstances in which they live. This is a recurring problem with much of the research conducted by albeit (mostly) well meaning individuals in the field of social sciences. It tells us about the people conducting the research, those funding it and the audience it is intended for through re-presenting the Gypsy using tropes we have come to expect – excessively poor, often itinerant, ignorant and under-educated, disenfranchised politically and marginalised economically, socially excluded and culturally appreciated within a very narrow context. Research that offers other perspectives is far less prevalent though of course it exists; in a presentation at Istanbul Bilgi University in 2004, Elena Marushiakova and Veselin Popov provided examples of a counter-narrative from their recent (at that time) field work in the Crimean region and Ukraine that challenged the expectations of the audience significantly. Does research that brings us information about those Gypsies who may present alternative or contrasting perspectives to these dominant tropes have an impact upon the wider body of scholarship? Despite the fact that such research does go on (Kinga D. Toth’s 2001 doctoral research at Manchester University about successful Romanichals in the UK, or Nidhi Trehan’s 2008 doctoral exploration of the notion of international non-governmental organisation personnel as elite groups and their relationship to the Roma and Gypsy grassroots movements in Europe, are two examples I can think of), little of this finds a resonance within wider social policy research apparently. So it would seem to be the case that research, funded by academic scholarships or major NGO’s, trans-national bodies or national governments is concerned with presenting Roma, Gypsies and Travellers as Gypsies – a set of notions surrounding the researchers’ ideas of who these people are. As Brian Belton has remarked about research in a Czech radio programme, “It’s an empire of written words. It’s an empire of writing that exists separately from people...”(Belton, 2005).

However, the notion that all research is negative and pervaded by stereotyped representations of Roma, Gypsies and Travellers is itself something of a stereotype. Stereotypes are specific products

of time and place that appear to offer simplistic and all-too-frequently negative, explanations for specific phenomena, by generalising them and distorting them. Frequently following the word “but...” stereotypes are results of these phenomena. Discriminatory and prejudicial stereotyping about Gypsies is couched in these pseudo-explanatory terms, when in fact it is a product of exclusion and marginalisation, not an explanation of them. Obvious as this seems, the frequency with which these appear in both research and the responses to it is surprisingly high, and many critics of researchers or their research, perceive both to be inherently stereotypical in their portrayal of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. As a recent conversation about a particular researcher amongst the Dom of south eastern Turkey suggested, the stereotype of the unscrupulous, invasive and self-serving scholar is widespread enough to reach even these largely unappreciated people. The explicit comparison being made was with the research I was carrying out as a Romanī person (though as a thoughtful reflection on this mission made by one of the researchers with me pointed out, despite a critical perspective regarding identity politics and the mobilisation of ethnicity as the prime factor in resilience and the continuing resistance of Gypsy communities to the demolition of their homes, marginalisation from education, employment and health services and a score of other problems, my discourse during research was entirely bounded by the wider one of Gypsy ethno-politics in general). The stereotype of the ‘bad’ researcher is one that may be reflective of the very real negative experiences of people on the outside of the “empire of written words”, but it nevertheless offers little in the way of explanation about why these should be so.

Research and researchers operate within significant constrictions during research projects or field missions, and these may be some of the reasons why they seem to reflect the stereotype of ‘bad’ researchers. The determinants of the research are frequently in the hands of the funding bodies of the programme, and as such this can have a negative, sometimes deleterious impact on the results (and thus the perceptions presented in findings and recommendations). Research criteria is often telescoped to view a very narrow set of questions, ignoring the wider considerations that might modify or radically alter the outcomes, and the question of funding is almost always a major criteria for how much, how long, how extensive or how frequently people are interviewed or who is being interviewed (The UNDP report *Avoiding the Dependency Trap* illustrates the problems with this question, whilst the 2004 report “*The Situation of the Roma in an Enlarged European Union*”, written by Focus Consulting Ltd, the European Roma Rights Centre and the European Roma Information Office, demonstrates that these can be overcome with careful research design and methodology; European Commission, 2004). In short, the funding and resources underlying any

research will often determine the kind of limitations that researchers operate within, and affect the results.

This, of course, is not the only reason that researchers may present ambiguous or negative perceptions of Gypsies through their reports or publications; in some cases the agendas of researchers are apparent from the very outset in the titles for their publications (the example of the UK's Communities & Local Government Office 2007 report, "Gypsy and Traveller Task Group on Site Provision and Enforcement: Interim Report to Ministers", Communities & Local Government where the section entitled "Community leadership" states, "We have identified skill and people shortages in planning, enforcement and inspectorate agencies", clearly suggesting the importance of 'enforcement' with regard to Gypsies and Travellers). In other cases, the hidden assumptions behind the research that surface in the kinds of questions asked, the kind of material gathered and the conclusions drawn from it, tell us much about the views of those who conducted the research in the first place and their intended audience.

The impact of historical contingency in many studies is frequently subsumed under a generalised abstraction that is ultimately self-referential – Gypsies are a marginalised and socially excluded group because they have always been so, because they are from elsewhere and 'other'. The relationship between modernity, the nation-state and exclusion is rarely examined as a context for much research, possibly reflecting the perspective of the audience for many of the reports produced (the work of Ussama Makdisi about sectarianism and violence in Lebanon is a notable exception; 1996:23-26, 30). The concerns of the modern nation-state and trans-national, supra-states are to improve upon the model and ensure social inclusivity, rather than reflect upon the historical realities of nation-state construction as inherently exclusivist in the promulgation of 'the nation' and ethno-nationalist ideology (for a reflective discussion of Roma 'nation-building' and its consequences, see Horvath, 2006:53-57; for a discussion about the International Roma Union's Prague 2000 adoption of the "Declaration of a Nation Without a Territory", see Acton and Klimova, 2001:157-219).

The problem of reliance upon older analytical approaches drawn from linguistics, ethnography, anthropology and social sciences being applied to historical phenomena, has been one that has concerned me in the research for this book. It is one of the developments that has been part of the process of researching and writing a text that might be best described by the term 'inter-disciplinary' research, and has become the model for this particular study and those related to it in the course of my work. At this point I would suggest that a more reflective scholarship founded upon a critical, multi-disciplinary approach can be realised, otherwise Romanī Studies is likely to

remain underpinned by late 19th century Euro-centric conventions of linguistics, folklore and 'racial science' (Fraser, 1997:172), and an approach that exoticises and objectifies. It is deeply unsatisfactory when a cursory reading of the most general works, the repetition of a 'standard' discussion of Romanī origins and the recycling of much that was first produced in the 18th and 19th centuries, can establish 'experts' and interpreters of Gypsies, of (usually) non-Romany background (the encyclopaedic works cited elsewhere in this book are examples of this). The growing disquiet about the increasing numbers of such 'experts' from both Romany and non-Romany people has led to an identification of the so-called "Roma industry". Despite the impassioned plea of a Romanichal activist and poet at a Greenwich conference of international scholars to recognise this (Frankham, 2000), the phenomena has increased, almost in inverse proportion to the general worsening of conditions for Romanī peoples in Europe (Harding 2001:xi-xii). Forced evictions, declining levels of access to health care, education, employment and training are rapidly becoming the long term 'norm' for many of the Gypsy communities in eastern and south eastern Europe. Gypsies have become the largest net export of nations in eastern Europe since the collapse of Stalinist Communism (Stewart, 2002b), and attitudes in receiving countries in western Europe and the United States continue to harden, as both popular opinion and political legislation are mobilised in a discourse about illegal immigrants and refugees. Gypsy is, in this context an additional series of ill-defined concepts about identity, equating with 'otherness', 'alien-ness' and 'difference'. Such notions are only reinforced by a discourse of Rroma nationalism that seeks to locate Gypsies as a 'non-territorial nation' rather than related minorities located in nation-states (according to the International Romanī Union's World Romanī Congress Prague gathering, that approved the notion; Acton & Klimova, 2001). Funding for social programmes aimed at addressing or alleviating the myriad problems facing Roma and Romanī communities in Europe have left few lasting benefits in the decade and a half of post-Soviet politics, whilst attempts to constructively address the social inclusion of Gypsies remain at the regional or national policy level, but seem largely ineffective (the debate about this is at the heart of the 'Decade of Roma Inclusion' initiative of the Open Society Institute and certain East European governments). The choice some communities make to continue to be 'outsiders' is, as it always has been a response to rejection and thus no choice at all.

Not all research is restricted to the presentation of negative stereotypes or notions that reinforce common prejudices of course; in some cases academics and researchers are keen to present certain data in the context of their own agendas for mobilisation or organisation of Gypsies, or to support the arguments made regarding origins, ethnicity and identity. The research into Gypsy history is one

such area where competing agendas and conflicting interpretations may reflect this to a much higher degree than in some others perhaps. In the sense that the audience of this kind of research may be broader (in that much social science research is directed at a non-Gypsy audience and intended to achieve change through mobilising it), it is an arena where a series of counter-narratives to the dominant themes of the nation-state, social inclusion and citizenship, have been presented as the historical experience of Gypsies. This representation of history has been made through the construction of an alternative narrative of journey, of exodus even, from the Promised Land or Baro Thān, as Rishi suggests (1989:1). The notion of the non-territorial nation is consequent with this as it suggests a displaced people, exilic and wandering like the Hebrews in the Sinai, and the potential for a return perhaps to a place where Gypsies are not alien and other. The question might be to what extent does scholarship that seeks to define this original departure echo these notions? Has the investigation of origins served the interests of Roma and other Gypsies in the confirmation of an otherness that justifies the discourse of social inclusion and minority rights, through asserting that like other minorities, Gypsies stem from elsewhere and are therefore inherently alien to the majority of society, distant and removed?

In this sense, the experience of the Gypsies in the Ottoman and Turkish lands offers an alternative perspective to history, as the emphasis (in modern Turkey) is on an identification as part of the nation-state, not as a minority with a diasporic heritage. The Ottoman picture is harder to discern as the records of how Gypsies in the Empire perceived themselves, are limited, though the occasional glimpse can be found in some official documents, but these may have portrayed a particular series of notions for a purpose (see Ginio, 2004:117-8). They do however indicate a sense of identifying with the broader society of Muslims, though clearly this is complex as it involves an oppositional duality with being Gypsy (Ginio, 2004:118). In order to move on to the question of Ottoman Gypsies and their particular place in society, I review some of the literature that has emerged regarding Ottoman Studies and the nature of minorities in the Empire, and relate this to the work that has looked at Gypsies in Turkey.

1.3 Stout hearts and sturdy footwear; the Gypsy Lore Society and other literature

*"...and who shall say what proportion of fact, past, present, or to come, may lie in the imagination?" H. Rider
Haggard, 'She' (1886)*

IN THIS SECTION, I wish to examine the some of the developments in Romanī studies and Ottoman historiography that have a bearing upon this book, a brief historiography of the writing of Romanī history as it more particularly applies to Turkey. In critically assessing the state of Romanī Studies in this area, and in light of recent publications providing an analysis of the Ottoman Empire's Gypsy populations, I shall discuss the concept of late Ottoman ethnic, confessional and social organisation. This has often been referred to as the millet system (Bosworth, 1982; Braude, 1982:69–88; Braude & Lewis, 1982:1–34; Cohen, 1982; Davison, 1990:112-132; Faroqhi, 1995; Haldon, 1992). Some inaccuracies that have arisen within Romanī historiography regarding this subject are due to a lack of clear understanding about the Ottoman Empire in general, and the millet system in particular (Braude, 1982:70). There has also been little historical analysis applied to Gypsies in the Empire beyond the European provinces (Marushikova and Popov, 2001; Ginio, 2004; Fraser, 1992: 171-176). Emphasis upon the Roma as a European people makes reference to their 'Indian origins', but frequently with little historical contextualisation, relying upon generalised descriptions such as "ancestors of the Roma left their mother-country India... about a 1,000 years ago during the Muslim invasions..." (Rishi, 1989:1) and vague notions of the history of 11th century Asia and Anatolia. It often appears as if little had been written that does not echo or uncritically repeat many of the earlier texts from Romanī historiography in the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society. This book is additionally written to try to begin to address some of these issues from a historical basis in Turkey in particular. Relatively little has been committed to paper regarding the Gypsies of Turkey, in spite of the importance of these lands in the history of the Romanī people. What has, has largely examined Turkish Gypsies as homogeneous except by rare references to confession, language and more frequently to occupation. No particular studies have considered the position of Gypsy women or children in and of themselves, and there is a tendency to consider Turkish Gypsies (as in a great deal of research in this field) as an undifferentiated mass, without stratification in class terms, gender or age. The references to Gypsies in the Byzantine period will be more fully discussed in the following section, but in modern scholarship at least, the description of these groups has been sparse. Here, a brief survey of some of the research concerning them is undertaken.

Leaving aside for the moment the travellers' accounts that mention Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire

(such as Evliya Çelebi's descriptions from his *Seyâhatnâmesi*, of which there is currently no entire translation in English; see Palles 1951; Dankoff and Elsie 2000; Dankoff, 1990), the first serious attempt to analyse aspects of the Gypsy communities in Turkey come from Dr. Alexander G. Paspatis M.D. (also Alexandros G. Paspates) in the 1860's who attempted to describe the language in use amongst them in his "Memoir on the language of the Gypsies as now used in the Turkish Empire" in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, (1860-1863:143 - 270). In his introduction to the history of the Gypsies, Paspatis refers to the fact that "no general persecutions ever took place against them, either on religious or political grounds..." and as a consequence "they have been suffered quietly to live in those provinces [of the Ottoman Empire]... and have multiplied to such a degree that they are superior in number to their fellow-countrymen in all other states in Europe..." (1860-63:147; Fraser and others follow this closely; 1995:175). He goes on to stress what many European commentators also suggested in arriving at an estimate of the population, namely how difficult this was as the Ottomans counted only sedentary Gypsies and usually undercounted women, boys under 15 years and men over 60 (see Karpat, 1985:xiv); their numbers for Muslim Gypsies are also unreliable. One total that Paspatis derived from other, states that "three fourths of all the Gypsies of Europe are to be found in Turkey..." although in actual terms, he is equivocal about the figures derived from Gypsies themselves "who by such mendacious accounts are inclined to give themselves importance and consideration in these provinces" (Paspates, 1860-3:147). Paspatis considers this data important because it confirms that great numbers do indeed live in Turkey, as referred to by travellers' accounts. He goes on to note that the Gypsies of Turkey follow the religion of those whom they live amongst, and that they inter-marry with Turks but not with Christians (1860-3:148). In the following pages Paspatis proceeds to analyse the language of the Gypsies after making his famous remark "The entire history of this race [sic.] is in its idiom..." (1860-3:149), a maxim that might be said to have guided Romanî Studies ever since.

In his opus, *Études sur les Tchingianés ou Bohémiens de l'Empire Ottoman*, Paspatis again refers to population in Turkey and how numerous Gypsies are (1870:35), before suggesting, in a rather curious remark that the differences in dialects spoken in the Empire meant that Balkan Gypsies may not understand those in other parts (1870:36). This I would suggest is an indication that Paspatis was aware of the fact that both Domari and Lomavren were being spoken by groups of Gypsies in Turkey, but not the knowledge of what these 'dialects' actually were - this would follow upon the work of Franz N. Finck in 1907 (34 - 60), K. P. Patkanoff in 1908 (229 - 257; 247 - 266; 1909:325 - 344), G. F. Black in 1913 (327 - 330) and John Sampson's 1907, "Gypsy Language and

Origin”(422), amongst others that would effectively chart the varieties of “Asiatic Romanī”. Such a possibility is useful in that it may give us an earlier indication of the presence of Lom in Turkey than the modern communities residing in the Black Sea region provide; these suggest an origin that is to be found in the Russian ethnic cleansing of Muslim peoples from the Caucasus in the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian war, in a discourse that is reminiscent of the mübadile (the population exchanges of the 1920’s and 1930’s) narrative of the Romanlar population (from interviews conducted in this region, September 2007). Paspatis also draws a distinct linguistic difference between Christian and Muslim Gypsies, as he suggests that Muslim Gypsies perceive the use of Romanës as essentially Christian and avoid using it as a result (1860-3:42). Paspatis’ work points to an older dialectical diversity that is echoed in modern Turkey’s Gypsy communities, and an interesting explanation as to the difference in competence noted between groups that might suggest why Romanlar who originate in the mübadile may have a higher competence than those located in Turkey prior to this. In an interview with an old Romanlar woman in the Bariş (Peace) mahallesi in Mersin (Içel) in May 2007, she described the 1930’s migration she had experienced from Selanik (Saloniki) and the process of conversion from Greek Orthodox Christianity to Islam at a point around Diyarbakir, with the shift from being Greek-speakers to becoming Turkish-speaking as they become incorporated into the new Turkish nation-state.

Other writers who referred to the Gypsies of Turkey included Francis Hinde Groome for the Chambers Journal in 1878, whilst Dr. A. Elyseeff briefly described the “Gypsies of Asia Minor” in his 1889, Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society article. More extensive descriptions come from Sir William Reginald Halliday (1922:163 - 189) who depicted the inter-dependence of certain nomadic Gypsy groups and Yörüks in the Anatolian plateau, whilst G.L. Lewis (1955) building upon the work of Halliday, suggested that some of the latter, the Geygelli were indeed Gypsies rather than Türkmén as they spoke a variety of Romanës. Burr, in 1948 attempted to investigate the historical situation of one particular group of Gypsies during Ottoman times (executioners; Burr, 1948:78-79), a position that would appear to have lasted into the modern Republican period, as Nazim Hikmet wrote, “...if some poor Gypsy’s hairy black/spidery hand/slips a noose/around my neck...” in his Letter To My Wife (November 1933). Juliette de Bairacli Levy (1952:5-13) also provided a description of Istanbul’s Gypsies, based upon her earlier travels (elaborated further in her 1953 book), in particular those musicians and dancers of Sulukule. Others had noted the Dom Gypsies of the Ottoman Empire’s Arab lands, such as Father Anastâs, the Carmelite (1913-14:298-320), who gave a detailed description of the lives of these itinerant metalworkers and traders. Robert

Alexander Stewart Macalister also wrote of the Nawar or Zutt in this period, though concentrating upon their language (Domarī), which he noted as maintaining a third neuter gender and therefore being related to, but separated from Romanī and indicative of an earlier migration from India by the Dom (Macalister, 1909:120 - 126, 298 – 317; 1912:289 – 305; 1913:161 - 240). Both the Carmelite priest and Macalister noted the considerable degree of prejudice shown towards the Dom by the Arab population just on the eve of the explosion of Arab nationalism in the revolt against Ottoman rule of 1915.

Much of the scholarship from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continued to focus upon the paths lain out by Paspatis, namely language and origins. Other Gypsylogists (a term coined by Acton to encapsulate the work of the members of the Gypsy Lore Society and other organisations or individuals associated with this predominantly folkloric approach; Acton, 1974), such as ‘Petulengro’ (Bernard Gilliat-Smith) chose to focus upon the customs and culture of Gypsies in the European provinces of the quondam Empire (1915-16:1-28, 65-109) attempting to capture something of the occupational and cultural distinctions between groups in the rapidly changing post-Ottoman Gypsy populations of the Balkans, many of whom would migrate or be forced to do so in the inter-war years. For these researchers, the continued pattern of ‘traditional’ trades and occupations amongst these groups (see also Gjorgjevic, 1929:7-25; Byhan, 1908-09:45-50; F. Foster, 1935-36, for examples) of Ottoman Gypsies had preserved cultural and linguistic forms that were not present in the rest of Europe. The dominant ethos of Euro-centric anthropological and folkloric research that Acton critiques, with its basis in scientific racism and post-Darwinian taxonomies is to be found in many of these works, reflecting wider Orientalist notions of the “Turk” in general that had come to permeate the discourse around the “sick man of Europe” for the previous century, and clearly indicated by the work of scholars such as E. H. Palmer (1867, see below). Yaron Matras has criticised Acton’s use of the term as a “shorthand” for dismissing this body of work as racist in conception and therefore of little worth, and of the term itself becoming a pejorative applied to opponents of the modern kshatriyya theory (during the debates regarding Romanī origins at “The Other Side of Europe”, the Second International Romanī Studies Conference in Istanbul in May 2005, at Istanbul Bilgi University), without much regard for the accuracy or veracity of such a critique. In the context of this book, the term is used by me as a description for a particular body of texts that are associated with the Gypsy Lore Society past and present and in some senses provide what might be seen as a romantically emplotted, synecdoche trope in the historiography of Romanī Studies (White, 1973), or an identifiable narrative within this

historiography.

The history of the Gypsies in the Ottoman lands and successor states has been a subject for enquiry from surprisingly early on. In attempting to explain the organisation of the Ottoman State and its phenomenal ability to prosecute war, European commentators often examined the Empire's peoples as part of the assessment. Aaron Hill (1685 - 1750), an inveterate traveller and observer in the eastern lands, in his first history of the Empire (1709) takes up the notion of the Egyptian origin of the Gypsies, albeit with an unusual twist (chap.25). When relating the conquest of Egypt by Selim Yavuz (the 'Grim') in 1517, Hill suggests that the defeat of the Mamlūks left a rebel band led by one Zinganus, who continued to resist the Ottoman Sultān and his son, Süleiman Kannuni (the Lawgiver, whom we know in western sources as 'the Magnificent' 1521 CE – 1566 CE). This band captured women in the desert and expanded through others seeking to join, thereby a society came into being of these Zingania and in them we find the origin of the Gypsies (in his 1740 edition, chap. 25). John Hoyland of Sheffield (1816) also drawing upon Grellman (1787) mentions the origins of the Gypsies amongst the rebels against Selim's rule, led by one Zinganeus (1816:116). Ottoman commentators on Gypsies in the Empire included the great Evliya Çelebi (c.1611-1679), referred to above, who recorded events and descriptions of the empire in the 17th century (partially translated in 1834 - 50), who notes their presence upon a number of occasions in the course of his travels in Izmir, Istanbul, Bitlis, Diyarbakir and in Rumelia, or European Turkey (though he does not draw any distinction between those in the eastern part of the Empire - presumably Dom or Lom - and those in the western provinces). Apart from tax records or defters (Marushiakova and Popov, 2001:26 - 28), there are occasional glimpses in some Sultān's edicts or firmans (Fraser 19921:72 - 175; Hasluck, 1948:1-12). As one would expect, the concern of Ottoman elites for nomadic and semi-nomadic populations including Gypsies, is limited to those points where the state accommodated, conscripted, taxed, attempted to control and settle, or came into conflict with these groups (Marushiakova and Popov, 2001:57-58). European discussions of the Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire (this formula is almost always used) begin to become widespread at about the same time as European domination of Ottoman markets and the Ottoman Empire undergoes a series of reforms arguably inspired or influenced by Western models (see Heyd, 1961).

The promulgation of Romantic nationalism amongst the various Balkan peoples, from the first rebellion of the Serbs in 1804, the Greek war for independence, 1821 - 26, and the establishment of the Bulgarian state in 1878, to the final collapse of the Empire in the aftermath of the 1914-18 war (see McCarthy, 2001; Levy, 1975), is almost coterminous with the development of Gypsy Lorism,

from Hoyland (1816) through James Crabb (1831), George Henry Borrow's various works (1841; 1851; 1857; 1888) and those of Francis Hindes Groome (1881, who is frequently overlooked in his contribution to the early Gypsy lore scholars; see for example his paper to the International Folklore Conference of 1891, where he developed his original Encyclopaedia Britannica article of 1879 on the influence of the Gypsies in transmitting folk tales from their Indian origins to Europe; see Owen Jones, 1967:71 - 80). The foundation of the Gypsy Lore Society in July 1888 (of which Groome's was a active member though initially reticent to take any official post) and its concomitant publication, the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (1888-) was an attempt at co-ordination of research and knowledge about these people, much of it concentrating upon the Gypsy communities in south east and eastern Europe. Earlier published examples of travellers' descriptions of Gypsy communities in the region (Bright, 1818), set much of the timbre of the later contributions to the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*. Until the advent of the work of Margaret Hasluck, the studies of ethnographers, anthropologists and folklorists was built upon the prevailing notions that dominated views about the Gypsies in Europe, with little recourse to those in the Ottoman lands (Paspati's early contribution to the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* notwithstanding). Hasluck, it has been argued "...can be regarded as an innovator who insisted on an Ottoman discourse of the Gypsies. She used for the first time, through her Albanian contacts the available Ottoman documents, to reconstruct the Gypsies' experiences during the Ottoman period." (Ginio, 2000). Her use of some of these documents is however, not uncontested by some Ottomanists who consider her translations of these firmans to be inexpert (Ginio, 2000).

In the post-Ottoman period, very little has been written about Gypsies in any of the Islamic successor states of the Middle East (see an example in Hanna, 1982; 1993) with what there is sometimes being disputed and incomplete (Lockwood, 1978:304-308, where the author includes no information about Shi'ia Gypsy groups in Iran or Alevi Gypsies in Anatolia). In the south eastern European context, Gypsies appear most often in nationalist literature as stereotypical images or carriers of myths (Andric 1994, for example where the Gypsies are presented as the 'willing' executioners of the barbaric Turks), or as tropes for particular qualities of other ethnic groups (see van der Port 1998:8-10, 133-176). After the work of Halliday, there is more interest in the historical past of Turkish Gypsies (Hasluck, 1938:49-61; 1948:1-12) though the linguistic and cultural aspects of Turkish Gypsies also continue to be discussed by some authors, though somewhat incompletely (Arnold, 1967:105-122). It would seem to be the case that Arnold's observations of Turkish Gypsies were conceived upon a series of notions of mobility and nomadism, despite clear evidence of Gypsy

settlements since the Ottoman period (Arnold suggests that there are no Gypsies to be found between the Istanbul suburb of Üsküdar and Ankara, and does not record any of the large numbers of nomadic Dom or Alevi Rom to be found in the region by others like Halliday, as he travels between Kayseri and the Iranian border; 67:106). Arnold places an emphasis upon linguistic identification in his study, defining Gypsies as speakers of Romanës, a distinction that ultimately leads him to conclude that the European Roma are both proficient and 'pure', whilst the Gypsies of Turkey and Iran merely use what he describes as "secret languages" or cant. This situation is the result of loss of contact between the Asiatic and European Gypsies, in Arnold's view (1967:119-20). Paspati's suggestion that the majority of Turkish Gypsies were 'nomadic' seems to have influenced Arnold profoundly, without considering the evidence to the contrary, and the perspective that he adopts (the loss of Romanës for Gypsy communities between the Indus to the Bosphorus) is strongly indicative of the continuing influence of 19th century folklorism in Romanî Studies. This influence and Arnold's ideas in particular, may also explain to some degree the lack of concern by European scholars for the study of Gypsies in Turkey in the mid-twentieth century, until relatively recently. In many ways the scholarship of this period also continued to reflect the 19th century concern with Orientalised models of Gypsy identity, and racially determined concerns of inheritance, 'blood lines' and physiognomy (Lee, 2000), in common with those applied to late Ottoman and early Turkish society generally (Çirakman, 2002:25-30). Yet, with the focus upon the European Roma in the years directly following the cataclysmic events of 1933 - 1945 and the Nazi régime (see Burleigh and Wipperman, 1991; Burleigh, 2000), the widespread knowledge of the conditions pertaining to Turkish Gypsies seems to have ultimately slipped from the purview of scholarly research. Arnold, lengthy article, and Mozes F. Heinschink's studies of the dialect of the sepetçiler in Izmir (Cech and Heinschink, 1999) represent a small number of works regarding Gypsies in Turkey, and in the east in general produced in this period by scholars. The devastation of the 1939 - 1945 conflict seemingly resulted in an intellectual shift back to Europe, perhaps to attempt an answer to the horrors of fascism and racial biology; whatever the cause, the concentration upon European and western European Romanî communities is marked in the immediate post-war era and well into the 1960's in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, and *Romanî Studies* (a refashioning of the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* in the face of a more critical, analytical and reflective sociological and historical approaches) scholarship in general. Turkish research remained relatively unconnected to this wider Romanî Studies discipline, as it evolved in the post-war period, until the advent of the Istanbul Romanî Studies Network (2002) and a series of seminars with two

international conferences during 2002-2005, that began to bring scholars from Bulgaria, Sweden, the United States and the United Kingdom into contact with those who had been working largely isolated from each other in universities, as journalists and a few individual research students.

In terms of the Turkish material produced prior to this point, that of Dr. Ali Rafet Özcan has been particularly influential as it was the output of a researcher from an important university, itself supporting that research. Dr. Özcan's monograph, *Türk Çingeneler* was published initially in 1998 (upon which Dr. Özcan was made Associate Professor of Theology at Gazi University, Erzurum) and subsequently made widely available through the Ministry of Culture in 2000. The work contained references to Gypsies as thieves, prostitutes, beggars, usurers and profiteers, profligate in their ways and immoral in their behaviour in marriage (a subject that he goes on to develop in his later article; 2006:461-470). He also remarks upon what he suggests is their inherent querulous and quarrelsome nature. Such work has also informed Turkish dictionaries and encyclopaedias produced officially, in that many of the definitions of the term "Gypsy" contain all of these prejudices and more (including references to Gypsies stealing children and selling them, being only half a nation – following the old adage that there are 66½ 'nations' in Turkey – and, most damaging of all in the current climate, being without religious belief). Such works have been challenged legally on a number of occasions by the activist and writer Mustafa Aksu but sadly with varying success (Dr. Özcan's work has been withdrawn as a result of a legal challenge from Mustafa Aksu in 2004, though not officially refuted and remains in the catalogue of the National Library in Ankara). Other works have been produced by journalists such as Nazim Alpman and Sinan Şanlier, who have attempted to present a balanced perspective and corrective to the widespread prejudices and misinformation present in Turkish media and academia elsewhere (Alpman, 1994; and various articles by Sinan Şanlier, 2006). The current campaign to save one of Istanbul's oldest Romanī neighbourhoods at Sulukule (established in Byzantine times) has also drawn a great deal of interest from journalists and writers elsewhere in Europe, such as Kai Strittmater from *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Ayla Albayrak at *Helsinki Sanomat*, Fred Taikon at *É Romanī Glinda*, and many others. This reportage has all endeavoured to include details of the Romanī community in Turkey and especially Istanbul, illuminating the social and economic conditions, and the cultural life of Turkish Gypsies, in the mainstream media. Academic research has increased in more recent times with a number of studies being undertaken by Dr. Eminé Onaran Incirlioglu at Bilkent University (2006:191-201) and Dr. Suat Kolukirik at Ege University (2006:133-40). Dr. Sonia Tamar Seeman's research into ethnicity, identity and music has also been an important contribution to the scholarship

about Gypsies in Turkey, moving as it does between the notions of identity so frequently associated with them and analysing the discourse surrounding these notions and stereotypes (2006).

Finally, the encyclopaedic material to be found regarding Gypsies of the quondam Ottoman lands is primarily located in the Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Edition, under the entry “Çingâne” (Lewis and Quelquejay, 1983:40b - 41a), which offers the detail about the possibility of Turkish Gypsies in Western Anatolia sheltering under the label of “Yürük” (Lewis, 1955) and confirms the confessional diversity amongst Turkish Gypsies by citing the same Geygelli as Alevi (though not inter-marrying with other Alevis, as suggested by my own research in the Kustepe neighbourhood in January 2007). Mehmet Fuad Köprülüzâde’s 1935 article in the *Türk halk ansiklopedesi*, “Abdals” also notes this confessional diversity by first drawing attention to the Abdallar as a Gypsy group, and Melih Duygulu provides an interesting summary of the history of Istanbul’s Gypsies including a list of neighbourhoods where (at the time) they were to be found including Kasimpaşa, Kuştepe, Balat, Ayvansaray, Gaziosmanpaşa, Üsküdar and of course, Sulukule. Nomadic Gypsies were to be found in Kağıthane, Merter, Ümraniye, Küçükbakkalköy, Beyköz and Halkili (where a large Alevi community resides at present). Duygulu’s article also discusses the linguistic situation, suggesting that the use of Romanī, called “Romanca” [pronounced Romān-ja] was widespread amongst Istanbul’s Gypsies, though couched in Turkish grammar (1994:514 - 516). The article by M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, in the MEB’s *İslām Ansiklopedesi*, is more widely known though far less neutral than that of Duygulu (1988:420b - 426b), drawing heavily upon older sources and H.M.G. Grellman’s *Die Zigeuner* (Leipzig, 1783) in particular. The MEB is the National Board for Education, indicating why this article should be more widely-known as it is in every school and education establishment as a basic text. Far from exhaustive, this brief survey illustrates the threads of scholarship that may be said to relate to Turkish Gypsies.

The study of minorities in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey has moved away from the predominant concern with the Christian and Jewish minorities that were the primary focus of European, Russian and American interests in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (see Braude and Lewis, 1982) and have remained so for scholars looking to establish the ‘legitimacy’ of a tolerant, pluralist commonwealth (Lewis, 2002 “Aspects of Change”:323-489), to more concern with other groups including Muslim minorities (see for example Neuberger, 2004; Destani 2007). The focus upon religion might still be said to be at the heart of many scholars’ enquiries, and in particular with the less orthodox expressions of Islam and Sufism (itself a field of enquiry that has been the focus of European interest for more than a century; Nicholson, 1914; Palmer, 1867; MacDonald, 1909;

Brown, 1868). Interestingly, there is a confluence of interests for some scholars between the Gypsies and the mystics of Islam; for example Edward Henry Palmer with Charles Godfrey Leland and Janet Tuckey, published a collection of English Gypsy songs translated from the Romanës (1875). Palmer also produced a catalogue of Turkish manuscripts in Trinity library and an important translation of the Qur'an (see Beasant, 1883). Clearly the study of Gypsies related to the wider notion of Orientalism that prevailed in 19th century Europe, and in particular the study of the Ottoman Empire (see Çirakman, 2002, for a discussion on the European Orientalist approach to the study of the Empire; see also, Grosrichard, 1998).

The impact of modern historiography has been felt in Ottoman Studies as in all other areas of historical enquiry, and there has been a shift from the tendency to analyse the Ottoman Empire in terms of its proximity to the model developed by Perry Anderson (1979) of the Asiatic Mode of Production to a richer discourse (Faroqhi, 1999:212), to one that reinterprets the Empire in the face of the 'traditional view' of dissolution and decline in the presence of European ideologies and economic power (see Aksan and Goffman 2007:4-18). The notion that the Empire was a unique phenomenon, a sui generis political entity monolithic and incomparable to the (equally monolithic) polity and culture of Europe has foundered upon the studies that have recognised both external convergence and profound internal differences (Aksan and Goffman, 2007:21; Barkey, 1994:230-35). Challenges to the accepted and unsatisfactory dictums about Ottoman social structures and societal organisation of the earlier Empire began to be challenged in the early 1980's (Braude, 1983:69), a development imperfectly followed by some Romanī Studies scholarship (Barany 2002:53-57; Barany 2001:50 - 63), though the notion that "the Ottomans devised a sociopolitical system that was humane and tolerant" (Barany, 2002:84) remains strongly embedded, despite the significant challenges to the notion of a "humane and tolerant" pluralist polity, from Bat Ye'or and others (2001). References to the Ottoman Empire retain the notion of a tolerance, or at least a benign indifference to the Gypsy populations, such as that by Fraser (1992:175), a picture that is more carefully considered in the work of Marushiakova and Popov (2001) and revealed by the study of Ottoman legal registers in Salonika, by Ginio (2004), clearly demonstrating that Gypsies occupied a secondary and frequently marginal place in Ottoman society that was based upon both notions of ethnic and religious identity, something that Makdisi makes clear in relation to Ottoman social organisation and too frequently overlooked, when he notes the "classical Ottoman imperial paradigm [was]... based on a hierarchical system of subordination along religious, class and ethnic lines" (Makdisi, 2002:768).

The study of Ottoman mentalités has produced some recent scholarship that has focused closely upon the ideas behind Ottoman superiority and ultimately self-destructive notions of identity, with tragic consequences for the Empire's minorities (Reid, 2000:175-189; Deringil, 1998). Definitions of osmanlılık (the quality of being Ottoman) altered fundamentally over the course of the nineteenth century, culminating in the notion of the Empire as an Ottoman Turkish polity, with the modernised, reforming Istanbul elite spatially and temporally distanced from the host of purportedly unreformed, "stagnant ethnic and national groups", the minorities that made up the subjects of the Sultān (Makdisi, 2004:769 - 771). The examination of this process of ideological legitimation, modernisation and the development of "Ottoman Orientalism" has provided a revision of the reign of Abdul Hamid II (1876-1908) in particular, and an indication of the mechanisms underlying the shift in perceptions of those minorities that previously were seen as integral, if differentiated elements of the Sublime State, the religious and ethnic minorities of the Ottoman commonwealth (Göçek, 1996; Derengil, 1998; Karpat, 2001). Models positing a culturally homogenous élite (Miller, 1941; Lybyer, 1913), have provided us with details about the Empire's rulers and ruled in particular periods, but too often been taken to apply throughout the Empire's lifetime unchallenged, undifferentiated and unchanged. More sophisticated analyses have allowed the picture of the Ottoman umerā (the religious scholars, judges and imams), and askeri classes to emerge as a dynamic force in the Empire, whose origins and extended networks of patronage and clientage crossed religious, class and frequently ethnic boundaries (Kunt, 1983 for example). The transformation of these classes and to some extent the relationships that characterised it, have been identified as a key element of the altered relations between governors and governed in the later 17th century (Kunt, 1983:95-99), and the effectiveness of the Ottoman bureaucracy from the 18th to the 20th centuries (Findley, 1980). As an aspect of reform, the charting of these changes in the Ottoman Empire can be related to the study of Gypsies in the context of their impact upon them. The significant changes that took place in the Empire, especially after Sultān Mahmūd II (1808 - 1839) in the period that has come to be known as the Tanzimat, or 're-ordering' of the Empire (Shaw, 1977), were such that a profound shift in mentalités took place that reached all aspects of Ottoman society. As Marushiakova and Popov note, "the process of reform (or at least attempts at such) in the Ottoman Empire also affected the Gypsies", in the government's desire to regulate the civil status of the Gypsies in line with other groups in Ottoman society (2001:57 - 59), something we can see in the early reference from Paspatis to the changes in the law regarding military service and Muslim Gypsies (Paspates, 1888:3-5).

The fragmentation of the élites and power in 17th and 18th century Ottoman society, led to the emergence of those known as *aşyān* (notables) or *dere-beys* (valley lords) and other rebellious groups of irregulars such as *derbençi* (Yörüks), *martolos* (Greeks), *levends* (Kurds) and *eflāks* (Bosian Muslims), the last of which used a dialect that would appear to be drawn from Romanës, according to Evliya Çelebi (Karpas, 1972:243-281; Shaw, 1971; Fleming, 1999; for the language of rebellious eflāks see Lazarrescu-Zoban, 1983:307-330), and to the development of strategies for state centralisation by the sultāns (Barkey, 1994). Analysing this group has led to a complex picture of seventeenth and eighteenth century contests for resources and control, washing back and forth between centre and periphery sometimes to an almost mortal degree, as during the reign of pro-reform Sultān Selim III (McGowan, 1981; Levy 1975). The role of the aşyān in the history of the Ottoman Gypsies in general is important, and I shall return to it in a later chapter, but the impact of individual aşyān in reform, and their eventual incorporation into the process of reform is one of the themes of the tanzimat period in Ottoman history (Barkey, 1994; McGowan, 1994:637 -757), which follows the promulgation of the Gülhane Rescript in 1839, and is usually deemed to finish with the accession of Abdul Hamid II (1876). The debate on the origins of the tanzimat in Western European drives for reform and (ultimately) control over the Empire is also one that has been contested (Davidson, 1990; Abou-El-Haj, 2005), with those seeking indigenous models for the initiatives constructing a well-argued, if contested case (see Darling's 1993 review of Abou-El-Haj: 118-20). The influence of the purportedly arch-conservative religious theocracy the ulemā as a force for change, has been cited (Gawrych, 1987:91 - 114; Heyd, 1961:63-96), albeit in the form of the leaders of the less orthodox Mevlevi dervish order, founded by Djālāl al-Din Rūmī (known as Mawlana, or 'our master', b.1207 - d. 1273).

Charting the 'decline', 'demise' or 'collapse' of the Ottoman Empire is an exercise almost as old as the Empire itself, not an exclusively European affair (Lewis, 1962:71-87) and one that has been significantly challenged by recent scholarship in Ottoman Studies (see Tezcan, 2007:167 – 198). The usual reasons for such decline, many of which reflect the cyclical book of Ibn Khaldun's *Muqqadimah*, frequently fail to establish the actual conditions in the empire at the time or identify the major causal factors, relying instead upon European notions most pithily expressed by Sir Paul Rycaut, who observed that though not entirely fallen, "...the Empire may never rise again" (1682:5). Bruce McGowan's painstaking and perceptive study of Ottoman economic life in the Central Lands (1981), clearly demonstrates the underlying demographic collapse in the wake of extended warfare, and the consequent near-bankruptcy of the Ottoman exchequer with consequent

loss of revenues, supplying an alternative narrative to the consistent discourse of Ottoman viziers and courtiers who portrayed the ills of the Empire as stemming from a variety of less structural causes, not least the interference of women in its governance (Pierce, 1993). Michael Palairé's analysis of the Balkan economies in the final period of the empire, demonstrates the continuing impact of Ottoman economic structures upon the region in the period of greatest European market penetration (1997). Donald Quataert (1983) has written extensively, documenting the profound economic dislocation resulting from internal revolt and rebellion had upon Great Power – Ottoman relations, whilst Kenneth Cuno has challenged the nationalist rhetoric of a sharp separation between the Ottoman and 'modern' periods and the impact of European economic penetration of agrarian relations in Egypt under Muhammad Ali (1805-1848), for a longer term assessment of the developments of cash-crop farming, commodification of the land and the emiseration of the fellaheen (1992), of which the Ghagar, Nawar and Halebi (all terms for Gypsies in Egypt, that are primarily used by non-Gypsies, who prefer the term Dom; see Marsh, 2000) formed a dependent part (Hanna, 1982). Economic dislocation also formed part of the process of disruptive change for the Gypsies of Turkey and the Balkan lands, as I shall go on to argue in this book.

The key to the 19th century Ottoman state was its success in maintaining an accommodation between the needs of the reformed bureaucracy, European political – economic interests and diminishing territorial possessions. This complex balancing act was only possible when access to markets could be guaranteed, the Ottoman economy effectively dominated by Europe and the Ottoman governance of the Empire maintained in the interests of the 'Great Game' (see Ufford, 2007; Hopkirk, 1990), or the 'Game of Nations' as it was known (Copeland, 1969). It was never in the interests of Europe's Great Powers to undermine Ottoman control of the Empire, except when disruption to markets became acute and access could be ensured with emergent successor states (Quataert and Inalcik, 1994:761). Quataert's analysis illuminates the relationship between European sponsorship of nationalist movements in the Balkans and exploitation of raw materials in return for finished goods. Nationalist historiography in the region prefers to gloss over the more material interests of European government's support for freedom and liberty for some of the Empire's minorities (Dimitras, 2000:41-59; Sesic, 2005). The examination of the situation of non-Christian minorities in the Arab lands has received less attention from historians and ethnologists (Destani being a notable exception), as has much comparative work with other imperial systems (Barany's analysis of the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, coming as it does from a combination of political science and Romanī Studies is unusual; 2002:83-110). This book draws upon a number of differing

literatures in order to suggest a series of conclusions regarding Gypsies, and the focus here has been to survey the salient debates within the field of Ottoman Studies and Ottoman minorities in particular. The shift in the position of Ottoman Gypsies is related to the broader changes within the Empire, often resulting from European influences that altered the relationship between state and minorities drastically in the later period.

One other consideration that emerged from European-Ottoman relations was the influence of time, as measured in European terms. Timepieces had been presented to the Ottoman sultāns by European diplomatic missions as early as the 16th century, but the general reform of time regulation was a product of the Tanzimat period of the mid-19th century, when the Empire began to be governed by clock-towers and the hours of the day were no longer determined principally by the call of the *muezzin*. Concomitant with notions of progress, the acquisition of timepieces for the elites in Ottoman society became a symbol of modernism, of adherence to the programmes of reform and a marker between the boundaries of civilised and uncivilised. Pocket watches had a particular resonance, not only in terms of status, but also in semiotic terms – as Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar has written,

“The watch which is the most intimate friend of its owner, companion to the beat of his pulse at his wrist, a friend at his breast sharing all his joys and sorrows, heated by the warmth of his body and espoused by his organism, and the clock which stands on his table and experiences with him all the happenings of the time span which we call a day, both inevitably come to resemble their owner, and become accustomed to think and live like him...” (1961:46)

Adoption of the western European notions of time had profound impacts upon Ottoman sensibilities and conceptions of ‘progress’ and ‘evolution’, ones that maintained the differences between those modern populations and those that could not be modernised, or Europeanised (Makdisi, 2002:771-3), with Istanbul as the temporal centre of a coeval and equivalent Muslim civilisation that resisted European imperialist and colonialist dominance in temporal and spatial terms (Makdisi, 2002:771; Fabian, 1983:144). It is in the context of these notions of time that the history of the Gypsies has come to be written.

1.4 Gypsies, history and the problem of time

"Time is the element in which we exist. ... We are either borne along by it or drowned in it." Joyce Carol Oates, Marya: A Life (1998)

TIME, AS JOHANNES FABIAN HAS CONVINCINGLY ARGUED is an ideology, a means of exercising power over those who were and are different, made distant in space and time (Fabian, 1983:144-47), and thus colonialism is justified through the bringing of time to those without it in the name of progress, advancement and development (Makdisi, 2002:771). European time is a continuous flow, a trajectory along which the less advanced societies and peoples are marked and mapped, always in relation to the 'standard time' of the western world, denied an equivalence and the right to be coterminous, but different (Fabian, 1983:145). The issue of time, and its construction in the writing of history, anthropology and ethnology has been one that has been little focussed upon in the field or discipline of Romanī Studies. Outside of the title of Michael Stewart's monograph and the English title of Emir Kusturica's popular film (1997; 1988), the notion of time and the Gypsies has rarely been discussed (see the recent initiative by the Open Society Institute Roma Initiatives, 2007). There are of course notions of time implicit or explicit in the collections of Gypsy folk-tales that many of the early Gypsy Lore Society members gathered and published in their Journal... and those of Francis Hinds Groome (1899), but these are the references to the timelessness that all such tales exist in, using the tropes of "From the dimmest dawn of time..." for example, the opening of "The Dead Man's Gratitude", Turkish Gypsy Stories, no. 1 (Hinds Groome, 1899:1; an interesting version of the Tobias and the Archangel Raphael story, from the Book of Tobit, and based in Zoroastrian myth - see Vickers, 2000:339-342).

All the historical writing that we might define as comprising Romanī historiography has been done so in the framework of western European notions of time, sequence and events, the basis of which it has been argued is to be found in the Neolithic impulse, the dramatic metaphysical shift from cyclical measurement to linear progression (Martin, 1993:53 - 74). Defined, classified, measured and documented in notions of sacred (Judeo-Christian, Muslim) or secular (post-Darwinian) time, the study of the Gypsies has been bounded by the underlying conceptions of how they correspond or differ as a group, to non-Gypsy structures including the quantification and management of the sequence of events that has come to predominate over all others. In effect the construction, or reconstruction of the Gypsy past has resulted in a great deal that reflects the present (whichever present the author occupied or occupies; see Burton, 1988:420 - 433). The "time of the Gypsies" is in fact the allochronic time (placing the object of study in another, non-European time, as opposed

to acknowledging the contemporaneous relationships of power and inequality that exist between researcher and researched), of those who observe and then write about them and in this the distance and separateness that Fabian describes as a product of European scholarship, is marked out in non-Gypsy terms (Fabian, 1983:144-47). The question here is one of how the imposition of non-Gypsy time has impacted upon the Gypsies, and following that, whether it is important and necessary to both recognise this fundamental organising principle and ask whether there is a particular Gypsy metaphysic that is being distorted through this process of imposition of western European time and scholarship.

The origins of notions of time, as suggested above, have been argued to lie in the shifting metaphysic of hunter-gatherer societies of the Palaeolithic to the agrarian sedentarism of the Neolithic era, when the management of cycles of oestrus and birth in livestock, and sowing and reaping in agriculture became the focus of communities hitherto adapted to these, rather than adapting them to their needs. The measurement of these cycles saw the consequent development of surpluses, population growth, elite groups who extracted those surpluses through co-option (the priesthood) or coercion (the nobility and kings or queens), stratified societies and highly complex social organisation. The control of time became the prerogative of the priesthood and connected to the measurement of dynastic achievements, changes and legitimacy through association with the past - the establishment of history in fact. The growth and control of trade and war by the dynasties themselves established the principle by which the arch of time was firmly established in a relationship with dynasties, priesthood and gods, and forged into a trajectory that flattened the cycle of pre-neolithic hunter-gatherer communities into the vector of sacred history (Martin, 1993:56-60; Fabian, 1983:36 - 76). The creation of sacred time and history, as an aspect of monumentality, literally of 'marking time' is intimately tied to the notion of a recording God's interventions in the Creation through chosen individuals (prophets) or peoples (Jews, Muslims, Christians) in a divine-human dialogue that both projects the trajectory of dynastic and priestly time forward into an eschatological future and an immanent, deliberate point of origin. The notion of order is essential, and the use of time in organising this narrative is the prime means of creating it. Out of chaos and disorder, divinely created or inspired harmony and concord emerges, usually through the mechanism of language, the word as understood by humankind, or anthropologos (a distinctly different narrative to that of many where the flux and fizz of creation is constantly re-presented in the present through ritual and myth; see Leeuw, 1938:413-14). The shift from sacred to secular in the Enlightenment altered the narrative to one of progress (Providence and Manifest Destiny; O'

Sullivan, 1839:426-30), and saw the de-coupling of time from sacrality, its naturalisation and expansion in the work of Darwin and Wallace (1958) and Charles Lyell (1835-5). The cosmic trajectory of humankind as the recipient of a divinely-ordained mission, whether Judeo-Christian or Muslim, had been initially harnessed to, and then supplanted by the superiority of the species over all others, the 'natural' processes of selection in the linear, branching advance over aeons of 'mankind' (the masculine gender linked inextricably with notions of order, harmony and progress in the European imagination). Such a version of time followed the twisting, branching schema of the sacral path that had been mapped by the prophets for God's chosen peoples, only in this the imperative was biological rather than celestial. Not only human beings, but their extraordinary ability to engineer space and matter, substance and sound in language and artifice, came to be seen as part of this narrative of selection, of separation, destruction and survival. Culture and expression subsumed the metaphysics of religion and ritual, history was extruded from ritual's dark twin, myth. The schematic presentation of cultures and languages in this way, in a reflection of the biological narrative of adaptation and evolution and a historical consciousness of conquest and expansion, revealed the vector of mankind's march through time uninterrupted (Martin, 1979:153-159). In this narrative, the construction of time was inextricably bound to the march of industry, science, technology (including the primary inspiration for development, war; see Diamond, 1997; Zinsser, 1935) and 'civilisation' (or the management of post-war societies).

The insertion of the Gypsies into this structure of time, as a means of recording the distance between one event and another and between non-Gypsies and Gypsies, has profoundly influenced the shape of Romanī Studies. In this sense, the events that might be characterised as important in the history of the Gypsy peoples are perceived and depicted within the framework of 'an-other' time, one that has itself been filtered through a number of cultural and intellectual 'screens' that serve to distance the observer from the observed. The narrative of Rom, Dom and Lom is measured primarily against the western European societies that have been predominant in analysing, categorising and describing them, in ways that frequently conform to the biological, evolutionary trajectory of post-Enlightenment, Darwinian time. Thus the movements of these various and diverse peoples are captured within the narrative of journey that is familiar to Judeo-Christian cultures, the Biblical Exodus, and are rendered as one, undifferentiated, in a trope that is resonant to us as the ethnic narrative of the nascent nation. In an irony that cannot escape notice, the groups of those most dispossessed by the very notion of the nation, the ethnic and its homogeneity are encompassed in a discourse of time that defines these very limits of belonging, group and history. The

construction of such narratives is one of the primary motivations behind all history, the desire to narrativise and chronicle the fragments of the past (White, 1966). In this desire, the element of time, as conceived of in colonial terms is a key factor, the drive to categorise, to create taxonomies of time and peoples.

The primary relationship with time for the ancestors of the Romanī people, those captives of the Amīr (later Sultān) Mahmūd who were forcibly removed to Ghaznā in the late 10th and early 11th centuries, must surely have been with what we might describe as a collision with Muslim time, the period since the Blessed Prophet had taken the momentous step in the migrations to Madīnā with his Companions, or al Hajj (AH). Their experience as ghulām (captives, soldiers and servitors) and ābd (slaves) of the Amīr and his governors elsewhere in the empire, would have brought them into the orbit of the redemptive trajectory of Islamic eschatology, and the influence that Persian thought and sufi mysticism had by then had on the Islam of the region (see, Richard N. Frye, 1974). The complex nature of Islam in these lands was reflected in the person of Mahmūd himself (see below) who would appear to have been quite different to the ideological picture drawn of him in the chronicles and panegyrics of his reign as the pre-eminent ghazī warrior of his day, and in the responses to the Ghaznāvid invasions of India. As Romila Thapar has demonstrated, the notion that these can be situated in a discourse of conquest and resistance, is part of an epic narrative in the colonial and post-colonial periods (Thapar, 2000a:46), where the dichotomy between the Hindutva and Islamist discourses as archetypal conflicts becomes crystallised. This picture of implacable hostility is a product of modern times, as is the communalism that Usaama Makdisi has described in Lebanon, or Gyan Pandey in India (Makdisi, 2000:180-208; Pandey, 1992). As such, these narratives are a product of the colonial time imposed by the rulers of these lands, the Ottomans and British, and such discourses have become a part-and-parcel of the historiography of Romanī Studies, as mentioned above.

The specific case of Mahmūd of Ghaznā's invasions of India were recast by British colonial administrators, initially as a legitimation of their historical "mission" to rule the sub-continent (a counter-part to the ideology of "manifest destiny"), as Sir Henry Miers Elliott wrote in his preface to the collection entitled *The History of India, as Told by Its Own Historians, The Muhammadan Period* (1867-77: 3)

"...and drawing auguries from the past, he [the reader]... will derive hope for the future, that, inspired by the success which has hitherto attended our endeavours, we shall follow them up [the Muslims]... by continuous efforts to fulfil our high destiny as the rulers of

India...”

then in the course of confrontation between the government and opposition in the House of Commons in 1843, as the “Hindū trauma... which has been rankling amongst the people for nearly a thousand years...” (Ellenborough, 1843). The notion of the “Hindū trauma” that Ellenborough coined has become a part of the discourse surrounding Romanī origins (inherited from the Hindū nationalism of ‘Veera’ Savarkar and K. M. Munshi; Savarkar, 1928 and K. M. Munshi, 1951) as suggested above. The endemic ethnic hatreds, so much a feature of British colonial history writing concerning India, has become embedded in the Hindutva history-writing of modern textbooks throughout the sub-continent (Deb, 2003).

The resistance to Mahmūd’s incursions was mounted by both Hindū and Muslim people in India (Thapar, 2000a:30), as the sources clearly indicate in their exaggerated descriptions of how many ‘heretics’ had been slaughtered (the same number as kāfirs – or infidels, fifty thousand in the assaults upon Mansur and Multan for example), in this case the Shi’ia and Ismaīlīs of Sind whose places of worship Mahmūd allegedly razed. In the chronology of the epic of conquest that 14th century Islamic writers such as Ferishta and Isāmī penned (primarily as a means of promulgating the model of ideal kingship to Muslim rulers at the time, not least the Saldjūks; see Hardy, 1960:107-8), Mahmūd was ‘fashioned’ as the protector of Islam through both the institution of the sharī’a and the destruction of heretics (Shi’ia and Ismaīlī), thus combining the twin pillars of Muslim rulership (Hardy, 1960:110). Modern Romanī Studies scholarship continues to accede to these notions through an uncritical and one-sided reading of the sources, where Mahmūd’s campaigns are consistently represented as a crusade against Hindū India in order to establish Islam upon the sub-continent, despite the obvious point that Islam had first been brought to India with mercantile communities in the early years of Muslim expansion in the 7th century CE/1st century AH, and subsequently more forcibly established in the three years of Arab invasion of the early 8th century under Muhammad b. al-Kāsim al-Thakafī (711 CE/93 AH). The attempt to consolidate Arab Muslim control under Khalif Umar II (717 – 720 CE) failed, although Muslim rulers dominated the region and eventually allied with the Fatamid Ismaīlī dynasty in the 10th century 985 CE/ 3rd century AH. The epic narrative of conquest, was in fact a re-imposition of Sunni control by a powerful ruler allied to the Khalif’a of the time, and more importantly perhaps, almost entirely driven by economic concerns – the means of support for an enormous standing army and militarised state, the desire to control trade in a number of commodities, most profitably horses (an essential element of Mahmūd’s own forces and hugely profitable for the Muslim and Hindū merchants of the

Sind and Gujrat; see Chakravarti, 1991:159 – 182), a trade that competed with that through north western India and Afghanistan that was under the control of the Ghaznāvids (see Chakravarti, 1999:194 – 211). The chronology and narrative of conquest and resistance must be carefully analysed in order not to subscribe to overblown notions of Mahmūd's invasions as crusades against Hindūs, wreaking terrible destruction and killing and capturing hundreds of thousands – even his celebrated (or vilified) attack upon the temple of Somanātha was clearly recast by both later Muslim and Hindū authors, though with very different intents. The actual 'destruction' of the temple and the famous 'lingam' is extremely doubtful (Thapar, 2000:38), and the infamous episode of the gates, so vigorously argued for by Lord Ellenborough proved a chimera (Brigadier Nott of the Afghan Army and the 43rd Bengal Native Infantry [subsequently the 9th Jat Light Infantry] returned them to the temple on the orders of the Governor General Lord Ellenborough, but they transpired to be of Egyptian, not Indian origin and they remained in the Red Fort at Aghra, having been wrested from the tomb of Mahmūd and the Afghan chieftains during the infamous 1842 Afghan War; Allen, 2001:56-60). The spurious Somanātha Gates became embedded in the narrative of British colonial time as a result, with the Orientalising of the Afghan peoples and in the mythology of the North West Frontier. In a very real sense the discourse surrounding Romanī origins is part of this narrative, through the inheritance of Hindutva nationalist historiography, as opposed to the panegyric of Islamist narratives of conquest and the incorporation of the British colonial epic of 'civilising' India in partial forms (including the paper from Colonel John Staples Harriott, discussed in full below, on the origins of the Romanies). Continuing efforts to slot the Roma into this complex trajectory do so at the expense of a critical understanding of time and its socially constructed impact upon the 'Other', but perhaps more importantly serve to obscure the complexities of the historical origins of the Gypsies and reinforce the politicised nature of these discussions, adding weight to the critique of Matras, Mayall and others (2002:208; 2004:243).

Their migration from the field of Dandānqān in 1040 CE (see below), the battle where the Saldjūks defeated Mahmūd's son, Mas'ūd, probably brought the ancestors of the Roma into contact with alternate notions of time as defined through the synchronic perceptions of sufi mysticism in Khorāsān, the most important aspect of which could be said to be the recreation of the eternal movement of the universe in the ceremony of the sema. The circular, sweeping motions of the derviş participants, one hand raised and one dropped (to signify 'as above, so below') was conceived of as the representation of unity and wholeness – a concept still found in the oriental dance of the modern-day Romanlar in Turkey today, complete with the movements of hands and

feet that reflect, arguably, this pattern and the older forms that connect with Indian dance in its wheeling motions (I am indebted to a number of Romanlar dancers in Sulukule and Kuştepe [Istanbul] for these insights, drawn from a series of interviews, June – September 2006). This narrative of connection between modern dance forms and older patterns forms part of the haeteratopic discourse of Turkish Gypsy time, an alternative trajectory or ‘narrative of journey’ that embeds them into a vector of Hindū-Muslim time, and one that associates them with Islam yet offers an explanation for less orthodox practices that may be defined in the broader range of sufi and Alevi experiences. The association of mystical Islam and the Turkish Gypsies is one that is very much alive in the modern communities, as the final chapter will demonstrate, with groups of Alevi, Abdallar and derviş Gypsies (historically as part of the Kalenderi order in Ottoman times; see Lewis, 1971:173), many of whom are peripatetic, following particular routes that take in holy shrines or sites (like the village of Hacibektaş in central Anatolia in August, the Alevi village of Bayraktar, Kocaeli and the environs of Halkili on the outskirts of Istanbul), and trading in small religious items. The passage through Khorāsān on the silk routes of the southern Caspian likely brought these proto-Rom into the orbit of mystical Islam, and the notions of timelessness, or eternal time that pervade the various philosophies that make up sufism.

Arrival in the troubled regions of north eastern Anatolia in this period, and the lands of the Armenian kingdoms, most especially the Baghratid Kingdom (also Bagaratid, Bagratuni in the sources) including the Armenian lands of Syunik, Lori, Vaspurakan, Van, Taron, and Tayk (855 – 1064 CE, although the unity of the kingdom started to break up in the 10th century and the latter period of 1045 – 1064 CE was one where the Baghratids ruled as clients of the Byzantine Emperors in Constantinople, often in absentia as they were in the capital as virtual prisoners; Khorenatsi, 1978:358-359). This brought the proto - Gypsy groups into contact with the miaphysite (the doctrine of Christ’s one incarnate, united divine and human nature) Armenian Apostolic Church, one of the oldest in Christianity, established according to tradition in 301 CE. The dating used in this church relates to the year of the 554 CE when the synod convened at Dvin formally condemned the formula used to define orthodoxy at the Council of Chalcedon and adopted the Armenian calendar – the Armenian Era (the Armenian Church was and is mistakenly accused of monophysitism, the ‘heresy’ that suggested Christ’s human nature was obliterated by his divine physis, taught by Eutyches and itself condemned by Chalcedon in 451 CE. The Eutychian doctrine was a condemnation of the Arianism of early Nestorian beliefs, that rejected the divine nature of Christ; Hughes, 1961:chap. 4). The Armenian lands are also the likely first point of contact with

Christianity, aside from the possibility of chance meetings with mendicant Nestorian monks on the silk routes, and so the primary encounter with the messianic Judeo-Christian trajectory of eschatological history, combined in this particular case with a notion of a 'chosen' people whose destiny was to suffer, according to the timbre of many of the Armenian chronicles of the time (Dostourian, 1993; Lastivertc'i, 1978). Armenian notions of time as expressed in the chronicles that exist from this period demonstrate a profoundly apocalyptic version of time, in that the end of days had been inaugurated by the arrival of the first Saldjūks in c. 1018 CE/467 AE, when they raided the areas around Lake Van and defeated an Armenian force with their archers. The warriors were wild-looking and demonic, according to Matthew of Edessa, with long hair that flowed like women (A. E. Dostourian, 1993, op.cit. p. 47; the presence of women warriors amongst the Saldjūk and their Türkmen allies is well-documented in later periods, so it seems likely that Matthew's informants shared the common abhorrence of women as combatants in identifying all the warriors as male). Vardapet Arsitakes (Lastivertc'i, 1978:42) suggests that the events he recorded were clearly part of the eschatological cycle of Revelations, when he writes,

“At the beginning of... Emperor (Michael IV Paphlagon's) reign (1034-1041 CE), there was an eclipse of the sun during the month Arac', on a Friday evening, in the year 482 of our (Armenian) era. Many learned people, seeing... [the eclipse]... believed that the birth of the anti-Christ had occurred on that day, or that it presaged very great evils. Indeed such... [disasters]... did occur in our day, and this narration is leading to... [a description]... of them. With our own eyes we saw the blows of divine anger and the unheard of punishment directed against Armenia because of our sins.”

However, despite being especially rich in primary sources in the period when we might expect to find some indications of groups of unusual foreigners from the east, these have not been the concern of Romanī Studies scholars by-and-large in attempts to support their linguistic arguments for the Armenian-derived lexicon in modern Romanës. The context when such a lexicon came into Romanës is lacking too in the secondary literature; Fraser suggests that the time spent by the ancestors of the Gypsies – in this case the Rom and the Lom - “cannot have been brief”, and further goes on to make the point that Lomavren “shares practically no items of Armenian derivation with European Romanī” might result from an earlier separation between these two groups before Armenian had profoundly influenced Romanës in the way it has Lomavren (Fraser, 1992:41). Hancock counters Fraser's suggestion by demonstrating that seventeen words are shared between Romanës and Lomavren whilst ten are shared between Lomavren and Domarī, but not Romanës

(Hancock, 2006:78-9). Earlier Hancock describes thirty-four Armenian loan-words (1987:4-10), and indicates the context for some of them being acquired, which may give us an indication of the kind of shift in metaphysic that I suggest had taken place. Hancock points to the changes in language that resulted as a consequence of the contact with Christianity in the Armenian lands, a Christianity that, as I have suggested above was almost millenarian and certainly apocalyptic at this point in time, and may have provided a new and rich series of explanations for what was happening for the people around the proto-Gypsy groups when they arrived in these lands as refugees and a defeated and to a large extent, decapitated society (in the sense that the remnants of the Ghaznāvid ghulāms and ‘abīd were no longer the organised military units and their auxiliaries, but had become melded with the camp, the raggle-taggle assortment of those that followed the armies and others fleeing the advance of the Türkmen).

The context for the adoption of terminology related to Christianity was perhaps one that reflected the very real fears of ordinary people in these lands that the “end of days” had indeed arrived. The words for the cross (trušul), church and priest (terusul) that entered Romanës and Lomavren derive from experience of Armenian Christianity, also suggesting that the proto-Gypsy population had not divided into those who continued to move westwards towards the Byzantine metropol and ultimately western Europe, and those that remained (or were constrained) in the Armenian and eastern lands (Hancock, 2002:74). The period of time that these ancestral populations spent in these regions was long enough and the situation critical enough, for the introduction of other words from Armenian to become embedded in the languages of the early Gypsies, such as “Easter” and “godfather” (Patradji, kirvo) as Hancock has pointed out (2004:74), though this I think would have been less of a survival strategy and much more a response to the immediate circumstances and the need for explaining them with a new series of understandings, perhaps as a result of loss of faith in the older notions of spiritual relationships, in a similar process to that suggested by Martin regarding the impact of Christianity upon Ojibwa and Micmac peoples in northern America in the 17th century (Martin, 1978). The shattering of an older metaphysic and its reconfiguration into a new, hybrid form (56-65), influenced by the impact of subjugation to the complex Islam of the Ghaznāvids (though not, I think Islamisation, for reasons I shall outline later), encounters with sufism in the course of traversing Khorasān and the longer exposure to Armenian Christianity, following the defeat at Dandānqān [1040 CE] and prior to the Saldjūk victory at Ani [1064 CE] a period of 20 years or so, of rapid movement and change in identity through incorporation of other elements for these emerging Gypsies [Hancock, 2006:70], and of significant shifts in views of the

world and their place in it, of loss of function [military and auxiliary] and defeat, enslavement and destruction, both literally of the warrior-class and metaphorically of the notions of self as Hindūs and Indians). These circumstances are at the heart of the shift in metaphysic I'm suggesting took place and the movement through space and times (Hindū, Ghaznāvid, sufi timelessness and Armenian Christian apocalypse). The notion in Fraser and others (1992:41; Marushikova & Popov, 2001:12), is that the context of contact with Armenian is an extended one, and not as this book argues one that may have seen rapid change during a period of crisis and turmoil. Such times clearly existed in these lands, and those of the Byzantines as they saw the Empire in the east collapse under the Saldjūk onslaught with their defeats in 1071 CE at Manzikert and 1176 CE at Myriocephalum. The importance of an additional factor here is the relationship between language and war.

1.5 Language-change, loan-words & war

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SHIFTS that language undergoes during wartime has been largely unregarded in the discussions of loan words in Romanës, a surprising example of the lack of context for the important linguistic arguments made to suggest the various narratives of journey undertaken by the proto and early Gypsies. One of the arguments made in this book is that the speed of language changes in the circumstances of conflict, turmoil and war are extremely rapid and the acquisition of loan words takes place within very short time spans indeed. The wide range of possible shifts is also one that goes well-beyond the immediate need for military terminology and this is one of the reasons that the arguments to locate the origins of the Gypsies in a warrior class need to be contextualised beyond the sharply linguistic definitions that are being deployed at present, by both those who would promote and those who wish to challenge or even refute such suggestions. This is a subject that goes beyond the purely linguistic field, into the realms of what we might describe as socio-military history.

Linguistic forms are greatly extended during war-time, with new words and concepts coming into existence in oral language whilst it might be said that written language contracts into abbreviations and a vocabulary that becomes foreshortened through a codification that is intended to define “friends” and “enemies” (Fussell, 1975:170). In wartime, distinctions are drawn between “us” and “them”, though the contents of these can and do frequently shift and change in differing contexts, whereby the former is imbued with what are broadly seen as morally positive qualities, notions of being ‘civilised’, virtuous, ‘just’ and frequently religious, and the latter comes to constitute the negative, barbaric and even bestial or inhuman qualities that are frequently irreligious or anti-religious. They are cruel, uneducated, undisciplined and subject to cupidity and unnatural vices, unrestrained in expressing their emotions, but ultimately cowardly. Frequently, they allow women a degree of power and even allow them to participate in war as combatants, possibly as leaders (Ascherson, 1996:61-62). Importantly they are subjects of despotism and tyranny, non-freedom in contradistinction to those who are fighting for freedom, democracy and against tyrants. In this way, language becomes the boundary between who is and isn’t an enemy. Language is more than a system of communication it encompasses signs and symbols that give meaning to various understandings, assumptions and perceptions. This whole is part of what Edith Hall has described as “inventing the barbarian” (see Hall, 1989:21-32). The “enemy” is often identified not by what he or she may speak, but by what they do not speak or the fact that what they speak is unintelligible, a “babble” (barbarophonos in Greek), or cannot speak properly. Such names as Hottentot stem from

notions that deny a validity to others' languages, in a similar way to the term cant and reduces them to the level of beasts of the field, those without speech (Ascherson, 1996:64).

In the process of exclusion and inclusion, the relationship between language and place frequently changes, especially as conflict and destruction or violence overtakes them. The names of places alter and space becomes re-designated, such as "no man's land" (Caddick-Adams, 2007), or lose their function as in the change from farmer's field to battlefield, countryside to "theatre of war". The context in which people exist in their everyday lives alters too, not just for the armies and troops but also for the civilian populations and an argot develops that attempts to encompass these shifts and alterations, sometimes in order to distance the events and their horror – as in the euphemisms that arise such as "gone for a Burton" originally an advertising campaign slogan for British ale, it became synonymous with death, as did "bought it" during the First World War (Fussell, 1975:169-87; 1990:251-67). Use of these argots becomes another marker of exclusion and possibly an indication of those who are disloyal, as they do not know them. Objects become dislocated, such as "tank", or proper nouns become generic objects, like the Roman consul Gaius Vibius Pansa Caetronianus (German panzer). Using the "wrong" language (not knowing the argot, idioms or responses) can be fatal – Bakongo Zairiens in Angola's bloody 1993 conflict were often "discovered" by their assailants when they were asked to say the word arroz meaning "rice" in Portuguese. Those who could not pronounce this word "properly" were killed as enemies (Mabeko-Tali, 1995:71). Those who are loyal are part of the group incorporated through language, and conquest can result in profound language changes that are not directly related to practical necessity. As Ottosón has argued for post-war Norway, when it comes to a situation where the potential exists for language shifts "the most basic fact is that change is never necessary for purely system internal reasons..." (Ottosón, 2005:98). New meanings or variant meanings can become attached to ordinary items and new words coined to mark the altered state in which people learn to exist.

Shared elements that originate in differing languages are common in war-time. In the Crimean War of 1853-56, the contact between British soldiers and Ottoman troops led to loan-words becoming part of the English language: chockablock for example from the Turkish çok kalabalik (very busy or crowded), çakil meaning "pebble" leading to the Scottish chucky stanes, and mufti (to wear plainclothes rather than uniform, originally Arabic). During the First World War troops from the British Empire brought a number of these terms into common parlance, including Blighty (from the Urdu "bilyati" meaning foreign), cushy (also from Urdu, "kushi" or comfortable), shufti (from Hindi, to reconnoitre, that also became "recce" from the French) and the experience of France and

vin blanc became “plonk” in the same period (Caddick-Adams, 2007).

The proposition that the proto-Gypsy groups must have spent an extended time in the Armenian lands in order for the influence of that language to be felt in modern Romanës is, I think open to question. The circumstances of such contact are not those that require an extended period in that they are war-time and as such, language changes are much more rapid and transmitted quickly. The argument that linguistic elements to be found in modern Romanës demonstrate a warrior origin (see the discussion in section 4.1), for the ancestors of the Gypsies may also be adjusted in the light of this argument, as the counter arguments refute the notion and the evidence as “web-page polemics” (see Matras, 2002:208). The suggestion here is that limiting the notion of militarily-influenced language only to a warrior elite (though Hancock does make it clear subsequently to his earlier work, when he writes “[that]... only a minority of the Indians would have been Rajputs in any case...” with reference to the arrival of proto-Romanī groups in Byzantium; see Hancock, 2006:84) does not recognise the changes and shifts possible that occur in language during war-time, with lasting effects amongst non-combatants. I would argue here that the entire period during the formation of the Romanī people can be viewed as consisting of this “other” time – from the late 10th century invasions of Sebūktigīn and then Mahmūd of Ghaznā to the arrival of Gypsies in Byzantium, this is an extended experience of war, conflict and turmoil that impacted upon all of the ancestral Gypsy populations, not merely those that may have been directly engaged in prosecuting war. The emergence of a war-time idiom amongst the population at large, of the areas invaded by the Ghaznāvids may have been further developed during the period of Ghaznāvid captivity and military enslavement, the defeat of the Ghaznāvids and the rapid movement into eastern Anatolia ahead of the Saldjūks and their Türkmen tribes peoples. The experience of the Armenian lands and the ‘apocalyptic’ understanding of the times recorded in the chronicles are likely to have been another critical juncture in the development of Romanës, with rapid shifts and acquisitions of loan-words and perhaps new, or re-allocated terms entering the proto-language, and not simply those that reflect functional needs, as Ottosón and others have suggested above.

This is clearly the province of linguistics and as such, these arguments here may not satisfy the expert scholarship that regards Romanī Studies as primarily following Paspates’ famous dictum, quoted earlier. The historical circumstances are also unproven in that there are no clear references to these processes as yet discovered in the sources; this is a case of drawing inferences and careful suppositions where I may propose an alternative or illuminating narrative – but still a narrative. Here I have attempted to contextualise both some considerations about the nature of time and

narrative structures, and then to draw out the threads of an alternative proposition regarding the length of time proto-Gypsy groups spent in the Armenian lands (in line with my suggestion about the acquisition of Persian loan-words during the period of Ghaznāvid captivity, in a following section of this book) and the possible circumstances that provided the context for an Armenian lexicon to be introduced to Romanēs and shared with Lomavren. The question of who those populations were, and are now, as they have been considered by scholarship is one that considered here.

2. Who are the Gypsies? Identity and influences in Romanī Studies

THE DEBATES AND DISCUSSIONS surrounding the subject of the origin and histories of the Gypsy peoples of the world have been conducted amongst scholars, activists and governments, since their appearance in the historical record and almost certainly long before that. The answer to the question “Who are we?” inevitably includes ideas about “Who were we?” and importantly, “Where are we from?” Most critically, it asks the question “Who are we not?” Modern historiography functions as the history of nations, and frequently assumes that groups of people who may or may not have some shared characteristics have travelled through time and over sometimes enormous geographical distances as sealed units. Each group is conceived of as existing in a kind of container, acting as a barrier to keep the contents ‘intact’ (or ‘pure’, as nationalists wish to present it), until their historical trajectory or pre-destined “path” brings them into contact with history again, as a “nation”. Those that have lived through the experience of domination, especially by an “alien” culture and society (usually an Islamic one, as in mediæval Spain, or the Ottoman Empire for example), are frequently seen as “...for centuries a people without history” (Bosworth, 1993:190). They await in a pristine condition, the establishment of nation-states based upon the particular identity of the group (Serbia, Albania, Greece, Sweden, Norway, etc.). Those ‘outside’ the territory of this group are expected to demonstrate an irredentist nationalism, militating to be united with their fellow nationals in a ‘greater...’ entity. The importance of claiming particular external groups as one’s own is not lost upon politicians and ideologues; the Indian government’s ‘sponsorship’ of the Gypsies took place in the context of growing tension with Pakistan in the late twentieth-century.

The concept of “nationhood”, of belonging to a particular territory or geography in some innate, primal fashion is of course, central to the nation-state. Those who are not of this “land”, have no “relationship” with the soil, encompassed in the idea that one’s ancestors are buried in it or have died on it are deemed to be “other”, “alien” and “immigrant”. Essential to the idea of “blood and soil” is the concept of “sedentary”, being ‘fixed’ in some meaningful way (domicile, ancestor burial, defence against “immigrants”, a notion of a common experience with others in the same territory). At its opposite is deemed to be mobility, movement either in a regular or perhaps seasonal pattern, or in a constant search for new resources, often associated with pastoralism. The meeting point between these two poles is the confrontation between sedentary and nomad, or the “steppe and the sown”, as Harold Peake and Herbert J. Fleure have described it (1928). The suggestion that there is a progression from one to the other is an example of European “Orientalism” (Said, 1972), the view of the ‘Other’ as exotic, existing in another, non-western time “...petty, barbarous and

cruel”, as David Lean’s *Lawrence of Arabia* describes the Arabs (1961; see also Hall, 1989:21-34; Ascherson, 1996:61-4). In the context of Gypsy histories (the differing experiences of the Rom, Dom, Lom and Travellers), this idea of a nomadic lifestyle giving way to a sedentary one is frequently associated with the agent of time; “...many Romanī are again living a nomadic life and have returned to their earlier culture”, according to an Azeri Rom (Daniels, 2003). “Settlement” is identified as a movement from an older (primitive?) past into a more modern (civilised?) present, rather than a particular point along a continuum, a condition that groups and individuals may move in or out of at various times. The history of nomadic peoples demonstrates in general that the latter is the most frequent mode of existence, but the ideology of the nation-state would seek to deny this and promote the concept of sedentarism as part of “modernism”.

The discussions about who and who are not included in these nation-states are, of course of especial interest to us here; inevitably Gypsy peoples have been identified as ‘not belonging’ in most nation-states at some time. In this instance, the Gypsies are usually seen as “...a people without history...” eternally suffering persecution, discrimination, forced settlement or forced migration, though this perception itself is recent. Before this, Gypsies were rarely seen at all, except as inherently “criminal”, but again without a history. This recognition of the experience of Gypsy peoples, especially the Romanī people is identified as happening in the moment; indeed a common stereotype amongst non-Gypsies is the notion that these are a people who live in the eternal present, incapable or unwilling to plan for the future or recall a more general past. Integral to the “scientific” racism that underpins the ideology of the nation-state, the “People” as a “nation” exist on a point along a continuum which stretches backwards and forwards in time (and often geographical space), punctuated by events that are recorded and ordered in the national historiography. Other “nations” or groups of nations may share a similar trajectory and are often perceived to further or less far along it, depending upon their level of “modernisation”, or what Samuel Huntington has unashamedly described as “civilisation” (2002), suggesting irreconcilable differences between them when identifying something called “Islam” and something called “the West”. These differences are most often presented in terms of “cultures”, and hidden amongst them are the ideas of “progress”, “development” and “democracy” with their concomitants, “backwardness”, “underdevelopment” and “tyranny”. Again, the idea of one “nation” or group of “nations” being more “developed” and “progressive” is contrasted with its opposite, to achieve the equation with “democratic” as opposed to “tyrannous”. The Gypsies, especially the Romanies have been consistently defined vis-à-vis this series of Eurocentric ideas, even to the extent of characterising as “anarchical” political and social

organisation amongst some groups (though in fact, this prejudice extends even to groups that have strong communal self-regulatory structures), in the “democracy-tyranny” spectrum. In this sense, it is the concept of “origin” as a point of departure, which can be used as a “measure” against which to compare others that makes the establishment of such more or less “important”. The more temporally remote that point, the greater the claim to an “authentic” longevity as a “nation” or “people” and the more one’s own “nation” may have “influenced” or informed others (Hellenic Greece for example). Some or all of these considerations underlie the attempts to establish definitively, the origin of the Gypsies.

In examining the record of references to the origins of the Gypsies (rather than records of the appearance of Gypsies), inevitably one lights upon the most frequently cited example of both, the reference to the “Lūrī” in the *Shāh-nāma* or Book of Kings. The 60,000 verse Iranian epic was written by Abu l’Kasim Firdawsī. When completed, he presented it in 1010 CE to another important figure in the discussion of Gypsy origins, Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznā (997-1030). This ‘legend of the Lūrī and Bahrām Gūr’ has become ubiquitous in Romanī scholarship, featuring in almost every monograph, article and web-site devoted to the Gypsies and has been used to suggest their presence in 5th century Sassanid Persia. Recently critically re-examined and challenged on a number of points (Hancock, 2003), the reference as first suggested by Col. John S. Harriott in 1830 attempted to draw attention to the Oriental Origins of the Romanichal, or English Romanies. Firdawsī and indeed his earlier source Hamza al Isfāhānī’s Chronology, never defined their use of the term “Lūrī” beyond explaining their presence in 11th century Persia by reference to a group of musicians from Sindh, or western India in the 5th century (see section 3.5). As there were many Hindūs and Buddhists in Sassanid Persia and the ruler Bahrām Gūr (420-438) gave poets, musicians and singers “the highest ranks at court” (Wiesehöfer, 2001:159), little conclusive evidence that these were Gypsies can be drawn. In the context of our current discussion, the suggestion that we might find the origins of the Romanies in Persia as a group of Indians from Sindh must be seen to be a consequence of earlier identifications coming, as it does in the 19th century.

10th century Byzantine references to the *Atsinganoi*, originally a heretical Judeo-Christian group centred in northern Asia Minor may be our earliest extant record of to Romanī people, although there are still questions about drawing equivalence between these references. The notion was present in these that the group referred to were “...a Sarmatian people...” (Fraser, 1992:46). The Sarmatians were a Central Asian, nomad people, speakers of an Indo-Iranian language. Herodotus in his Histories (Rawlinson, Rawlinson & Wilkinson, 1862) notes that they were a people who lived

and travelled in wagons, that their warriors included women and their priestesses men, and they could retreat endlessly into their steppe lands, thus defeating the Persian Shāhanshāh, Darius I through despair and despond. Clearly, we are dealing with the Byzantine proclivity for using archaic descriptions of contemporary peoples. Later, 12th century descriptions of Byzantine Gypsies are much more reliable, referring to bear-keepers, magicians, soothsayers and snake charmers as “Egyptians” in various religious commentaries and tracts (Soulis, 1961:146-147). Numbers of other references in late Byzantine sources indicate that there was no clear link made with the earlier Indians in defining the origins of these wandering acrobats, jugglers and animal-trainers. One other reference from this period suggests a connection with the Arabs, that of Simon Simeonis in 1323, when he notes a group in the island of Crete who asserted “...themselves to be of the family of Chaym... always wandering and fugitive...” and living in black tents similar to the Arabians’ he had seen elsewhere on his travels (Fraser, 1992:50). The biblical reference to “Chaym” or Ham, is frequent in the context of descriptions of the Gypsies in this period, especially in Western Europe after 1400 when the Gypsies were identified as “pilgrims”, atoning for apostasy and armed with patents royal. Various were the legends that attached to these bands of distinctive, dark-skinned travellers often led by ‘Counts’ or ‘Dukes’, but many of them made a connection with the fabled land of Hermes Trimegistus, the ‘author’ of a series of Gnostic and alchemical texts (actually Arabic in origin; Holmyard, 1929:525-6) believed to be ‘Egyptian’. Charters, such as the one granted to Johannus Cinganus by the Venetians in 1244 at Nauplion, contained the evidence for the later claims by Gypsy groups in Western Europe (Soulis, 1961:164-165). In response to the Ottoman incursions, Gypsy war-band leaders were awarded titles in charters such as ‘duke’ and ‘count’, with the concomitant responsibility for providing military service in the classic late feudal relationship.

One of the earliest attempts to closely define the origins of the “Egyptians” in Western Europe was by Andrew Borde (or Boorde) in 1547, when he published his examples collected in 1542, of “Egipt speche”. Survival of early works is often more by chance than by design, but some inference can be drawn from the fact that original manuscripts are extant. Sebastian Münster’s *Chronographia Universalis* of 1550 also suggested an Egyptian origin, but in this case, Lesser Egypt, located as Münster himself suggested, in the Gangetic or Indus regions (Bartlett, 1952: 85). Earlier, the municipal authorities responsible for Hildesheim in Hesse recorded a visit from a party of ‘Tartars’ again from Egypt (Fraser, 1992: 66-67). ‘Little Egypt’ was frequently cited as the place of origin in various records of towns and cities in the 15th century, possibly gleaned from Gypsies themselves.

This was connected by commentators with the region of Modon, in the Venetian territories, but as Fraser suggests it derived from the original notion of an 'Egyptian' origin, as the community there in the 14th and 15th centuries themselves claimed (1992: 53-54). One interesting reference to the Gypsies of Modon at this time comes from Lionardo di Niccolo Friscobaldi in 1384, when he notes that these apparent penitents without the city walls as Romiti (1818:72). Other travellers to the city suggested that it was the original home of this group, but this reflects the growing antagonism and suspicion shown to Gypsies in Western Europe from the late 15th century, illustrating the shift from pilgrims and penitents to 'spies' and 'vagabonds'.

Their arrival in Western Europe, prompted by the chaos of the interregnum in the Ottoman lands during the first decades of the 15th century and a worsening of conditions for the Gypsies there, focused attention upon the 'discovery' of the origins of this hitherto unrecorded group. The choice by many annalists, commentators and writers of Egypt as the 'home' of the Gypsies reflected the concern with magic, conjuring and especially alchemy, following the 13th century translations of the 'works' of Hermes Trimegistus and their dissemination (Holmyard, 1923: 525). The appearance of these dark-skinned, unusually dressed strangers also reinforced the ideas about the 'East' as the home of wandering tribes, heathens and infidels, the enemies of Christendom. The shift to the biblical lands of Egypt may reflect the limited extent of the knowledge of those who first encountered these groups in the Modon region and their assumption that these were people connected with that land through magical practices. It may also be the case that, in order to allay further suspicion, the Romittoi chose to present themselves not as quondam residents in the Byzantine and then Ottoman lands (one a schismatic state and the other an infidel one), but as people from a place that Europeans had some ideas of, the biblical lands. The flight to Egypt of the Holy Family even provided some basis for claims to penitence; the Gypsies had refused succour to the fleeing Christ-child and so were doomed to wander as a result. It is also possible that those who gave Egypt as their origin, initially at least were indeed from that country. Their presence in Modon, an important entrepôt for pilgrims to the Holy Land and other ports with traffic to the Latin Crusader states like Ragusa (Dubrovnik), is compatible with such a suggestion. There is a supposition that only Romanies (among the various Gypsy groups) were present in the Balkans, by many modern scholars. The presence of an older community, absorbed into the more numerous later identity and earlier instances of Dom being found in these regions, may be supported by the reference from the Kingdom of Cyprus to the community of Gypsies there under the Lusignan King Jacques II (1460-1473) (Marsh & Strand, 2003:4). It is conceivable then, that the earliest

“Egyptians” spoke the truth.

Until the later 18th century, the ‘Egyptian’ origin remained the dominant explanation, recorded in tracts and treatises with little variation. The changing situation of persecution and oppression in Western Europe required only that they be vilified by commentators as Ottoman spies, thieves, idlers and con men and women. Ideological justification for the appalling treatment meted out to Romanies in Europe was to be found in these works, and the earlier suspicions and prejudices took on a lethal character when the writers of standing and influence took up their pens to do so. Even the notion that Gypsies were indeed from Egypt came under scrutiny, and English encyclopaedias referred to “...counterfeit kind of rogues, who being English, or Welsh people, disguise themselves in uncouth habits...” according to Ephraim Chamber (1728). This terminology merely reflected the earlier legislative descriptions of “counterfeit Egyptians” in a variety of punitive laws in the mid-sixteenth century (Fraser, 131-137). Such an approach dominated the discussion of Gypsy origins, and can be seen to manifest the beginnings of the racist paradigm of the “true Egyptian”, as opposed to the vagabonds and thieves claiming to be Gypsies (Fraser, 1992:92).

The Indian origin of the Gypsies might be said to have been ‘discovered’ by Münster in 1550 CE, although the claim that he was told this by Gypsies is not entirely correct (Hancock, 2002:2) as referred to above. Others did not take up his suggestion however, and presumably, the Gypsies questioned by Western Europeans maintained the idea of an Egyptian origin, as it fitted well with preconceived notions. The forty articles in the Vienna Gazette (Weiner Anzeigen) of 1775-1776 CE, written by an anonymous Hungarian author (Fraser, 1992: 190), seem to have been based upon the suggestion from Istvan Vali in the 1760’s. Pastor Vali had allegedly attended Leiden University to study religion (there is no record of him there), and came across a group of Indian or Sinhalese students, from whom he collected about 1,000 words. Comparing these with the language of the Gypsy labourers on the family estate in Raab, he ‘discovered’ their similarity (Hancock, 2002: 2; Fraser, 1992: 193; Hancock, 1991). Jacob Bryant also collected material, apparently at a Windsor fair in 1776, which he published later (1785: 387-394). The German scholar, Jacob Rüdiger collected examples of Romanī from a Gypsy woman in Halle, and compared it with a variety of Indian languages, noting the similarities especially with a dialect of Lahnda called “Multani” (Fraser 1992:194).

The most important work of the late 18th century was H. M. G. Grellman’s *Dissertation on the Gypsies* (1787, English edition), originally published in Leipzig in 1783. In addition to the usual material describing the Gypsies in terms of stereotypes and prejudices, Grellman synbooked the

earlier Weiner Anzeigen articles and the work of other scholars, arguing for a clear relationship between Romanī and Indo-Aryan languages that was most closely related to Gujrat. He also posited a date of departure from the Indian subcontinent at the time of the incursions by Timur-i lenk (Tamerlane) into the Delhi Sultānate in 1398 CE (2nd edition, 1807). The new science of comparative philology guaranteed the interest of scholars in Romanī and the origins of the Gypsies as an example of change and development in an Indo-Aryan related language. Augustus F. Pott, in his monumental *The Gypsies in Europe and Asia* (*Die Zigeuner in Europa und Asien*, 1844) and his work on the Gypsies of Turkey (1844: 321-335), drew on the material that had by then proliferated about the Gypsies and their language, to write the primary scientific works on Romanī. Another scholar, Franz X. Miklosich in Vienna (1872-1881) wrote two volumes of history of the migrations of the Gypsies, based upon the philological evidence, and can be said to be the first to re-construct (or construct?) the 'long march West' of the Romanī peoples.

Subsequent works investigating the origins of the Gypsies, and especially the Romanī people have all followed Grellman, Pott and Miklosich to a greater or lesser extent, apart from a few who have sought to redefine the debates in ways that have reflected the concerns with the "social construction" of ethnic identities. Okely's challenging *The Traveller-Gypsies*, sought to deconstruct the 'myth' of the Indian origin in regard of English Gypsies and demonstrate that the 'link' to India was a product of European Orientalism (following Said's book), an attempt to exoticise a socially excluded and marginalised group (1983). More controversially, Willems, Lucassen and Cottaar (1998), have developed a critique of the 'traditional' perspective of Romanī Studies and brought their own "socio-historical approach" to bear, arguing that the Gypsy identity is a product of Grellman, Pott and others since who have taken a widely disparate series of groups, who may or may not share a number of characteristics and constructed a composite called "Gypsies". Taking the notion of the "imaginary Gypsy" even further, Mattijs van de Port has argued that "Gypsy-ness" is an "instance of the Wild", an aspect of societal discontent expressed in a cultural form and a concomitant to "civilization" (1998), in Serbia especially. The 'Dutch' school can be said to include the important work of Ger Duijzings (1997), about the "making of Egyptians" in the context of the Balkan conflicts in the last decade. His notion that identities can be reconstructed as necessity and extreme circumstance demands, is the kind of psycho-historical analysis that Justin McCarthy suggested in his catalogue of the 'ethnic cleansing' of Ottoman Muslims from the region, 1821-1922 (1995), when individuals traumatised by war and loss sought refuge in the 'safety' of a marginal identity. Without being too reductive, the underlying book shared by these and other works

is that, like Americans and many other modern 'ethnic' identities, "Gypsies" can be made and are not necessarily "born".

Recent scholarship has sought to address both the implicit racism of the earlier 'folklore' studies, intrinsic to many of the contributions to the early *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (1881-) and the challenges of post-modern ideas about 'ethnicity' and 'identity' as a socially negotiated phenomenon. Attempts to establish the history of the Gypsy peoples on a complementary basis to the existing linguistic evidence in the formative lands of the Ottoman Empire, rather than to construct it as Miklosich and others have done has demonstrated the extent to which the Romanies (and consequently other Gypsy groups) are a composite people, from a variety of origins and the product of complex social, economic and political factors (Hancock, 2003 & 2002; Mischek, 2003; Altinöz, 2003; Marushiakova & Popov, 2000; Marsh, 1999). The argument that they were 'forged' in the borderlands of Anatolia between the hammer of the Saldjūk Turks and the anvil of the Byzantine Empire in the 12th century is becoming more widely accepted, though not uncontested. The attempts to define more accurately the point of departure to specific raids by the Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznā in 1018 CE (Courthiade, 2003), demonstrates the extent to which there is a 'Romanī historiography', seeking to refine and expand the knowledge about Gypsy origins and history and confront some of the more extreme and ultimately untenable 'myth-making' that has passed for scholarship until now.

The key factor to the existence of the Gypsy peoples (Rom, Dom and Lom, Irish Travellers, Yenische, Resande and others), has been the ability to exploit particular economic niches in sedentary society, whether as commercial nomads, horse-dealers, farmers, metal-workers, miners, gun-powder makers, canon-founders and carpenters or a host of other occupations that Gypsies have undertaken to provide themselves and their families with a living. The musicians and metalworkers of the Dom peoples (Ghagar, Nawar and Halebi) of Egypt, Syria and the Middle East have adapted to their environment as it has changed to meet the challenges they have faced in a way that other groups have not been able to so successfully. The Roma of South-Eastern Europe have attempted the same, when faced with the horrors of 'ethnic-cleansing' and persecution as a product of the assertion of ethno-nationalist identities in much of the Balkans in the last decades, fleeing when possible and adapting to new environments in Sweden, the United Kingdom, Germany and France amongst other states. The 'resident' Gypsies (Romanichals, Resande, Irish Travellers, Sinti, etc.) of these nation-states have sought to maintain their distinctiveness vis-à-vis these newer groups of Roma, whilst building essential relationships through political and cultural organisations

to challenge the common problems of discrimination, poor resources and marginalisation of all Gypsy communities wherever they may be. The position of those groups adopting an exclusivist and separatist identity, which is premised upon the notion of a more definite 'Indian origin' and therefore of being 'more Romanī' (Hancock, 2003: 2), is mirrored by those who seek to re-affirm a 'Swedish' or 'English' Gypsy identity as 'more' legitimate in the context of the nation-state. The search for the 'true Gypsy' begun in 16th century Western Europe, ultimately provided the ideological justification for the genocidal policies of emergent nation-states over the next two centuries, as it did in the period of Nazi Germany, 1936-1945. Such notions remain part-and-parcel of the discrimination towards Gypsies in most nation-states of Europe.

The scholarship seeking to establish the origins of the Gypsy peoples must, it seems to me, refrain from 'buying into' such racist paradigms by following the patterns of nationalist myth-making and nation-building adopted after the advent of Romanticism in late 18th century Western Europe, and exported with such lethal results elsewhere today. The widely diverse and complex origins of Gypsies in all their variation should be positively acknowledged, held up as an example to challenge the absurdly reductive notions of the 'Swedish', the 'Norwegian', 'Danish' or the 'English' and other nations. The "liberation" that Said identified is in the "un-housed, decentred, exilic energies... whose incarnation is the migrant..." (1992). The particular genius for adaptation and flexibility that has been essential to the survival of the Gypsies stands against the rigidity of the notions of the nation-state, which appear archaic and much closer to the fearful, exclusivist 'civilised' Athenians contemplating the 'barbarian' Scythians in 4th century BCE Hellas (Ascherson, 1996:62), than the trans-national, multi-cultural, diverse community of Gypsies in the early 21st century European context, examining their opportunities. To seek to separate out, to identify with 'archaic' notions of ethnicity and territoriality, through tracing particular origins for their own sake, may be a dangerous irrelevance, ultimately denying Gypsies the complexity of their history, rather than explaining it. One particular piece of scholarship demands special attention, in the discussion of origins, as it plays a seminal role in so many works and references to Gypsy history and migrations that it has become almost axiomatic – the legend of Bahrām Gūr and the Lūrī.

2.2 “...the strumming of their silken bows...” the problems of the legend of Bahram Gūr and the Lūlī

THE REFERENCE TO THE FIRDAWSĪ LEGEND is one that is frequently cited in Romanī Studies texts, histories of all Gypsies, articles and newspaper reports (see Lori, 2003, for examples in connexion with the Dom; Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:11; Kenrick, 2004: 21; Fraser, 1992:34-5), yet almost no context or explanation is given as to who Abu ‘l-Kasīm Hasan b. ‘Alī of Tūs, or Firdawsī (c. 329 AH/940 CE-411 AH/1020 CE) was, why he wrote the Shāh-nāma or Shāhnāmè, “Book of Kings” (c.1010 CE; see Cl. Huart, H. Massé, V.L. Ménage, 2003: 918a; Warner & Warner’s 1905-1925 English translation, 2005), and in what historical circumstances it was produced. Hamza al -Isfāhānī b. al-Hasan, ibn Mu’addib (c. 280 AH/893 CE-360 AH/971 CE), in his Chronology (Ta’rīkh sinī mulūk al-ard wa ’l-anbiyā’) of c.961 CE, is an earlier source for the Bahrām Gūr legend, for those attempting to construct a “narrative of journey” for the Romanī peoples during their earliest history (see for example, Marushiakova & Popov, 2001: 11-12). Other “characters” (such as the King Shangūl of Hindūstān) have been merely treated as parts in a shadow-play, without investigation of whether these have any basis in historical fact; like Karagöz, the Turkish Gypsy puppet, introducing himself to us as a diversion from our worldly travails, they form a “backdrop” for the story. The text itself has been little analysed and is quoted (most often uncritically, though Fraser does not; 1992:36-7) in many cases, yet as Hancock remarks “it is wrong” (2002:5). Here I would like to suggest why.

Effectively with this tale, the perceived connection with an Indian origin for Romanichals (English Gypsies), and by extension all Romanī people, seemed confirmed, and an early date of departure apparently established by the appearance of the Lūrī or Lūlī in Persia at the time of Sāsānid Shāh Bahram Ghūr, (420-438 CE). Hamza al-Isfāhānī also seemed to report an earlier version of the same episode in his Chronology, c.960 CE. With the production of an English translation of the Shāhnāmā in India (see Macan, 1829) and a paper by Harriott (1830: 518-58) in the Royal Asiatic Society’s Transactions series, this story was seized upon as an explanation and ‘welded’ to the linguistic arguments surrounding Romanī origins. These suggested that one original migration had left the north-western Indian region at a relatively early date, before separating into the three distinctive linguistic branches of Romanī, Domarī and Lomavren (Marushiakova & Popov, 2000:5) somewhere in the Persian lands. The most influential of proponents was John Sampson, “...the leading English language Romanī scholar of the early twentieth century” (Hancock, 2002:3), who published his work on the dialect of Welsh Gypsies in 1926. Through discussions of this Romanī

monogenesis theory in the pages of the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society [Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society], Sampson's work was disseminated, and almost immediately challenged by Sir Ralph Turner in his Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society article on Romanī and Indo-Aryan (1926: 145-89). Turner argued that he remained unconvinced of a singular origin for both Domarī and Romanī (Fraser, 1992: 21), as the linguistic ancestors of each were related to differing groups of Indian dialects, not the same (Hancock, 2002:2-6). Despite this criticism, and continuing challenges from more recent scholarship regarding Persia and claims for such early origins, both the Firdawsī 'legend' and the monogenesis theory are still frequently cited in discussions of language and Romanī history (see Hancock, 2006:5-7; Mayall, 2004: 119-25; Fraser, 1992: 20-22 for summaries).

Some of the implications of this debate between Sampson, Turner and others, were that it effectively focussed on key differences; firstly that the origins of the Rom, Dom and Lom peoples as one proto or ancestral population, or "...the conviction that all Gypsies, dispersed at all points throughout the world, were originally from a single stock." (Mayall, 2004: 119) Secondly, that these groups stem from entirely separate and distinct ancestry, sharing similar historical circumstances surrounding their emergence as Gypsies (Hancock, 2000: 11). To some extent, the polarisation of the two positions with their supporters and adherents has characterised the field of Romanī Studies ever since, in that these positions have become coalesced around notions that we might broadly define as an ethnicised, or socio-historical discourses of origins (see Mayall, 2004:3). Here we might discern a crucial contest in the study of the Gypsies, between those who are committed to a view of Gypsies as a distinct and identifiable ethnic group, with a history coterminous with other ethnic histories (Kenrick, 2004; Hancock, 1985, for examples), and those who would see the claims to ethnic identity as an aspect of political mobilisation, but not adequately convincing in the context of scholarship and research (Willems, 1996; Okely, 1983). In this context, the legend of Bahrām Gūr becomes more than merely an interesting anecdote from an early mediaeval Persian source that may refer to an episode in Romanī history; it attains the status of "evidence" of claims to this coterminous history, the ethnicised discourse of origins.

The context of the debate is important to establish, as it is essential to our understanding of the competing discourses and, more importantly the longevity of this 'myth' and its role. It is my intention to critically examine the principle elements of this oft-repeated legend; Hamza al-Isfanhani's extraordinary *Chronology* of pre-Islamic and Islamic dynasties of Persia; Firdawsī's epic of the struggle between good and evil, precipitated by murder and perpetuated through a bloody cycle of revenge between the sons of Tur (nomadic Turanians from Central Asia) and those of Īraj

(the sedentary Iranians). In addition, it is important to examine the processes whereby these elements came to play a seminal role in the development of Gypsyism and later, Romanī Studies, and examine the translations and references that were, and continue to be authorities in the discussion of Gypsy origins. Finally, it is critical to decipher the character of the Sāsānid Shāh, Bahrām Gūr (Vahrām V, 420-438 CE) in these works, before referring to Amīr, later Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznā (389 AH/999 CE - 421 AH/1030 CE), the archetypal ghāzī ruler of his age and emulator of much that is described in the cycle of legends about Barhrām, if we are to attempt to understand the intentions of the authors of these episodes on their own terms, and see it as part of the later writing about Mahmūd (Hardy, 1960:25, 170).

I suggest in this that we have a series of narratives recording the 5th century arrival in Sāsānid Persia of a contingent of allied Sindi mercenaries of Rād̄jput origin, the remnants of which became conflated with an eleventh century group of Domarī itinerant singers, dancers and musicians, in attempts to provide a plausible genealogy for the latter. This group was part of the wider community of Gypsies that came to include elements from the later forced migrations of Sultān Mahmūd, those known by the epithet of Kāoli (now Kawlī or “from Kābulī”, i.e. the central Ghaznāvid territories), and the descendants of an earlier Zutt population, especially from the ancient Indian colony at al-Lūr (Minorsky, 1986: 817b). The varied and differentiated character of the Gypsy communities of modern Iran are, I would suggest, an outcome of this picture of complex origins, and the continuing policy of forced population movements by the Khalifa and through to the late Ottoman state (Windfuhr, 2003: 416a). It is also the case that the processes of the emergence of Gypsy identities in Persia can be described in a way that mirrors the equally differentiated and complex picture found in Europe. In the context of the semi-mythical chronicles and poetic epics of early mediaeval Iran however, I suggest the tale of the Shāh and the Gypsies must be seen as unreliable evidence of the early arrival of any ancestral migrations of proto-Gypsy populations.

The chronicler and philologist known as Hamza al -Isfahāni b. al-Hasan, ibn Mu’addib (c. 280 AH/893 CE-360 AH/971 CE), was an accomplished scholar. He was especially known for the meticulous lexicographical study of misspellings caused by the ambiguities of the Arabic script in Persian literature, a study of Persian festivals, an extensively annotated *diwān* of the most famous poet of the ‘Abbāsīd period, Abū Nuwās al-Hasan b. Hāni’ al-Hakamī (130 AH/747 CE-198 AH/813 CE), a collection of the proverbs and expressions of Persia, a work concerning the superstitious beliefs and amulets amongst common people in Iran, and a political and biographical history of Isfahān (Ar. Isbahān). His greatest work was the remarkable Chronology, detailing the

history of the Islamic and pre-Islamic dynasties of Persia, and his survey of world history has been studied in western Europe since the 18th century and often translated since (Gottwald, 1844-48). It would appear that although Hamza al-Isfahāni was acutely aware of his position as a Persian man of letters, and maintained some prejudices towards the Arab conquerors of Persia, he nevertheless combined a thorough and original scholarship with a critical use of the best available sources, whatever their provenance. His work "...demonstrates the breadth of enquiry amongst Islamic scholars and the curiosity at work in Muslim scholarship in tenth century Persia" (Rosenthal, 1984: 156a).

His reference to the legend of the al-Zutt comes in his description of the life of the monarch, Varakhān V (420-438), known to us as Bahrām Gūr, or the "wild ass" (onager). Bahrām Gūr V was brought up by the Arabs at al-Hīra and his education entrusted to the renowned scholar and jurist, al-Mundhir Ibn al-Numān. Al-Tabari (c.855) tells us that, contrary to legend, his appellation of "Gūr" was not achieved by a prodigious feat of archery in pinning a wild ass to a lion with one arrow. Instead we learn that Bahrām, through constant exercise and physical skill was given the name. Noted as a hunter by both his contemporaries and later by 'Umar Khayyām, it was eventually to be the cause of his death after eighteen years of rule (438). In his first year of kingship, he declared war on the Roman Empire during the reign of Theodosius II, who had himself just extended the city of Constantine through the construction of the Great Land Walls in 417. Despite the Sāsānid Persian success of winning Nisībīn from the Romans, the general Mihr-Narsē sued for peace in 421 (Huart, 1983:585b). In his own domains and those he conquered, Bahrām Gūr showed a propensity for the persecution of Christians. In the struggle with the Hephthalite dominated Kidarite confederation, the Persian monarch personally slew the Hephthalite king at the Battle of Kusmehan outside Marw al-Shāhidjān in the contested territories of southern Trans Oxiana (Huart, 1983:582b).

A number of stories regarding this monarch are given in Hamza's work, including one relating to the "Treasury of Jamshid", a much-celebrated ruler of ancient Iran whose wealth Bahrām discovers whilst out hunting and distributes to the poor, thereby enhancing his rule through this act of kindness. This legend has its origins in the Shāh's policy of tax remissions that he carried out at points during his reign (Massé, 2003: 939a). Hamza's Chronology is partly in that tradition of *nahīsat al-mulūk* or "mirrors for princes", a strong feature of Persian elite culture and an element of statecraft in later Islamic imperial systems, such as the Ottomans (see Bosworth, 2003: 984b-988b). The legend which most concerned Gypsyloists, and scholars of Romanī Studies, occurs a little later

in the text, where he describes the story of the origins of the al-Zutt from the 12,000 Indian musicians, sent by the King of India for the entertainment of Bahrām's bibulous, but poor subjects. The story serves as the model for Firdawsī's later tale, and follows the familiar Persian pattern of beneficence on the part of the monarch and the thriftless Zutt (Fraser, 1994: 34), as a 'foil' for Bahrām's virtues. The wide use made of the works of Hamza by later Islamic scholars doesn't detract from the fact that there are some problems with his work. His lexicography suggests highly unlikely etymologies for Persian words rendered ambiguous in Arabic script, revealing a proclivity for invention and a bias towards looking for 'evidence' to support his contentions about the superiority of Persian, over Arabic (Bosworth, 2003: 985b). Additionally, his claims that the 12,000 al-Zutt dispersed into the Persian lands and multiplied, would seem to be contradicted by his assertion that their contemporary numbers were small, yet he offers no explanation for this disparity. Nonetheless, the use of Jewish, Greek and Armenian informants for sections of his histories reveals a striking comparison with other examples of panegyric courtly composition and a concern with veracity that others noticeably lacked (Robinson, 2003: 76).

Abu 'l-Kasim Hasan b. 'Alī Firdawsī was born 941 CE at Bazh in the Tabaran area of Tūs, to a family of *dikhans*, or landowners in the village. He died in 1025-26 CE/416 AH (Browne, 1902-24: ii, §2: 90). Like Hamza, Firdawsī was a passionate Iranian with a profound knowledge of the early legends, myths and histories of Persia, gleaned from both Arabic and Persian sources. Some of these became incorporated into the 60,000 verse epic *Shāhnāmā*, and again like Hamza, Firdawsī made use of a wide variety of sources in producing his "Book of Kings". He also extracted portions from the work of his compatriot, Dakika, who had been assassinated by a Turkish slave sometime in 370 AH/980 CE, after which Firdawsī had begun to compose the *Shāhnāmā*. Dakika's rendering of "an ancient book" that he refers to in his introduction, no doubt provided an initial inspiration; until this point Firdawsī had been the composer of some lyric verse and short, epic passages (Ménage, 2003, II: 918a). Despite his historical association with Mahmūd of Ghaznā, Firdawsī only approached the rulers of his day when he had exhausted his own resources and cannot be counted amongst the other panegyrists, poets and historians brought to embellish and celebrate the court of the Sultān, frequently against their wishes (Browne, 1902-24, ii §2: 91). Firdawsī's achievement despite Mahmūd's miserly response to it (he gave only a very small sum to the poet, whereupon Firdawsī quit the court; Huart, Massé, Ménage, 2003, ii:917a), only serves to illustrate the transcendence of the epic over much of the other panegyric output of the period (Huart, Massé, Ménage, 2003, ii:918a).

Another important distinction was in the matter of faith; Firdawsī was of the Shī'ī branch of Islam whilst Mahmūd was allegedly militantly Sunni (Thapar, 2000:29-31). Having secured the protection and sponsorship of Mahmūd's first vizier, himself of Shī'ī persuasion (an interesting indication that Mahmūd was not the Sunni militant he is portrayed as), Abu 'l-Abbas Fadl b. Ahmad al-Isfarayini (994-1010 CE), Firdawsī set about revising and extending his work, especially those passages where he expressed his praise of Mahmūd, after the description of the death of Rūstam, for example (see Warner and Warner, v, pt. li: 118; i, §12: 112);

Abú'l Kásim! Our great Sháh's hand is still

Thus generous alike to good and ill.

He never slackeneth in bounteousness,

And never resteth on the day of stress,

Delivereth battle when the times demand,

And taketh heads of monarchs in his hand,

But largeseth the humble with his spoils,

And maketh no account of his own toils.

Oh! May Mahmūd still rule the world, still be

The source of bounty and of equity!

As we might deduce, the amīr was busy securing his reputation as *Yamīn al-Dawla* 'defender of the faith', and *Amīn al-Milla* 'protector of the umma', and a prince on a par with Rūstam or Bahrām himself, but with the fall of the vizier Abu 'l-Abbas, Mahmūd's apparent intolerance for heterodoxy became more pronounced (Huart, Massé, Ménage, 2003, ii: 919b). The infamous reward that Firdawsī received upon submitting his magnum opus was clearly a comment upon this somewhat opportunist change in opinion on Mahmūd's part. That it was opportunist is without doubt; the support of heterodox, sometimes shamanist Central Asian elements in the Khorāsān region where Iranians were predominant, was crucial to Mahmūd's early military successes in his expansionist programme (Bosworth, 2003, VI: 65b). His role and the pre-eminent ghazī warrior was always tempered by pragmatism, and his maintenance of his Hindū troops, especially when deployed against rebellious Muslim subjects, indicates that this ideology was part and parcel of the Ghaznāvid ruler's 'self-fashioning' (Hardy, 1960: 28). Firdawsī may have expected a more tolerant

and generous reception, if he understood the role of the poets and authors at Mahmūd's court as part of this process of promulgation of myth and majesty, and so his disappointment is understandable.

The primary problem concerned with both poets' work has been defined by most scholars as a question of origins (see Fraser, 1992: 11-32 for a discussion of the various approaches this has taken). Central to this problem and its exegesis, has been the endeavour to establish a coeval timeline, matching the conclusions of those researchers for whom the analysis of the Romanī languages has provided the necessary 'framework' for developing the history of the Gypsies (see Sampson, 1926; Turner, 1926; Gjerdman and Ljungberg, 1963; Kochanowski, 1979; for examples).

Frequently this has been at the expense of clearly establishing the relationship between language and memory, as recorded history. The pursuit of evidence relies upon commonly assumed connexions, as when Marushiakova and Popov refer to the Firdawsī episode as "...the events described, although told in a semi-legendary fashion, and in much later times, are rooted in historical fact and can be taken to refer to one of the initial stages of Gypsy migration" (2001: 11).

The main criticism of such presentations of "historical fact" might be summarised as follows;

Statements of this kind, even when they are partially true, ignore the principle that in order to establish an historical connexion between A and B it is not enough to bring forward evidence of their likeness to one another, without showing at the same time that the actual relation of B to A was such to render the assumed filiations possible, and that the possible hypobook fits in with all the ascertained facts... (Nicholson, 1914: 8-9)

Fraser (1992: 42) clearly cautions against reliance upon the single factor of language to determine history, when he writes "... it is prudent to take stock of possible oversimplifications which [sic] the linguistic approach to prehistory [i.e. early Romanī history]... may encourage." As such, the lexicostatistical endeavour has resulted in a number of debates and disputes, assertions and arguments, based upon abstracted notions of Romanī history and migration in general, which have been adduced from linguistics. In this context, reference to historical sources has often been selective, and subjectively driven by the predisposition to support particular narratives. Uncritical use of sources in some instances has led to misidentification of Romanī peoples as other groups; a case in point being the equivalence drawn between early Byzantine references to Atsinganoi or Athinganoi and the Gypsies, despite Byzantine chroniclers' detailed knowledge of individual heretical groups and their beliefs (see Hamilton, 2001: 72; Theophanes Omologetes, the Confessor [c.760-817 CE/c.6,269-6,326 YC], cited in Hamilton & Hamilton, 1998: 36). Once again, Fraser's

scepticism proves salutary,

Too often the assumption has been made, in looking for traces of the Gypsies, that any reference to a migrant group pursuing a Gypsy-like occupation can for that reason be equated with them... (1992: 35)

In this instance, we might refer to the hostile reference from Theophanes to the Atsinganoi or Athínganoi, (literally meaning “untouchables”), when he described the basileus Nikephoros I Genik (802-811 CE/6,311-6,320 YC), requesting them to sacrifice a bull to subdue a riot (possibly with the participation of certain Pavlikiani, or dualist Paulicians). Michael I Rangrave (811-813 CE/6,320-6,322 YC) persecuted the Athínganoi severely, imposing the death penalty upon them for their heresies and almost certainly reducing their numbers drastically (Mangrove and Scott, 1997: 739). The distinct possibility that one of the Byzantine emperors was of this persuasion (Michael II the Amorion 820-839 CE/6,329-6,348 YC), meant that conditions improved for this group and Theophanes’ continuator (writing about the period 813-961 CE/6,320-6,470 YC), suggests that this was as a result of the fact that when growing up in Phrygia, Michael, a cattle herder at the time, had been told that one day he would become *basileus* (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001: 14-15). By the end of the 10th century, there are few indications that the Athínganoi were still in existence. The argument that the term Athínganoi can always be taken to denote Gypsies in the Byzantine sources, is inconsistent with the linguistic data concerning both Domarī and Romanī, that Matras suggests cannot be accepted to have emerged prior to the 9th century CE at the earliest (2005:68). The descriptions of Theophanes Omologetes and his Continuator suggests a clear knowledge of the practices of this heretical group (a mixture of Judaic, Zoroastrian and Christian), with no indication of a differing language being spoken amongst the group, or an origin outside the imperial lands (Phrygia and Likaonia). Speck’s suggestion that this argument may be taken as given is, I would argue, an instance of the impact of Gypsyism upon Byzantine scholarship (as is the reference to Athínganoi as equivalent to Gypsies, in Fögen’s discussion of Balsamon on magic; see 1995: 102, n.15), but in this instance, it is not tenable (see Marushiakova & Popov, 2001: 14, for their use of Speck to support this argument; Speck, 2003: 48). The more obvious references to Athínganoi in Byzantine sources as Gypsies (those that are concomitant with the linguistic evidence), when one of the grounds for conflation may result from the practice of Levitical ritual purity ablutions (Bowman, 1991: 223) amongst the Athínganoi, something that might indicate the *Aiguptoi* (Egyptians) maintained what appeared to be similar pollution taboos, or enough alike to be equated with the Athínganoi. The practice of sorcery and divination is another.

In this current discussion, the case of the Lūrī, Lors or Lori who are described in the Persian sources have been firmly located in this discourse of origins, despite the problems of identifying who is exactly meant by this description. As evidence of an early departure from India for the Roma, they have been mobilised to support arguments between scholars, which have become extremely well worn in the discipline through repetition. Indeed, it is almost axiomatic that the legend of Bahrām Gūr and the Lūrī must appear in the early stages of any “history” or description of the Gypsies (see Simmons, 2000, for an example from the “Origins of Gypsy Fiddling”). Many of these accept the basic story as representing a factual, albeit couched in legendary terms, account of the earliest migration (Simmons almost uniquely notes, “... modern scholars dismiss this story as romantic fiction”). Such wide circulation has this particular episode had, that English folk-singers like Fred Brookes can write a song about the subject and unquestioningly present it as part of the Romanī “tradition”. The historical veracity of the story, the analysis of the descriptions Hamza al-Isfāhānī and Firdawsī (the two best known redactions) in either symbolic or semiotic terms, the textual analysis offering wider perspectives and a more nuanced understanding of the descriptions, have not been widely undertaken by scholars. Despite the previous interpretations of this episode, and if taken at face value, the story of a group of musicians from north-western India transplanted to Persia in the mid-5th century CE remains just that. I would suggest that without further analysis it is neither incontrovertible proof of a Romanī presence in Sāsānid Persia, nor is it yet a clear case of mistaken identity, and thus the continuing uncritical use of this legend of Bahrām Gūr and the Lūrī in any narrative of Gypsy history is indefensible.

2.3 The origins of the “Romanī” connection

THE ORIGINS OF THIS LEGENDARY IDENTIFICATION are to be found in a piece written by a Colonel John S. Harriott (sometimes misidentified as Captain James Harriott), of the East India Company Army c.1830. Colonel Harriott later became a Major-General of Her Majesty’s Army in India (1838) and was a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, to whom he had submitted his treatise, *Observations on the Oriental Origins of the Romanichal*, as part of their Transactions for that year (Harriott, 1830, 2: 518-558). Harriott was the kind of soldier-scholar familiar in both this milieu and period, similar in many ways to the more famous Richard Burton, also an East India Company officer during these years. His treatise closely followed upon a translation of the Persian epic *Shāhnāmā* in four volumes by Turner Macan, published in Kalkhata (Calcutta), with the majestic title *The Shāh Nameh... carefully collated with a number of the oldest and best manuscripts and illustrated by a copious glossary of obsolete words and obscure idioms... that included a life of the author in Persian and English* (1829). Other European translations of Firdawsī’s poem followed this, indicating an especial level of interest in Persian literature by western European scholars at this time. A French translation by M. Jules Mohl in seven volumes (*Le Livre des Rois*, Paris, 1838-78), an Italian verse translation published in Turin, by Pizzi (1886-88), German (F. Rückert, 1890-05), English (A. G. Warner & E. Warner, 1905-12) and Gudjarati versions (J. J. Modi, 1897-04) were subsequently produced, to say nothing of selections in Danish (A. Christensen, 1931), Dutch, Turkish and Özbek (Ménage, 2003: 918a). The reasons for this rapid development in translations of Firdawsī might be seen in a number of factors to do with European, especially British influence in the region, as this was becoming dominant and the Empire strengthened control over the Indian sub-continent, its resources and especially its trade. According to geopolitical logic, parts of the “Middle East” were indispensable to the defence of this acquisition, in that the imperial mission was seen to be justified by the earlier Muslim invasions of Firdawsī’s patron, Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznā, as Sir Henry Miers Elliott suggested (1867-77: 3).

Thus, the work of Harriott, and others like Burton, must be seen in the complex light of European Orientalism, and part of the process Said has described as

...to dignify all the knowledge collected during colonial occupation with the title “contribution to modern learning” when the natives had neither been consulted nor treated as anything except pretexts for a text whose usefulness was not to the natives... (1987: 80)

Crucially for 19th century European and Ottoman Orientalists, the article by Harriott suggested the

possibility of being able to “institute new areas of specialisation; to establish new disciplines; to divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index, and record... every observable detail...” (Said, 1987: 86; Makdisi, 2002: 1-2), about an Oriental population in Europe’s heart, the Gypsies. The appearance of a group of itinerant musicians and thieves in Firdawsī’s great opus, confirmed (for Harriott and his readers) that the connection of the English Gypsies and the Indian origin of their language could be made securely. This confirmation underpinned the founding of Gypsylore, as a new discipline and area of specialisation, a means of categorising “natives” in the colonies and at home and of conceptualising the other in both settings. It is no coincidence that the investigations of Harriott, Burton, and the later Gypsylores are primarily intended to extend this categorisation, this “mapping” of the Gypsies in their various “habitats”. As Hancock (2004) has written, in his introduction to the life and work of Jan Yoors,

... the same colonialism and the European domination of non-western peoples were feeding into notions of a hierarchy of human groups. From the new sciences of botany and zoology the move to classifying human populations was a natural step, and the idea of “races” and their ranking occupied much of the scientific and nationalistic thought of the day.

Populations resulting from unions of different “races” were believed to inherit the worst characteristics from each, and thus only the genetically pristine or “True Romany” counted for anything.

Whilst the work of Yoors was, Hancock argues, markedly different (2004), Harriott’s study was intended to demonstrate the inheritance of genuine Gypsies, and those that followed him continued to promote this true/false dichotomy.

2.4 The interpolations of Colonel Harriott

THIS TROPE OF AUTHENTIC/INAUTHENTIC followed upon both the much earlier deduction of Romanī as an Indic language, by István Váli, Jacob Bryant, Jacob Rüdiger, and Heinrich Grellman, in the late 18th century (see Hancock, 1993; Fraser, 1992: 191-197), and the notion of the “counterfeit Egyptians” (Fraser, 1990: 43-69) that had been present since the mid-16th century (Fraser, 1992: 85-86). The migration to Persia in the 5th century appeared plausible, as it was alluded to in the *Shāhnāmā*. The story suggests that Bahram Ghūr was visited by his Indian “father-in-law”, Maharaja Rao Shankal of Sind, who offered to send him 10,000 Lūrī musicians to entertain the ordinary Persians who were imbibing their wine without musical entertainment (Hancock, 2004: para 12; Marushiakova & Popov, 2000: 5; Fraser, 1994: 35); although Hamza al-Isfāhānī states the figure of 12,000 (see Fraser, 1992: 35), whilst others suggest 4,000 in number (see Minorsky, 1986: 816b). The king was however, displeased with these Lūrī and dismissed them before the year was out. A number of inaccuracies have crept into the story, so that the most recent recapitulations of it have conflated and reversed some important details. The 1905-25 translation by Warner and Warner, Volume VII, Chapter 39 (148-150) refers to the episode in the following way;

Thereafter he sent letters to each archmage,
Gave clothing to the mendicants, and asked:
In all the realm what folk are free from toil,
And who are mendicants and destitute?
Tell me how things are in the world, and lead
My heart upon the pathway toward the light.”
An answer came from all the archimages,
From all the nobles, and the men of lore:-
The face of earth appeareth prosperous,
Continuous blessings are in every part,
Save that the poor complain against the ills
Of fortune and the Sháh. ‘The rich,’ they say,
Wear wreaths of roses in their drinking-bouts,

And quaff to minstrelsy, but as for us
They do not reckon us as men at all.
The empty-handed drinketh with no rose
Or harp.' The king of kings should look to it."
The Sháh laughed heartily at this report,
And sent a camel-post to king Shangul
To say thus: "O thou monarch good at need!
Select ten thousand of the Gipsy-tribe,
Both male and female, skilful on the harp,
And send them to me. I may gain mine end
Through that notorious folk."

Now when the letter
Came to Shangul he raised his head in pride
O'er Saturn's orbit and made choice of Gypsies,
As bidden by the Sháh who, when they came,
Accorded them an audience and gave each
An ox and ass, for he proposed to make
The Gypsies husbandmen, while his officials
Gave them a thousand asses' loads of wheat,
That they might have the ox and ass for work,
Employ the wheat as seed for raising crops,
And should besides make music for the poor,
And render them the service free of cost.
The Gypsies went and ate the wheat and oxen,

Then at a year's end came with pallid cheeks.
The Sháh said: "Was it not your task to plough,
To sow, and reap? Your asses yet remain,
So load them up, prepare your harps, and stretch
The silken chords."

And so the Gipsies now,
According to Bahrám's just ordinance,
Live by their wits; they have for company
The dog and wolf, and tramp unceasingly.

This text is the fullest English edition (available at <http://persian.packhum.org/persian/>), and generally considered to be the best critical edition, hence referring to it here. Harriott appears to have translated the text himself in his essay of 1830, although he may have been using the four volume 1829 Turner Macan edition, and this redaction differs markedly from the Warner in some respects, most notably in Macan's translation of the apocryphal story of Firdawsi's fabulous reward and extended sojourn at Mahmūd's court (Ménage, 2003, II: 919b). The most obvious difference between Harriott and the later version is the use by Warner and Warner of the terms Gipsy and Gipsies, in place of his rendering of Lūrī. The tale in both is more clearly defined in terms of numbers and the change in conditions for these Lūrī, their "contract" with the Sháh. The translation continues as above, until the final part where Harriott renders the text "...and support themselves by means of their songs and the strumming of their silken bows..." (Harriott quoted in Fraser, 1992: 35, again a poetic detail absent from the Warner edition). Their dismissal also contains an interesting difference, in that "...the Lūrī, agreeably to this mandate, now wander the world, seeking employment..." and they are left to consort "...with dogs and wolves, and thieving on the road by day and by night" (Fraser, 1992: 35), details not contained in the Warner translation. In this instance, Harriott's insertion of ideas already associated with the concept of "Gipsie" are clearly recognisable; the happy acceptance of their fate, as decreed by Bahrām, to wander, play and sing, and the association of criminal activity with this perambulation. We can detect the ideas of the author of the 1775-76 Wiener Anzeigen articles, and Heinrich Grellman's 1783 Die Zigeuner (Fraser, 1992: 191-193) at work here, and Harriott's prejudices about Gypsies have been

interpolated in the text anachronistically, as the Warner translation suggests. The extent to which Harriott is reflecting wider prejudices is also an interesting point; despite the use of the term Gypsies by Warner and Warner, they do not seem to find the concomitant pejorative associations of petty larceny in the Firdawsī text. Clearly the Warner edition has been influenced by the widespread acceptance, by the time of the publication of their series, of the tale as presenting us with something about the origins of the Gypsies, so that the term in the Persian text has been equated with the English term. In his introduction to Volume 7, Edmond Warner makes mention of the inclination of “Professor Nöldeke... to consider Bahrām’s importation of the Gypsies [sic.] from Hind to Īrān historical” referring to Theodore Nöldeke’s note in his *Britannica* article on the monarch and his reign (Warner, 1905, vii, section 4: n). Again, this reflects the notion that Lūrī can be equated with the English term, Gypsy, but this does not prompt Warner and Warner to “gloss” the Firdawsī text in the way that Harriott’s earlier one does.

The other differences in terms of the Harriott translation and the Warner edition of Firdawsī are more significant, if less obvious in the former. The Indian ruler (Shangūl; see above), is referred to elsewhere in the text as the “noble chieftain of the Sindian host...” (Warner and Warner, 1905-25, vii, §31: 125), and in a following section Rai or Rādājā (§37: 140), but the majority of the interaction between the Shāh and the King (§36-§38), takes place in Kannūj, as it is rendered (Warner and Warner, 1905-25, vii, §29: 118), suggesting that the Gangetic basin is the heart of the King’s territory, that extends over the Sind. There is a long narrative of various fabulous deeds and exploits on the part of Bahrām in Hind; he wrestles with the court champion after a feast (§28: 117), and other feats, that precedes the reference to the Gypsies in the poem, in the tradition of the heroic literature of the *Khudāy-namag* (The Book of Lords; c.590-628). These deeds culminate in the King of Hind offering one of his three daughters to Bahrām as a wife:

“O thou Joy of hearts! thou hast prevailed.

Attempt no greater feat. I will bestow

My daughter on thee as thy wife, for thus

Shall I be profited in word and deed. (Warner and Warner, 1905-25, vii, §32: 127)

Herein lies the origin of the identification of the Shāh as the son-in-law of Shangūl; he is married at Kannūj to the “moon-faced maid” named Sapīnūd, with whom he flees the intrigues of Shangūl to keep him in Hind, and returns to Īrān (§34: 131-134). Reconciled to Shangūl, he calls upon him for the Lūrī (§39: 148-150). It is in the consideration of this point that I will turn to a closer

examination of the Lūrī, Lūlī and the Zutt.

2.5 al-Zutt and the Lūlī

IF WE EXAMINE THE LITERATURE ASSOCIATED with this tale (Minorsky, 1986: 816b), it suggests that the usage of the term lūrī or Lūlī is itself inconsistent at an early point. Hamza al-Isfahānī refers to the musicians in the story as al-Zutt in his *Chronology* (c.350 AH/961 CE), but thereafter the terms used by subsequent poets are related to Lūlī, lūrī, lōrī. In the translation by M. Jules Mohl of Firdawsī (1838-78, vi: 76-77), the translator renders the term Lūriyān, and in his 1841 translation of the *Mudjmil al-tawarīkh* (c. 520 AH/1126 CE), Mohl extends this term to al-Lūriyūn al-sūdān, or “the black Lūrī” (515, 534). al-Tha‘ālibī writes in his *Ghurar al-siyar* or *Ghurar akhbār mulūk al-furs wa-siyarihim* (c.429 AH/1037 CE), that the Lūrī are descended from these “black” al-Lūriyūn al-sūdān (Zotenberg, 1900: 567), and following this, other Persian poets refer to the “blackness... like night”, of these people (there is no suggestion that they originate in the Sudan; see Minorsky, 1986:817a). They are also described by writers as shūkh “petulant”, bunagāh (that is their way of life is “irregular”), and most interesting of all in the context of the *Shāhnāmā*, shangūl meaning “extremely joyful” and “carefree in their happiness” (Minorsky oddly suggests this term means “elegant” in his *Encyclopaedia of Islam* article; 2003, v:817a). Modern connotations associated with the term Lūlī are similarly glossed (see Digard, 2003:413b) though Hancock suggests an etymology deriving from the Romanēs with “lur” or “lor” meaning “robber” (Hancock, p.c. 2008), whilst there are a significant number of terms associated with Persian Gypsies, both in terms of occupational identity and regional designations (Minorsky, 1986:817b; Digard, 2003: 412b-13a), to which I shall return in the following section. This shift from al-Zutt to Lūlī, al-Lūriyan, al-Lūriyan al-sūdān, is not merely an alternative terminology, as demonstrated by the consistency with which the latter term is used. It represents an alternative narrative, a differing interpretation from Hamza, to the dominant discourse created after Firdawsī’s text. I would suggest that Hamza is attempting to include in his *Chronology* an historical account relating to an Indian population in Persia defined as al-Zutt, one that is providing a plausible genealogy for groups defined as Lūlī or Lūrī five centuries later. Hamza is also attempting something else in his writing, for his text is one that is not concerned with praising present rulers, but with detailing the Iranian past, in contradistinction to the less glorious present.

Firdawsī’s unequivocal praise for Mahmūd and his descriptions of Bahrām are intended as a reflection of the characters of each, and an exemplar of the princely qualities embodied by both monarchs. There is also the clear description of the lesser, feckless characters of the Lūrī sent by the King of Hind Shangūl, almost certainly intended to pander to Mahmūd’s own prejudices about

Hindūs and their rulers. The cycle of events that leads to this episode demonstrates the duplicity of the Indian princes through the characterisation of Shangūl. The Hindū monarch is portrayed as (VII, §29) deceitful, and cunning, intending upon bringing Bahrām to destruction by persuading him to challenge a huge wolf (VII, §30) and then a terrible dragon (VII, §31). He even plots to have him beheaded at his court, a deed so scurrilous that even his chief advisor will not countenance it (VII, §32). Although the two are reconciled eventually in the tale after Bahrām agrees to marry Sapīnūd (though the couple flee to Iran), Firdawsī does not fail to point out the Indian remains “an idolater”, whilst Bahrām, he suggests, is “a worshipper of God” (although he presumably means Ahura Mazda in this instance VII, §36), this is clearly intended to draw attention to the Shāh’s similarity to the Sultān. In this (as in Bahrām’s reply to Faghfūr of Chin; VII, §35), the contrast is drawn with the inferiority of the non-Persians, in their claims to majesty, their dealings with monarchs, and their bravery and prowess. The argument could be made that Firdawsī was clearly appealing to Mahmūd as a Persian monarch in the line of the Shāhanshāh or king of kings, and equally that Mahmūd perceived himself to be so. Like earlier episodes in Iranian history, the Ghaznāvids had secured their position over their previous Samānīd masters through these qualities, and thus had every claim to be considered shāhanshāh.

In this change in terminology as regards al-Zutt and the Lūlī, ambivalence arises that if uncovered, may offer both the connection between the various ethnonyms, and provide an illuminating perspective upon the origin of the Gypsy populations of Persia and elsewhere in the region. Minorsky has identified in his article on the term Lūlī, that the origin of this name is in the early Arab scholars’ description of the inhabitants of a town in Sind, called by them Arūr or al-Rūr (Alore; 1986:817a). The Arab conquest of the region had taken this town sometime before 95 AH/714 CE, according to the historian al-Balādhurī c.850 CE (Hitti and Murgotten, 1924: 439-440). Muhammad Ma’sum “Nami” Mir records that Alore was

“...a very large city on the bank of the Mihran (the Indus); that there were many very fine buildings in it; that outside and around the town there were gardens full of trees, having good fruit, and that everything was to be found there that the inhabitants and travellers might desire”

and it was the royal residence of Rai Suheeris (Malet, 1855:7). It fell to Muhammad b. l’Kasīm on “...Thursday, the 10th day of Rumzan, in the year Hijree 93 [711 CE]” (Malet, 1855:17). The linguistic shift from Arōrī/Rūrī to Lōrī/Lūlī, Minorsky argues, occurs after the translation of Indian Alore into Arabic al-Rūr, a dissimulation of the two “r” letters, being a common occurrence

(1986:817a). The groups identified in the *Shāhnāmā* and other works, are seen as descendants of the presumed captives from this, the most important city in Sind, after the Arab conquest in the beginning of the 8th century CE. This strongly suggests that the origins of the Dom are to be found in such populations, a point I shall argue in the following chapter. What has happened in this particular case is, I suggest, that the general term *al-Zutt*, the Arabic term for *Djāt*, has given way to the specific term *Lūlī*, but that both have their origins in the same region (see Bazmee Ansari, 2003, II: 488a). The semantic shift reflects a change in the presentation of the relationship between the *Sasānīd* shāhs and the *Gūpta* Kings of India, and the reconfiguration of relations in the wake of Arab conquest.

The interpolation of the fabulous episodes relating to *Bahrām Gūr* and *Shangūl* King of Hind, in a narrative depicting the prowess and bravery of the Shāh, is a device to explain the alliance of the *Sāsānīds* and the *Gūpta* monarchs, in the face of a common enemy, the Hephthalite Huns, Hunas or *Hayātīla* (White Huns; see Enoki, 1955:1-58; Howorth, 1873:114-127). The origins of communities of Indians as allied troops assisting the Persians in their defence, lies at the heart of the story of *Bahrām Gūr*, I suggest. The struggle against the Hephthalites was one waged by the shāhs over two centuries, from the initial attacks of the Chionite Huns in c.350 CE against Shapur II. After a treaty between these, the Huns refrained from full-scale assaults upon Iran until *Bahrām Gūr*'s reign, though it is likely that sometime in the early 420's the Shāh defeated the Hephthalite king, dedicating his crown, the Hephthalite queen and her servants to the *Gushnasp* fire-temple at *Shiz* (Morony, 2003, IX: 74b). Later onslaughts were not repelled, and the Hephthalites came to dominate Persia and India, as I shall discuss in the next section. However, the role of victorious allies that the *Hindūs* had played in relation to the fifth century *Sasānīd* shāh became problematic for the later, Muslim Persian chroniclers, as the Indians maintained their *Hindūism*, even after the Arab conquest of Sind, thus remaining "idolaters", whilst the *Sasānīds* could at least be represented as believers monotheists (adherents of *Ahura Mazda*), and in some senses closer to Islam. The legend of the *Lūlī* functions as a semiotic dislocation describing this shifting relationship, giving an ignoble origin for people who were once valued and respected allies.

2.6 “Strong and valiant men”; the Hephthalites

THE HEPHTHALITES APPEAR IN ROMANĪ STUDIES literature as the impetus for the earliest migrations during the 5th and 6th centuries CE (Marushiakova and Popov, 2001:11-12), or more specifically for the Dom in the context of groups of composite military units moving westwards to confront the so-called “White Huns” as they swept into north western and central India (Hancock, 2000:9-11). The argument has been made that the Hephthalite Huns are a contributing ‘push’ factor in the migrations of the early Gypsies, and as such it is to them that I would like to turn in order to discuss the question. The origins of the Hephthalites are very obscure and frequently contradictory theories as to whether these people were Turks or Indo-Iranian have been put forward (Litvinsky, 1996: 135-144; Sinor, 1990:294-5, 298-301; Frye and Sayili, 1943:195-6; Enoki, 1955:56). Enoki’s argument that the (H)Ephthalites should be regarded as an Iranian tribe have been cautiously accepted by Frye and Sayili and others, though they suggest that like most central Asian nomadic empires, the Hephthalites should be seen as a composite confederation containing differing elements including both Turkic and Iranian (1943:195). Sinor suggests that the term is a dynastic appellation that was adopted by the Avars towards the close of the 5th century CE, when Hephthalite rule was consolidated over Tokharistan, where these people had been living for some time (1990:298). This new confederation pushed the earlier Kidarite rulers westwards into a confrontation with the Parthian and Sassānid empires (1990:299). The Hephthalites themselves were to expand into Sassānid regions at the expense of the Persian rulers for a period, though earlier they had been repulsed by Bahrām V Gūr (420-38) as the *Shāh-nāma* tells us (Warner and Warner, VII, pp. 165-69; Litvinsky, 1996:135), whilst also noting the names of the Hephthalite rulers as Iranian.

The term Hephthalite itself has a variety of meanings given in the sources, but most can be associated with the notions of ‘bravery’, ‘strength’ and “valiant men” (Litvinsky, 1996:135). Chinese sources suggest these people are descended from the Great Yüeh-Chih mentioned in the lists of tribute bearers at the Chou court, 1000 BCE (Narain, 1990:155) in the region of Tokharistan and Gandhara and are known as I-ta (Enoki, 1959:7). They are also mentioned as originating from the Ch’e -shih of the Turfan oases, and numismatic evidence suggests the use of a Bactrian script and an élite language derived from East Iranian (Litvinsky, 1996:135). The Chinese suggest that the Yüeh-Chih spoke a different language from all those around them (the Juan-juan, Kao-Ch’e and Hsuing-Nu, all of whom were Altaic Turkic speakers; see Enoki, 1959:6), but the linguistic evidence is slim indeed (Sinor, 1990:300). These people may have been Indo-European speakers inhabiting the Tarim Basin and the Taklamakan Desert region (Narain, 1990:154). In the 5th century

BCE this area had been home to the trading peoples who appear to have been from Central Europe and Celtic in origin, weavers of particularly fine cloths, with a burial culture preserved in the so-called “mummies of Ürümchi” (Wayland Barber, 1999; Mallory & Mair, 2000) and the Hephthalites are suggested to have originated in this area (Enoki, 1959:3). Enormously successful traders along the ancient silk routes, the peoples of the Tarim basin created a complex and flourishing culture connected through trade to the Chinese Empire and those of the Middle East (Wayland Barber, 1999:12).

Procopius of Caesarea noted that they were a “... Hunnish people and so called [but]... do not mix and associate with those Huns we know...” (Procopius, 1966, quoted in Litvinsky, 1996:136), indicating that the Hephthalites were not Huns but used this appellation to intimidate their enemies (Frye, 1984:346). Described as settled, “white-skinned and not ugly or bestial like other Huns...” they were ruled by one king and “...possess a legal state structure, observing justice amongst themselves and their neighbours in no lesser measure than the Byzantines and Persians...” (Procopius, 1966, quoted in Litvinsky, 1996:135). Chinese sources however suggest that the Hephthalites had no cities and lived as nomads, based upon eyewitness accounts (Sinor, 1990:300) thus illustrating the complexity of defining who exactly these people were. The question of language is also problematic, as Litvinsky suggests (1996:136) that only a very few words are known from the numismatic evidence, but the most modern scholarship has argued that the nature of the confederation was such that the elite may have spoken an Iranian language (as suggested by the inscriptions upon these coins; Bivar, 2008) as it may illustrate and elucidate the complexities noted by the sources between the so-called “Red” and “White” Hephthalite Huns, shown in mural art of the period (Litvinsky, 1996:137). These appellations may not be related to physical differences however, as central Asian nomadic groups often had these definitions added to ethnonyms (Sinor, 1990:301). These differing perceptions of Byzantine, Persian and Chinese sources is perhaps best explained by the representations we see in the murals, depicting the remnants of separate socio-economic and ethno-linguistic groups (Litvinsky, 1996:141). The Hephthalites would appear to be a complex confederation depicted in the sources and secondary literature in a variety of ways and using a bewildering number of ethnonyms (Ephthalites, White Huns, Hayātila, Hunas, Xyōn, Hyōn, Var, Avar) and whose origins and ethnological attributes are extremely unclear. The Hephthalite state may have been based upon a nomadic, Indo-Iranian elite who governed a largely sedentary society of primarily Turkic and Indo-European peoples, and was certainly powerful enough to establish control over an enormous area from Tibet to Turkmenistan in modern terms (the borders of

the Northern Wei and Southern Qi dynasties of China to the eastern Sassānid Empire). If as Sinor suggests the Hephthalites are to be identified as a dynastic appellation of the Avars (1990:298, 301), then the inclusion of the lands of the Avar Khanate would suggest that the northern limits of the state stretched from Siberia to central India. The state would appear to have lasted from the early 5th century when it broke away from the Juan-juan confederacy in or around 415 CE (Sinor, 1990:293) until its destruction by the Türks between 557-561 CE (Sinor, 1990:301), although some Hephthalite elements continued to exist as late as 651 CE, when they fought against the Arabs in Khorāsān, and in 704 CE as part of a rebellion in the same region (Bivar, 2008). It is with the conquest of large parts of northern India that the Hephthalites have been connected to the ancestors of the Gypsies (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:11-12), or at least the Dom (Hancock, 2000:9-11), as I suggested at the opening to this section, though the case has not been made in detail. In one other instance the Hephthalites have also been cited in connection with sun-worship and Kosovan Roma beliefs about the importance of the sun (Polansky, 2006:67). The latter draws upon the detailed descriptions in Enoki regarding the customs of the Hephthalites in this regard (1959:45-9), and then suggests that the city of Multan was, in the pre-Islamic period, a centre of sun-worship in India (2006:65). Other sources are less clear about the nature of the Hephthalite beliefs; Enoki quotes the Chinese envoy Sung Yün in describing them as being antithetical to Buddhism (1959:45) and building their tents to face eastwards, indicating a belief in sun-worship (1959:46), though possibly also elements of Zoroastrian fire-worship. There may also have been practices linked with the Turkish Tang'ri or Sky God, and elements from Hindū Shiva worship (Enoki, 1959:48). Their attitudes towards Buddhism did not preclude a tolerance shown towards Buddhist shrines and the worship of their subjects in them (Enoki, 1959:49), though Litvinsky suggests that in the conquest of India (477-520 CE) the Hephthalites destroyed many hundreds of Buddhist temples and stupa (1996:147), though this is another contradictory factor, given the tolerance of Buddhism in Balkh according to Chinese eye-witnesses (Enoki, 1959:47). A complex religious picture emerges, with what seems to be a profoundly syncretic pattern of beliefs amongst the differing groups within the Hephthalite state (Litvinsky, 1996:142-4) and differing relationships between these groups and the ruling elite over time. It may have been that the practices of central Asian nomadic invaders from time immemorial were behind the initial destruction of the Buddhist places of worship, thus terrorising the population and eliminating the possible resistance from groups in Indian society, followed by a more conciliatory policy once the conquest was complete. The destructive and cruel hostility of the Hephthalite ruler Mihirakula (520-42 CE) towards Buddhism during the initial invasions, contrasts with the evidence from a seal that shows him worshipping Hindū deities Vishnu

and Shiva, inscribed in Bactrian script and dated to the late 5th century (the seal is currently in the collection of the British Museum) so perhaps individual rulers adopted varying attitudes to the religion of their conquered subjects.

The Hephthalite destruction of the Gupta Empire followed an earlier repulsion of the Kidarite invaders by the Indian prince Skandagupta in 455 CE (on behalf of the Emperor Kumāragupta, d. 455 CE), almost certainly prompted by the pressure further eastwards on the Kidarites from the Hephthalites (Bivar, 2008; Litvinsky, 1996:141). The death of Skandagupta in 470 CE marked the turning point for the Hephthalite invasions, as they had previously subdued the Kidarite confederation and began embarking upon the conquest of India in earnest in order to control trade, spices, tea, silk and slaves (Barfield, 1989:2-4). The conquest of northern India and the subjugation of the Gupta Empire lasted until the middle of the 6th century but would seem to have finally ended with the victories of the Türk kaghanate and those of the Sassānids, by which time the Hephthalites had already been repulsed from the region of northern India, though it is not clear if the dynasties that took control in the regions of Gurjara represent some continuity with the Hephthalites, in ruling Kannauj for example (Bivar, 2008).

The connection with the early migrations of the ancestors of the Gypsies is extremely tenuous as the documentary evidence does not suggest large scale populations movements resulting from the invasions of the Hephthalites and the scenario presented by Hancock, of composite armies marching to confront the 'White Huns' outside of the territories of the Indian lands is also at odds with the evidence of Hephthalite incursions. The defeat of the Hephthalites by the first Mawla prince Yasodharman in 528 CE (Malcolm, 1880:191-2) was one that took place upon Indian soil, not in the territories beyond the Hindū Khush and the final destruction of the Hephthalite state did not involve the Hindū kingdoms that emerged from the break-up of the Gupta Empire. The likelihood of the Hephthalites being the mechanism by which large numbers of Hindūs migrated from India in the 5th century is very uncertain, particularly when a much clearer trajectory of forced migration can be suggested with the Arab conquest of the Sind at a later period, as I shall argue subsequently. The strength of these connections would seem to have relied upon an initial identification with the Hephthalites in the Shāh-nāma and the work of Col. John Staples Harriott, and the arguments for accepting the equivalence of the Lūrī with the ancestors of the Gypsies. These are I would argue here not tenable, and therefore the suggestion that the Hephthalites are related to the events that gave rise to the Romanī people as an aspect of this can no longer be accepted.

2.7 Harriott, history and historiography

IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ABOVE ARGUMENTS, the seminal role of John S. Harriott, in the identification of the story of the Lūlī and Bahrām Gūr, with the origins of the Gypsies, must be re-evaluated. Harriott's translation of this section of the *Shāhnāmā* (1830: 518-58; Warner & Warner, 1905-25, VII, §39: 148-150), interpolated anachronistic notions relating to the character of Gypsies, as these had been defined in European scholarship since the 1770's and had been part of the popular prejudices and stereotypes for a great deal longer. Harriott's glossing of these notions upon the text of Firdawsī's story, added an additional layer to an already complex text; one that contained elements of the less subtle panegyrics being produced at the court of the sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznā as a supplication in times of the author's needs, yet retained a transcendent narrative and structure that lifted it beyond these material concerns. Firdawsī's religious heterodoxy may have added an additional motive to those of Mahmūd in awarding the aged poet a meagre pension for his monumental work, but the text itself displayed a clear intention as regards the comparisons of Bahrām and Mahmūd in this tale and the tropes of the deceitful and dishonourable behaviour reflected the prejudices of both poet and sultān towards the Hindūs, I would suggest. Harriott's colourful redaction of the text concerning the Lūlī or Lūrī has fundamentally been at the base of a positive identification for many scholars, with the Gypsies, yet this reference has not been systematically or rigorously interrogated by either Gypsy-lorists, or modern Romanī Studies scholarship. Upon examination, the translation by Harriott displays a number of aspects that throw doubt upon whether this may be safely asserted in any connection with Gypsy origins, and I would suggest that the continuing use of the reference is an aspect of the mythologising of Romanī history that must be separated from the actuality of that history, whilst it may continue to be described as an aspect of Romanī historiography.

3.1 The question of an Arabic ‘lingua poetica’, and the origins of Domarī in the Umayyad Khalif’a

“Lo! It is Allah who splits the seed and the date stone... He brings forth the living from the dead...” (The Glorious Qur’an, Al An’Am Sura: 95)

IN THE LIGHT OF THE PRECEDING DISCUSSION regarding the origins of the Gypsies and the legend of Bahrām Gūr, it will be important to examine in the next chapter, the evidence for suggesting that we may locate Domarī origins in populations of Hindū captives from al-Sind or Sindhu (Sind, Belūčistān, Makrān, parts of the Pandjāb and Rādjāsthān, as described by Arab geographers; Bosworth, 1997:632), and al-Hind (generally referring to the regions east of the Indus or Mihrān, in this period; Maqbul Ahmad, 1986: 404-5). The regions were the subject of Arabic invasions and conquest in the first century of the expansion of Islam, and in this context, it is necessary for me to predicate my considerations with some discussion about the nature of pre-Muslim Arabic society, its transmogrification through the impact of Islam, and the intrinsic relationship between Muslim society, and the formation of what we might call proto-Domarī groups in the Iraqi (Irāki) lands of the later Khalif’a. In particular, I concentrate on the emergence of an Arabic koīné, as a precedent for the eventual emergence of Domarī, and a military context for the coalescence of Dom identity in the armies of the Umayyad Khalif’a, in the conquest period, during the first two centuries of Islam. The most obvious location for this precedent would be the so-called poetic koīné of the pre-Islamic early 6th century CE, but for reasons I discuss below, I suggest this is not the case, as this ‘lingua poetica’ is itself uncertain, and contested by some scholars and the evidence for its early existence debatable. The model for the emergence of the Domarī-speaking community is to be found, I suggest, in the Arabic armies of the conquest period, the first two centuries AH of Islam (7th and 8th centuries CE). The re-configuration of Arabic society as a result of the revelation of Islam, the removal of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers to Yathrib or Yasrib (al-Madīna after the phrase madīnat al-nabī, “the city of the Blessed Prophet”), in 622 CE/1 AH, and the campaigns of expansion and incorporation of differing populations carried out subsequently, provide a better precedent as I will argue, for the evolution of Domarī and the Dom.

The capture of many thousands of Hindūs and their forced migration to the Umayyad heartlands is the primary factor in a chain of events that results in the eventual emergence of the Dom and this I suggest, prefigures later developments that lead to the ethnogenesis of the Romanī people. There are common factors here I propose, in the pattern of confrontation, defeat, capture, forced migration, a reconfiguring of the social organisation of these Hindūs with the collapse of their internal system of social stratification, belief and value systems, that undermined the existing socio-cultural structures. In addition to a linguistic coalescence under these conditions of a societal shift, new forms emerged

as a composite identity, reflecting the diversity of the groups involved in the process. This process is one that is intrinsically bound up with the nature of Islamic society as suggested above, in that the social organisation of the early Muslim state contained the possibility of incorporating and reconfiguring disparate populations in new ways. This point, although perhaps controversial is one that is at the heart of the processes of ethnogenesis of the Gypsy peoples and must be dealt with primarily, as it underpins the conceptualisation of this process as argued throughout this book.

The traditional portrayal of this period of the early part of the life of the Blessed Prophet, accepted by many scholars (though not uncritically; see Crone and Cook, 1977), suggests that Arabian society was in the process of significant change and to some extent, dislocation (Lapidus, 1988: 11). In the period just prior to the revelation of the Apostle of God and the advent of the community that became the umma, Arabian society “was in [a]... ferment” (Lapidus, 1988: 20), in which “new conceptions of collective identity emerged” (Lapidus, 1988: 18). Mecca (Makka) was the site of a diverse population without tribal affiliation; refugees, merchants and foreigners, all of who held various religious convictions and moral conventions (Hourani, 1991: 11). The shift from collective to more individual notions of responsibility and social status was beginning to emerge here, and the reconfiguring of social relationships based upon these ideas was starting to have an impact upon Arabian society outside of the harām of Mecca. Lapidus attempts to encapsulate this society as one that “set individuals free from the traditions of their clans and allowed for the flourishing of self-conscious, critical spirits who might conceive of a universal God and universal ethics.” (1988:20) The strongly conflictual tendencies present in Meccan society at this time could have been unleashed and eventually eradicated this social grouping, but instead its coalescence around the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his revelation, and the relocation of the community of his followers to Yathrib (al-Madīna) offered the opportunity to establish this emerging religious and social group on a more substantial basis. The cohesion of this community was forged through common belief, the development of a social and ethical system, alienation from the surrounding social structures and the evolution of a language of prophecy as the foundation for the expression of this revelation from God, vouchsafed to the Blessed Prophet. This discourse and the process of seeking to define it in order to successfully transplant the divine message beyond the boundaries of the initial collectivity, thence the ethnic group (Arabs) to achieve the universality made explicit in the message of Islam, is the foundation for the emergence of a koīné that underpins the varieties of Arabic that we know today.

One of the aspects of this “ferment” and one that is essential to these considerations, is the

discussion about the emergence of this koïné. Established scholarship identifies this with a particular form of common language, al-‘Arabiyya, used throughout Arabia by reciters of epic poems (djāhiliyya), or ruwāt [sing. rāwī] (much like the Dom in present day Egypt), that “marked the development of a collective identity transcending the individual clan”. (Lapidus, 1995: 18)

Hourani remarks that there was

a growing sense of cultural identity among the pastoral tribesmen, shown in the emergence of a common poetic language out of the dialects of Arabia. This was a formal language, with refinements of grammar and vocabulary, which evolved gradually, perhaps by the elaboration of one particular dialect, perhaps by a conflation of several... Their poetry may have developed out of the use of rhythmic, elevated and rhymed language for incantations or magical spells... (1991: 12)

The use of this koïné was, it is suggested by Hourani, common at tribal gatherings, in markets, towns and oases, and also at the courts of the Arab dynasties located on the peripheries of the great empires of Byzantium and Persia: the Lakhmids in Hira and the Ghassanids of Syria. It apparently crossed social and cultural boundaries to become eventually, the medium of classical Arabic literary expression, al-Mu‘allaqat, or ‘suspended poems’, from their supposed hanging, written in letters of gold, on the Ka’ba, generally numbered at seven. This etymology is more likely, in fact, to refer to the poems, the Shi’r or “Seven” as a “necklace” or hanging jewels (Lecomte, 2003, vii: 254a). The process of the development of this poetic lingua franca, evolved out of a much older tradition over time and was not recorded until later, as this was a form of expression that relied upon public recitation (and still does, in the case in the case of the Dom reciters of the epic poets; see Reynolds, 1995). A discussion of al-Mu‘allaqat also provides a context for examining the composition of the Qur’ān as a relatively uncomplicated process, by implicitly suggesting the means of expression already existed for the setting down of the revelations to the Blessed Prophet. The question about the differing interpretations and the redactions of the text remains beyond the bounds of this work, yet it must be noted that the process of setting down the actual text of the Qu’ran was one that remained problematic until the introduction of a fully vocalised and pointed text, in the ‘Abbāsīd period, popular tradition ascribing this to the governor of Iraq (‘Irāk), al-Hadjdjādī (74-95 AH/694-714 CE), resolving some of the previous confusion resulting from a proliferation of interpretations during the Umayyad Khalif’a (41-132 AH/661-750 CE; Paret, 2003, v: 408a). The implicit argument made by Lapidus, Hourani and others is that the process of linguistic development had been part and parcel of the emergence of the Muslim identity, a recognisable aspect of the evolution

of this group in Arabic society.

The form of Arabic that is identified by St. Jerome as *arabica lingua* in his *Praefatio in Daniele* and in Hebraic sources, is what may be reflected in the term *lisān al-‘arab*, the source of literary Arabic (Rabin, 2003, i:561b). The description *al-‘arabiyya al-fushā*, can be understood as something more closely related to the notion of an emerging *koïné* in the sense of “clear” or “universally intelligible”, though not a synonym for “pure Arabic”. The discussion of the development of Arabic as a script, linked as it is with the evolution of literary Arabic, is also of interest in some specifics, such as its invention by Christian missionaries at al-Hira (interestingly enough, an example of the earliest Arabic script being found at the church of Hind, or the Christian Indian church from c.560 CE), as a means of propagating the Bible amongst the Arab tribes (Abbott, 1939:5 plate 1). Muslim authorities suggest the passing on of written Arabic by two Christians from al-Hira, Zayd b. Hamād (c.500 CE) and his poet son, to the Arabs, in some form that was part way to the later classical language, as it was described as “not clear” (Rabin, 2003, i: 565a). The development of the form is one that seems to have been a process of evolution over some time, and it is recorded that the poet ‘Adī b. Zayd b. Hamād drew upon many different dialects in his, and his father’s work, suggesting a complex trajectory with associations to notions of the superiority of some of these dialects (that of the Quraysh, the Blessed Prophet Muhammad’s tribe, for example) and to the Bedu, especially of the Nadjd, who remained the locus of notions of “genuine” Arabic into the Islamic period (Hourani, 1991:13).

The Qur’ānic evidence would seem, at first glance, to support the notion of a poetic *koïné* at an early date, mutually comprehensible amongst the various dialects of the Arabian peninsula, as it is identified by early Muslim scholars as the “clear Arabic Book” (Khalafallah, 2003, i:565b-569a). This is evidenced by the connection between the *djāhiliyya* poetry (the *Mu’allaqat*), and the structures, syntax and grammar of the Holy Qur’ān. The process of assembling the authoritative version of the Glorious Qur’ān, apparently took place during the period of the third Khalif Uthmān (644-56 CE), although Muslim tradition ascribes the “collection” of the Holy Qur’ān to within a short period of the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), during the Khalif’a of Abū Bakr (632-4 CE), but this tradition is problematic (see the comprehensive discussion in Welch, 2003, v:400b-427a). The complex process whereby the final, consonantal and pointed version of the Qur’ān was produced is difficult to identify, and the question of variations in the original “readings” or ways of vocalising the texts, is one that relies upon the science of the hadiths or traditions regarding the sayings of the Blessed Prophet, as a means of corroborating understandings of complex and

potentially ambiguous material (the “Satanic verses”, for example; see Welch, 2003, v:404a; Ali, 2003:26-7). To this extent, it may not be possible to rely upon the Qur’ānic canon as evidence for the existence of an earlier, pre-Islamic koīné “clear” and “universally understood”, in this sense (Rabin, 2003, i:561a).

The theory that a pre-Islamic koīné was in existence then, relies to a large degree, upon the identification of diverse elements that make up the argument in toto, including the al-Mu‘allaqat, or collected pre-Islamic epics, and the Qur’ān as evidence of this. This identification is also problematic however, as the records of these epic poems are drawn from collections set down some centuries after the apparent emergence of such a poetic lingua franca. These are highly refined texts, that demonstrate a degree of perfection in their grammar, syntax and vocabulary, that experts suggest is almost unique, and certainly makes it highly unlikely that they will have stemmed from such a conflation of 7th century dialects. Lecomte suggests that the accepted position of recognising that there exists some older material in what is essentially fixed, almost “stereotypical” specimens of an older poetic tradition, incorporates the idea of apocryphal elements (Lecomte, 2003, vii: 254a) but this is not the position adopted by some, and the assertion is altogether too certain. The idea of the existence of an early poetic koīné is also challenged by the accounts of gatherings where oral epics were recited by differing tribal poets in a kind of competition. During these recitations, it was apparently common for disputes to arise from misunderstandings, or a lack of comprehension about style and language that strongly suggests no such common koīné existed at this time.

To summarise, the form of Arabic that one might describe in the terms Rabin suggests (2003, i:561a), and that Lapidus and Hourani assert was in existence certainly amongst professional reciters (rāwīs) of the pre-Islamic epic poetry (djāhiliyya), namely a poetic koīné, is problematic. It is difficult to use as a precedent for the development of other such amongst conquered peoples, as this is so specific a set of cultural conditions that it would seem unlikely to be able to apply it in other circumstances. To support the argument for considering Domarī as having evolved in conditions that would seem comprehensible to those around this phenomenon, the Muslim Arabs, I suggest a more common experience is necessary to identify (although this assumes that it is possible to perceive the mentalité of peoples within a vastly different cultural and socio-historical matrix from my own, a conception that must be at least regarded with caution). The reason for pursuing this consideration is that such an assertion by Islamic historians, or historians of early Muslim society and culture, regarding the existence of this ‘lingua poetica’, may apparently provide a better precedent than that which I shall proceed to suggest. Despite this difference, it is nevertheless

instructive to outline some context for my suggestion that the development of Gypsy languages and peoples, is intrinsically linked with the development of Muslim society itself and more particularly its military organisation, as an alternative to the view of Islam as alien to them, as frequently alluded to in some Romanī Studies scholarship.

3.2 “He created Man, taught him the mode of expression...” (55: 3-4) Arabic as a military koïné

THE EXPANSION AND RAPID CONQUEST by the Muslims into the regions around the Arabian peninsula, was achieved by groups of differing tribes-people, refashioned by faith and messianic zeal that led them to dominate parts of the imperial lands of Byzantium (Egypt and Syria) and all of Persia. This irruption must be seen as one of the most dramatic periods in human history, with extraordinarily far-reaching effects stretching from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. It began, as I suggested above with a profound readjustment of elements of Arabic society and culture in the context of “ferment” and rapid social and economic change; in a sense it was a profoundly secular and political readjustment as much as the outcome of revelation (see the works of Patricia Crone, Michael Cook and John Wansborough). Its locus was the urban society of Mecca in the Hidjāz, and the expansion of trade in the southern Arabian region that connected it to the Yemen in the south, Syria and Iraq (Irāk) in the north, and westwards to the Abyssinian lands, via the Red Sea. The expansion of trade and communications, shifts in control of resources and in particular authority, within the tribal groupings of the Arabs, especially the Quraysh, are the some of motors of change in the complex web of factors involved. The other must be the person of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his visionary search for a secular and religious understanding of the world and the altering that world in the light of revelation and what was a process of ‘nation-building’.

The evolution of the Hagarenes, the early adherents of the prophetic vision granted to Muhammad (as they are described by Crone and Cook, 1977:8-9), into Muslims was one that saw a reconstruction of elements of Arabic society, or more particularly a certain section of Meccan society in the period of the Blessed Prophet, the early 6th century CE. The ferment that Lapidus characterises at the core of Arabic society is the basis from which the immediate group around Muhammad developed (the community of believers or umma, a word whose complexity developed along with the phenomenon it described; see Lewis, 1996:53). The revelations that the Blessed Prophet brought to the pagan, clan-based matrilineal system of the Arabs challenged the existing institutions and notions of society, kinship and authority. Social structures, mores, religious beliefs and economic organisation formed a whole, inextricably bound together (Lapidus, 1995:25). As the teachings of the Blessed Prophet developed, his oppositional position to the dominant norms and values of the surrounding community became more acute and this is the impetus behind the exclusionary treatment by the Makkan elites towards Muhammad and his followers (Hourani, 1991: 17) though the first eight years of the Muslim era show a pragmatic co-existence with pre-Islamic elements, such as the alliance with tribes that maintained adherences to Manat, al-Lat and al-Uzza,

the supposed three daughters of Allah (Ali, 2003:25-6). The removal of the fledgling community of believers to the oasis of Yathrīb or Yasrib, as it is recorded in the Qur'ān (33:13), some 200 miles north of Makka, is the event that underpins the rise of Islam, the Hijra of 622 CE/1 AH (Lewis, 1996:52). The development of this community of saḥāba, or Companions of the Blessed Prophet (see Muranyi, 1994, viii:827b), is a complex one that Crone suggests has been fundamentally misunderstood as a result of the recasting of early Islamic history in the century following the death of the Blessed Prophet (1997:7-15). This community was however, moulded by his vision and the experience of his leadership in al-Madina, where he had been offered the opportunity to take up the role of arbiter in what appears to have been a deeply divided urban society, subject to factions and almost constant feuding, probably as a result of economic competition (Lapidus, 1988:25). A move towards monotheism may be indicated by the use of the word Allah in some Madinan poetry, as a designation for a supreme God (Watt, 2003, v:995a), prior to Muhammad's arrival in the oasis. With the compacts between certain of the tribes-people and the Blessed Prophet, the move by the Hagarenes began in 622 CE/1 AH, with some seventy-three men and women from Makka preceding the relocation of Muhammad and Abū Bakr, in September of that year. The organisation of the defence of this new community against the attacks upon it in the following years can be discerned from the "Constitution [Compact] of Medina" that it describes the inhabitants of the oasis as a single umma (Watt, 1956:225-6). This text would appear to be a composite one with many repetitions and accretions, yet it is interesting in many ways here as it details the membership and rights of the community, including the Jews of Medina and those who were not converts to the religious message brought by the Blessed Prophet (Watt, 2003, v:996b; Barakat, 1979). The process of social organisation is one that underlies the text and it is in this process of reconfiguration that I suggest we can identify the approach of the Muslims to the societal organisation, to the incorporation of conquered peoples (Crone and Cook, 1977: 83-106).

The linguistic reconfiguration that occurred in the conquered territories, particularly in the cities and established military centres resulted in the evolution of a series of urban dialects that produced innovations and differentiations not only between groups of differing confessional orientation (Christians, Jews and Muslims), but also between classes and gender, often in the same urban context (Gibb, 1986:574). The primary mechanism for this change was the blending of the older dialects of Arabic into a "...sort of koine, rather military in character, which constituted the language of the conquered or newly-founded towns" (Gibb, 1986:574). It was this koine, with its innovative differentiation between groups, that provided the impetus for the development of Domari

and the evolution of the Dom identity and a 'model', or perhaps 'accepted' process for the evolution of the Ghaznāvid koine that, I suggest, underlies modern Romanës.

3.3 *al-Sind, al-Hind* and *Rādjputana* in eighth century; the problem of the origins of the Dom

THE LINGUISTIC EVIDENCE DRAWN FROM DOMARĪ clearly suggests an earlier departure date from India for this group or groups (Hancock, 2005:5-7), than the ancestors of Romanī speakers, a proposition that has been argued since at least the early 20th century (see Macalister, 1914; Fraser, 1992:34-40). Potts' 1846 treatise may be the first scholarly consideration of the subject, although it was based upon observations by an American missionary, rather than Potts' own research in the field (Rev. Eli C. Smith, in parts of Syria). Matras' consideration of the contemporary picture in one particular case, the Dom of Jerusalem, gives a linguistic model for the arguments of difference and similarity between Domarī and Romanī, and the separate developmental path of the former (1999:1-58). The current series of practical and accessible Domarī web-lessons by Donald Kenrick (2000-), based largely upon Macalister's work, includes a piece entitled "What is Domarī?", where he states "[it]... preserves the neuter gender for nouns whereas Romanī has only feminine and masculine" (2001). This last is the crucial juncture that is, in some aspects contested by some scholarship (Matras, 1999:7) and it is important to briefly examine this notion as it underpins the entire debate and can be summarised as a question of linguistic origins and their relationship with the historical group (this is, in a sense shared by the whole corpus of Romanī Studies historiography).

The argument for considering the language spoken by those Gypsies in the Arab lands as an earlier emigré from the sub-continent revolves around the transition between what linguists describe as Middle Indo-Aryan and New Indo-Aryan, a process that Fraser suggests took place in the Indic languages "during the centuries leading up to AD 1000" (1995:18). That this shift in forms was not complete, or that dialects maintained older forms for some time is agreed by most commentators (Matras, 2002a:30-34); what is sometimes at issue is the argument about the speed of such a transformation (at a recent conference organised by the Roma Education Fund in October 2007, Dieter Halwachs argued that the transformation is still going on). That Domarī retains a form that reflects the older construction of nouns, as Kenrick suggests (Kenrick, 2001), is again something shared by many scholars although the current status of this form is not clear until further research is published and existing research confirmed (see John & Hancock, 2008; Hancock, 2000:1-13). The arguments may be summarised as linguistic analysis having demonstrated that the dialects that came to make up Domarī must have departed the environment of Middle Indo-Aryan during the shift in forms and the loss and reassignment of nouns in the neuter gender that took place c.1000 CE (Hancock, 2006: 77-78). This may be the same as suggesting that the ancestors of those groups that have spoken and continue in some communities to speak Domarī, left the orbit of the Indian lands

earlier than this point, though the link between languages and those speaking them may not always be so clearly defined. The case of a number of languages of trade and exchange are a case in point of fact; not all those who spoke Aramaic along the silk routes in the 3rd century BCE were of Semitic origins, nor living in the Syrian and Mesopotamian lands. Arabic is another example, and perhaps even clearer, as the language of religion, scholarship and trade that spread from Trans-Oxiana to the Iberian Peninsula in the 9th century (Fück, 1986:569-71) and similarly Latin could be described as such. The predominance of Latin in those areas of the Roman Empire where other languages were the “mother tongue” ensured its continuing use as a lingua franca in the post-imperial period. Most especially (in the context of this discussion), the essential place of Latin as the language of the Roman military-administrative system, made certain that mercenary and auxiliary troops of non-Roman origins learnt and used a form of the language (especially amongst the officers of these units), as this would facilitate promotion, in addition to efficient communication (see Wells, c.1999). Koinés had of course been part of the development of other identities and to this extent, the connection between groups of Indians in the heartland of the Khalif’ā and the later Dom is not necessarily a unique one, but it is significant in that this took place with a social reconfiguration that again had an earlier precedent in Islam.

The case for accepting the proposition that the two are indeed coterminous here must rest upon the notion that Domarī is a pariah tongue, without the kudos of carrying a new revelation, or being the mechanism for literary exchange, or government as in the cases above. As the speech of a marginalised and socially excluded and discriminated group, it is hard to see why the transmission of it would have been anything other than through the group that used it and indeed, it is likely that as a boundary marker of group identity (Barth, 1969), it would have remained deliberately limited in its use. The important question of at what point the speakers of what came to be Domarī left the Indian lands must be considered as part of the question of how the language came into being. The suggestions that speakers of the various dialects that formed the basis for Domarī can be identified categorically in one historical setting or another, is at the heart of the debate and part of the problem, as the movements of Indian peoples has been a constant factor over millennia. From Indian troops at Thermopylae (Kartlunen, 1989:13), to the presence of Hindū doctors in the time of the Blessed Prophet, the incidence of Indian populations in the Persian lands, Byzantium, Arabia and elsewhere in the region is attested. If we are to determine the origins of the Dom, it is necessary to identify the most likely of circumstances in which they emerged.

A convenient starting point is to consider the suggestion of Hancock (2000:9-11), regarding the

emergence of Domarī as a koīné outside of India, in similar circumstances to those pertaining to the emergence of Romanī in the 11th century CE. Hancock begins by stressing the discrete and distinct histories of Romanī and Domarī, “separated by over five hundred years” (2000:9). Other authors also have argued for the separate origins of the two (Matras, 1995: 29-59) and Turner’s description of what he defined as European, Armenian and Asiatic Romanī first challenged the Sampson theory of a single origin that then divided in the wake of a sojourn in Persia (see Fraser, 1992:28-39, for discussions about the doubts of identifying Romanī and Domarī as having common origins). Hancock goes on to briefly outline the elements of shared lexical content between the two and demonstrates that there is a very low incidence of Persian borrowings. “It [Domarī]... is clearly of an old-Indic type, and differs significantly from Romanī in its phonology, grammar and lexicon.” (2000:9) This argument is further developed in Hancock’s recent article (Marsh and Strand, 2006:77-78) where a comprehensive list of words further supports his evidence. Having established the underlying position of a separate historical trajectory for the two languages he goes on to examine their different origins by starting from the account in Firdawsī, of the Indian musicians arriving in 5th century CE Sassānid Persia. As I have argued elsewhere in this book, the historical “fact” behind this legend is extremely unlikely though Hancock’s linguistic analysis confusingly concludes that the episode is “quite likely” to have taken place, but that “it does not hold up linguistically” (2000:9). This position is altered by Hancock’s later emphatic assertion that despite this argument being repeated frequently in recent scholarship “it is wrong” (2002:5), as the relationship between Romanī and Domarī is clearly different due to the evidence of a third gender in Domarī (2002:7). Domarī has its origins in a series of dialects that lexically are more similar to others in the central regions of the Indian sub-continent, rather than the north western region where the legend suggests these musicians would have hailed from. The origins of Dom populations, Hancock goes on to suggest may be found in the groups of troops from a variety of backgrounds, that left India to deal with the military threat of the Hephthalite Huns who invaded north-western and northern Indian lands and eastern Persia, during the late 5th and 6th centuries CE (2000: 10). Citing a variety of historians (Thapar, 1966; Wolpert, 1977; Wright, 1969 and Watson, 1988) regarding the “White” Huns, or “Ephthalites” (2000: 11), a link is suggested between the Gupta Kings’ defence of their territory against these and the origins of the Dom in a composite military force that attempted to repel them. A further series of connections is posited between the early mediaeval Hindū state of Kabul or Kapisha and groups of Dom in Persia in the mid-19th century (Hancock, 2000: 11), although again as he suggests, it is not clear what this relationship is. It is possible to see a direct relationship between Hancock’s argument that the linguistic evidence for

dismissing the Firdawsī legend as pertaining to the origins of the Romanī peoples is the likelihood is that these musicians would have been speakers of north-western Prakritic, whereas Domarī shows lexical similarities with central region Prakrit dialects (Hancock, 2000:9). Thus, the characters in the Firdawsī legend are likely to have been from Sind and not Hind, a suggestion that would support the possibility raised earlier of Sindhi troops as allies of the Sassanids in their defence against the Hephthalite Huns.

There are a number of issues with this series of suggestions that require some deeper investigation before I go on to suggest an alternative narrative. The linguistic arguments regarding the similarities with central Indian dialects and Domarī are in the context of this overall book, beyond my own competences and my argument refers frequently to the work of Hancock and other linguists to support the historical picture presented throughout (whilst acknowledging that these themselves are part of a developing narrative). Nevertheless, the relationship is not clear it seems to me, in Hancock's own depiction of the origins of the Dom, as it relies heavily upon Thapar's suggestion of the development of linguistic evolution during the Hunnic invasions. He cites her as remarking that the shift from Prakrit (literally "natural" or "unrefined") to Apabhramshá ("falling down"; see Fraser, 1992: 16-20 for a discussion of the shifts from Old Indo Aryan or Sanskritic, through Middle Indo-Aryan or Prakritic to this most advanced form, before a final shift to New Indo-Aryan around 1000 CE), was partly the result of the influx of refugees and migrants from north-western territories, fleeing into central and western India in the wake of the Hephthalite assaults (Thapar, 1966:257, cited in Hancock 2000:10). Initially, this would appear to draw an inference between the dialect groups of north-western, central, southern and other Prakrits and a clear geographical location that is coterminous with these (Thapar, 1966:257, cited in Hancock, 2005:10). This is of course not the case and the notion of a clearly definable territorial boundary between one group of dialects and others is altogether too neat. In this case, it is not clear if we are being told that the north-western dialect groups (Sindhi, Landha/Western Punjabi; see Fraser, 1992: 18), impacted upon the central and western Prakritic dialects (Panjabi, Rajasthani, Gujarati, West Hindi), or that dialects spoken by people from the north-western parts of India influenced those spoken by inhabitants of central and western India, which would of course mean the dialects spoken by the inhabitants of north-western Hind impacting upon central and western Hind and not the speakers of dialects in Sind (north-western Prakritic). What this does suggest is the problems that arise from linguistic's use of historical data and their assumptions about it.

In this case, it might appear that the displacement of peoples influencing dialects one upon another

would confuse the assertion that Domarī can be traced sufficiently, in its origins to one group of dialects to the exclusion of others, unless it is possible to relate the origins of Domarī especially to a particular linguistic context. If Domarī is similar to Romanī in its historical development in the circumstances in which it arose, then the situation that pertains to the latter, namely

... that not enough is yet known of the emergence of the modern Indian vernaculars to take the quest beyond rather general comparisons of shared evolutionary features which do not permit [us]... to identify a particular language with certainty as Romanī's closest relation...
(Fraser, 1992: 20)

would surely suggest a similar problem with Domarī. The main point of distinction as Fraser suggests, is the presence in Domarī of a third neuter gender, traceable to the shift from Middle Indo-Aryan to New Indo-Aryan, c.1000 CE and an origin during the 5th century CE, but most discussions suggest that Domarī is more closely related to central Prakritic, than north-western, suggesting that it is locatable to a particular context. These shifts are cumulative, and give an imprecise measure of linguistic change, as mapping the linguistic development of any dialects relies upon being able to corroborate, through textual analysis, the proposed path of development (I am indebted to Professor Matras for what much of what follows, arising from a conversation 26th June 2005; any inaccuracies remain due to my imperfect understanding of his points). The most ancient of developments provide the baseline from which others follow, as a point in real time, and the divergence of common vocabulary at a relatively constant rate allows for the “dating” of these shifts, to a greater or lesser degree, by cross-referencing with examples found in contemporary texts (see also Fraser, 29-32). Clearly, the relationship between the written and spoken word can be profoundly different, and the status of recorded language as representative of elite discourse must be taken into account. The essentially conservative nature of written texts, and examples of deliberately archaic forms remaining in use in literature well after their disappearance in the spoken idiom, must ameliorate any claims to pinpoint accuracy in terms of “dating”, and a wide margin of error has to be allowed. Similarly, the regional specificity of dialects is also elastic, and the notion of a continuum, rather than hard and fast geographical boundaries between differing dialects, is far more useful here. There are, however, “frontiers” where differences can be ascertained, and in this way it is possible to see the origins of Romanī and Domarī as pertaining to the central region of Prakritic dialects (Panjabi, Rajasthani, Gujurati, Western Hindi), and their genesis in the period c. 9th centuries CE. Whilst a dynamic picture must be borne in mind when considering these points, however, it is may not possible to locate the notion of a group of “composite military troops moving

westwards out of India” to confront “an invasion of India in this area at this time” with the ancestors of the Dom, nor to suggest that they may be related to “Indian troops [that]... left India to engage them [the Huns].” (Hancock, 2000: 9-10) The support for such a critique of this position must be considered in the context of the broader historical picture, and it is to this that I now turn, with an alternative hypothesis.

The original migrations that led to the emergence of people we now call Dom were, I would suggest forced and not voluntary, and took place as a result of the Arab invasions of Sindh in the early 8th century CE and not during the earlier Hephthalite invasions. The notion that Hindūs left India to confront the Hephthalite may appear to find some confirmation in the texts of Firdawsī and al-Hamza Isfāhānī, in their locating an origin of the people they knew as Lūrī in these earlier events (see below), but I would argue that the necessary conditions for the fundamental reconfiguring of Hindū groups are not to be found in 5th century Sassanid Persia, but in the complex and turbulent Muslim societies of the 8th and 9th century Khalif’ā. In order to develop this argument, it will be necessary to briefly outline the course of Muslim history in these centuries.

3.4 The Umayyad and ‘Abbāsīd Caliphates: The Hindūs into Dom

THE CAMPAIGNS OF MUHAMMAD B. AL-KĀSIM AL-THAKAFĪ in 711 CE/93 AH to conquer Sind, took place under the patent of the Irāki governor, al-Hadjdjādj, during the Khalif’a of al-Walīd I b. ‘Abd al-Malik. The assault of the Arab forces upon the region saw the Indus valley up to Multān, conquered in fierce and bloody warfare over the three years of al-Thakafī’s generalship. Enormous numbers of Hindūs were purportedly killed and captured (including 6,000 kafīr prisoners at Rāwar and at Multān), but the key to understanding the subsequent evolution of the Dom identity, is the incorporation of mawālī or client soldiers, into the Muslim Umayyad armies, as qīqīniyya or اططان يقي units (see Crone, 2003: 284-300; 1991: 874-882). These client troops remained Hindū and brought auxiliaries (cooks, fletchers, tent-makers, sword-bearers, grooms and their own attendants) and wives and offspring, captured at the battlefield in the attendant camps that made up the majority of any mediaeval army. All armies at this time and well into the early modern period were effectively societies on the move, as Hale has remarked (1989: 62-3), including merchants, traders, scribes, bureaucrats, moneylenders, provisioners and others. Approximately two-thirds of any army was made up of non-combatants, and most soldiers took wives and children with them on campaign. Defeat then would mean the transfer of surviving troops, and their families to the victor’s side. The probable picture of the development of the Dom would seem to indicate that this military group were decimated at points over a period of time, leaving groups of Indian descent without a military function in Islamic societies, but maintaining the artisan skills associated with the auxiliary and attendant personnel, especially following the ‘Abbāsīd Revolution that ultimately deposed the Umayyads in 750 CE. In the context of Muslim history, rebellions against the Umayyads have been related to the discussion of Romanī origins by Donald Kenrick (2004:24-5). Kenrick argues that the Arabic sources mention the Zott/Zutt an Arabic version of Jhāt, as part of an earlier rebellion in alliance with Sayābiyya (Sumatrans), and suggests that these Zott were the progenitors of the Rom (following de Goeje, 1903), after their defeat and capture by the Byzantines in their conquest of ‘Ayn Zarba, on the Syrian borderlands in 855 CE. White refers to the Zutt being removed to the region of Antioch (Antakya in modern Turkey), under the Umayyad Khalif Mu’āiyya ibn Abi Sufyan (661-680), to colonise the area of Suwaidiyyah (modern Samandağ) in the Orontes delta (White Jr. 1974:201 - 221). These Zutt and their Sayābiyya allies had joined the ‘Alīds (followers of Ali ibn Abi Talib during the First Fitna, or ‘time of trials’) in the early civil wars of the late seventh century (656 – 709 CE), and were therefore suspect in their allegiances to the Umayyad Khalif’a as Shi’ia Muslims. The continuing disturbances involving the Zutt in 710 CE would indicate that their

presence and adherence to the party of Ali remained at other locations, such as Mamistra (modern Yakıpınar, near Adana), another city retaken by the Byzantines in 964 CE and ultimately lost after many changes in occupation, to the Ottomans in the 14th century (it remains a Roman Catholic titular see: Vaihlé, 1913). The attempted re-Christianisation by the Emperor Nikephoros Phocas in the years following 964 CE are likely to have eradicated or removed any vestiges of the Zutt population exiled there in the 8th century. These rebellious Zutt were also present during a much larger revolt that threatened to topple the ‘Abbāsids in the later 9th century, led by one Ali Muhammad (see below). Kenrick’s suggestion that these groups transported onto Byzantium (at least as regards the ‘Ayn Zarba Zutt) form the basis for the Romanī in Europe is problematic, as the linguistic arguments outlined above would demonstrate that this is too early; it is possible that such a group may have contributed to the presence of proto-Dom communities in the Byzantine Empire, though this is speculative. It would not provide a possible suggestion as to the origins of the Dom peoples of the Arab lands however; for this I would suggest the later turmoil that erupted in the ‘Abbāsīd Khalif’a provides a better explanation. In order to present this hypobook, it is necessary to briefly examine the history of the ‘Abbāsīd period.

Though initially Shi’ia, the ‘Abbāsīd movement quickly shifted to a more orthodox Sunnism with the reign of the Khalif al-Mansur (754 – 775 CE) and the emphasis upon the dynasty’s relationship to the Blessed Prophet through his uncle Abbās. Al-Mansur’s son, al-Mahdi (775 – 785 CE) introduced much of the Persianised bureaucratic practice built upon Sassanid models that became a hallmark of the later Khalif’a, as well as extending the use of client soldiers and recruiting large numbers of Turkish slaves or mamlūks to the Muslim armies from the 830’s under al-Mūtasim (833 – 842 CE). This in itself was to prove the undermining of ‘Abbāsīd rule, as these mamlūks eventually grew powerful enough to create their own power-bases and render the Khalif’a impotent. By the close of the reign of Harūn al-Raschīd (786 – 809 CE) the seeds of conflict were in evidence in the ‘Abbāsīd polity and civil war erupted upon Harūn’s death between his two sons, al-Amīn and al-Maīmun, dividing the state between Iraq and Persia, but the ‘Abbāsīds had already faced severe revolts in Persia and had all but lost control of the Maghreb during the reign of Harūn. With a renascent Byzantium on the offensive under the Emperors Nikephorus (802 – 811 CE) and Theophilos (829 – 842 CE) in Syria and Asia Minor, and the challenge of the Khazars from the Black Sea steppe in the Armenian lands, the ‘Abbāsīds also faced the break-away of their Persian military commanders such as the Thurids in Khorasan (820 CE), to be swiftly followed by others. The use of the Turkish mamlūks did little to resolve the problem of diminishing ‘Abbāsīd authority,

as these too followed suit and established nominally loyal principalities including the Ghaznāvids in the 970's. The seat of the Khalif'a became insecure and al-Mūtasim transferred this to Samarra in 836 CE, further alienating and weakening 'Abbāsīd control, and did not return to Baghdad until 892 CE (Hourani, 1993:22-43).

Religious conflict also played a significant part in the demise of 'Abbāsīd power, as the Khalif al-Maīmun attempted to enforce the adherence to the Mūtazilite school upon the religious establishment, something of a return to the original Shi'ism of the dynasty, after 813 CE and until the accession of al-Muta'aqil in 847 CE. This policy was extremely unpopular and many of the rebellions faced by al-Maīmun and his successor al-Mūtasim were a response to this. The reassertion of 'Abbāsīd control that marked the reign of the Khalif al-Muta'aqil attempted to curb the power of the break-away Persian and Turkish military commanders, but his murder in 862 CE effectively forestalled any success in the long-term and eight years of anarchy followed until al-Muā'faq became the effective power in the Khalif'a, while his brother al-Mūtamīd held the Khalif'a (Lapidus, 2002:56-66). However, even during this period of attempted imposition of central authority, the fourteen-year rebellion of the Zanj or Zang severely challenged the hegemony of the 'Abbāsīds, and brought it close to collapse.

The Zanj rebellion (869 – 883 CE/255 - 265 AH) broke out amongst the East African slaves of Somalian, Eritrean and Ethiopian origins who worked building the vast irrigation projects that the 'Abbāsīds engaged in at this time, in the marshlands of the Basra region as related by the historian Muhammad ibn Jarir ibn Yazid ibn Kathir, Abu Ja'far al-Tabari (d. 923 CE) (al-Tabari, 1988-2007). The rebels were reportedly led by a descendant of the fourth Khalif Ali ibn Abi Talib (son-in-law of the Blessed Prophet), and therefore claimed to be fighting for the re-establishment of Shi'i hegemony in the 'Abbāsīd Khalif'a, as they asserted that the later Caliphs had departed from the path of Ali and the first 'rightly guided' imams of the past (see Popović, 1999:chap. 2, who disagrees with the notion that Ali ibn Muhammad was a descendant; the translation of the 1976 French monograph is problematic; see Morony's review article 2000:1842). Ali as leader of the revolt, brought together a formidable force that also included renegade mawlā (client soldiers), Bedouin, Zutt, Suwaidiyyah and mercenaries from the 'Abbāsīd armies, creating an effective state that reportedly had six or seven fortified cities that al-Tabari describes as impregnable and established a capital in the Shat al-Arab region (Mesopotamia) called al-Mukhtara. The state was a military one and the cities were organised around the production of weapons and warships, for use upon the Tigris and Euphrates. During the height of the rebellion, the armies from al-Mukhtara

reached to within seventy miles of Baghdad, still the major city in the 'Abbāsīd Empire despite the seat of the caliphs being at Samarra at this time. The disaffection of the population from the 'Abbāsīds was apparent in that there were fears that Baghdad would open its gates to the rebels and join with them, and only rapid action by a swift-moving 'Abbāsīd force to bolster the defences quelled this in 877 CE. On a number of occasions the rebels defeated the 'Abbāsīd armies sent against them, and reportedly large numbers of the troops changed sides as a result after the battles. The eventual defeat of Ali ibn Muhammad seems to have been as a result of betrayal and capture through the incitement of al-Muā'faq who orchestrated a wholesale policy of amnesty and bribes to various sections of the rebel forces in the later years of the revolt, and with Ali's execution or death in the siege of al-Mukhtara (the sources are confused in their accounts; see Popović, 1999:Appendix III), the leadership of the rebellion collapsed and al-Mukhtara was taken and sacked in 883 CE by al-Muā'faq, a date slightly later than al-Tabari gives as the conclusion of the rebellion, though insurgence linked to the Zanj would seem to have continued and the 'Abbāsīds only reasserted widespread control with their return to Baghdad as the heart of the Khalif'a in 892 CE and the re-organisation of the state (Popović, 1999:chap. 5). The destruction and dispersal of the Zanj saw large numbers of former rebels reduced to slavery, and pariah status in the 'Abbāsīd lands, or fleeing to the regions beyond their immediate control in the Maghreb and northern Africa. It is in these groups that I suggest we find the ancestors of the Dom.

4.1 Koīnés and cavalry charges: the Kshatriya theory and the problem of Rajpūts and Jhāts in Romanī Studies

The argument that the ancestors of the Romanī people, are the descendants of the Indian Kshatriya warrior caste from the late 10th and 11th centuries has been posited for some time. In defining the origins of the Gypsies, reference to Jhāts as the original “tribe” from which Romanī peoples are descended began as early as 1849, when Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821-1890, himself of probable Romanī origins; see Lovell, 1998:27) suggested the connection in his essay about the Jataki-Belockhi dialect (1849:81-125), and went on to note the role of Abu l’Kasim Mahmūd b. Sebūktigin of Ghaznā (969-1030 CE, Haig, 1993:133; or 971 CE/361 AH-1030 CE/421 AH, Bosworth, 1991:65), in the fragmentation of the Jhāts and other tribes of northern India. Burton dated this dispersal in the 11th century CE, in the context of his short reference to Mahmūd (Burton, 1849:83). An earlier date for the dispersal of the Jhāts was suggested by de Goeje (1903: 20-33), in relation to the expansion into Sind (al-Sindh), the region around the lower course of the Indus river, by the “Omayad” (Umayyad) caliphs in the period 93 AH/711 CE, up to the Ghaznāvid incursions of Amir Sebūktigin (c.365 AH/975 CE). The question of the Jhāts was also tackled in the monumental work of Sir Henry Meirs Elliott, (1867-77). In an ethnological note to the first volume (1867-77a: C, 507-508), Elliott quotes General Cunningham’s Archaeological Report for 1863-64, equating “... the Jāts [sic] with the Xanthii of Strabo, and the Iatii of Pliny and Ptolemy...” and suggests their origins are in the region of the Oxus river, amongst the Abars (Elliott, 1867-77a: C, 507). The designation of this generic term by him suggests a connection with the Avars or Juan-juan, as Chinese sources record them (Sinor, 1990:293). The role of the Avars in Turkish and Byzantine history has been discussed previously in this book, here the possibility of their connection with Romanī history is also raised. This southern Indo-Scythian tribal confederation became known as the Jhāts, in contradistinction to their northern relatives, the Meds (Elliott, 1867-77a: C, 507). De Goeje (1903: 20-33), and most recently, Kenrick (2004: chap.2), have attempted to link the Jhāts, or al-Zutt as they are recorded in the early Arabic sources (see Bosworth, 2002: 574), to the Gypsies from their transportation from Sind by the Sāsānid emperor Bahrām Gūr V (r. 420-438) to their settlement by Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (614 CE-42 AH/662 CE), companion of the Blessed Prophet and governor of Basra, and eventual Byzantine dispersal from ‘Ayn Zarba after 220 AH/835 CE (Bosworth, 2002: 574). The Jhāts latterly appear in the annals of the Ghaznāvid assaults upon the region of Multān in 418 AH/1027 CE (Briggs, 1829: 47-48), when Mahmūd’s seventeenth expedition took place. He defeated a force of Jhāts who had taken to the waters of the

Indus, by constructing a substantial flotilla (reportedly fourteen hundred boats, although Elphinstone and Elliott both express doubts about the figure or circumstances of this particular action; see Elliott, 1867-77b: D, 465), armed with iron rams (Briggs, 1829: 47). The defeat of the Jhāts resulted in most drowning, whilst their families, having taken refuge on some islands "...fell into the hands of Mahmood [sic]" (Briggs, 1829: 47). The Jhāts also appear in the *Tārīkh-u-Subuktigīn* of Abū-l Fazl al-Baihakī, c.451 AH/1077 CE, when he relates the story of Tilak the Hindū's defeat of the rebellious Governor of Hind, Ahmad Nāltigīn in 426 AH/1035 CE Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 109-112). This episode illustrates that they were part of the auxiliary forces that the Ghaznāvid commanders could mobilise, despite the conflicts between the Jhāts of Jūd, and Sultān Mahmūd in 417 AH, recorded by Nizāmī-d dīn Ahmad's *Tabakāt-i Akbarī* (Elliott, 1867-77b: D, 466). Elliott also suggests elsewhere that the Jhāts are the descendants of the Yueh-Chi via the Kators (1867-77b: A, 403-4) in a complex genealogy that takes us back to the central Asian Avars and Hephthalites. The presence of these particular Indians amongst the larger Hindū community at Ghaznā is likely from this point in time, but the genetic core of Romanī ancestry is unlikely to be exclusively, or even predominantly from this single group.

As I have argued previously, the Arab assaults on Sind are at the root of the question concerning the origins of the Dom, and de Goeje's work (1903) may provide some explanation in identifying the 8th century CE Muslim invasions as the catalyst in the process of Dom ethnogenesis. In the context of Gypsy history, the evidence that the Umayyad general Muhammad b. al-Kāsim al-Thakafī captured many thousands of Indian prisoners (both warriors and non-combatants; see Haig, 1997: 632; Fredunbeg, 1900: Section 8) may offer an explanation of the ancestry for the Domarī-speaking Gypsies, though again the need for the chroniclers to glorify the victories of the Muslims over the infidel Hindū should be borne in mind. The linguistic evidence would certainly not support such an early departure date for the ancestral Romanī population, as the evolution of Old Indo-Aryan, and the loss of the third neuter gender, did not take place until some three centuries later (Hancock, 2004: 8). The kshatriya theory has had supporters since these first suggestions (Leland, 1882; Kochanowski, 1968), most recently Hancock (2006; 2004; 1987), whose arguments combine both linguistic and historical analysis to advance the case. However, not all have been, or indeed are convinced and others continue to propound the notion that the origins of the Gypsies lies in related castes of itinerant traders, metalworkers, entertainers and snake-charmers associated with military expeditions or caravans (see Hübschmannová, 2004). Indeed, the scepticism of Fraser (1992: 45), when discussing the Kshatriya theory has been taken further by others, who deny any validity at all

to the notion:

“...in a number of recent publications, Hancock claims that Romanī was formed as a military koiné by a caste of warriors assembled to resist the Islamic invasions of India. In some circles, this view is gaining popularity as it pretends to revise what is referred to as potentially racist, or at least stereotypical images of the Rom. There is, however, neither linguistic nor historical evidence to support it.” (Matras, 2004: 301)

Matras has elsewhere argued in the past for a view similar to that of Hübschmannová, namely that Romanī is spoken by “descendants of itinerant castes of artisans and entertainers who are spread throughout Central Asia, the Near East and Europe.” (2002:1) The most recent text by a scholar of the “social constructionist” school also remains extremely sceptical about the idea of the Rajpūt origins, in the context of an overall criticism of an Indian ancestry, suggesting that any linguistic or historical “evidence” is at best imprecise and unclear (Mayall, 2004:223-224). As others from a similar theoretical perspective have suggested, the kshatriya or warrior caste theory of origins reflects something of a Romanī political aspiration (see Willems & Lucassen, 2000), that can be seen in contradistinction to the earlier Gypsy-ologist identification of origins amongst the lowest and most despised “pariah” groups in Indian societies of the past. It is in sharp contradistinction to this earlier view of origins, that some Romanī Studies scholars declare their agreement with Hancock’s perspective (Lee, 2004:pc; Marushiakova & Popov, 2001; Kenrick, 2004).

The arguments surrounding Romanī origins are, as suggested earlier, always a complex mixture of scholarly debate, linguistic analysis and defence of particular positions that may reflect wider political and social agendas and this particular book is no exception. The question of why in this instance it has remained the subject of constant enquiry and sometimes heated debate is in itself, an aspect of “the problem of Gypsy identity” and proceeds from the “contextual, constructed and contested” nature of such (Strand & Marsh, 2006), as Mayall has so eloquently demonstrated (2004: 219-251). However, much of the establishment of contra positions to the kshatriya theory suggests that Hancock’s own argument lacks any earlier reference, that it is in fact *sui generis*. An examination of the development, or reiteration of this notion in his most recent text (2005), clearly demonstrates that it has preoccupied those concerned with the question of exactly which group of Indians Gypsies actually descend from (to somewhat oversimplify the proposition), for some one hundred and fifty years. Hancock’s arguments are clearly part of this historiography, which he explicitly details (Hancock, 2005: 3-6).

Persistent myths of origin are, of course, the staple of many ethnic identities, and indeed the basic building blocks of many national communities. In this sense, those attempting the construction of Romanī identity are following a well-worn path:

...if Elizabeth of England was the heiress of pre-Saxon Britons, if the Swedish kings were descendants of the Goths, the French kings sprung from Gaulish loins and the Muscovite tsars (through a particularly weird conceit) related through Rurik to the Emperor Augustus, then it was not too eccentric for the Polish commonwealth to boast of its origins in a race of Iranian 'barbarians' from the Black Sea. (Ascherson, 1996:231; for a discussion of Polish 'Sarmatism' and nations as 'forged' communities, see Ascherson, 1996:230-6)

One might add that it seems not too improbable that Gypsies might claim to originate from a 11th century warrior caste of disparate elements, frantically (and heroically perhaps), defending their towns and temples from the onslaught of an especially militant Islam. Yet of course, it is this very notion, that of the heroic defeat, the military catastrophe in the face of overwhelming odds, that has been addressed recently in a challenging proposition that these moments of "death and glory" are part and parcel of the development of many political and "ethnic" communities (Schivelbusch, 2004:25) and in particular the Hindutva historiography discussed earlier. In addition to providing the foundation for societal and moral recovery and being a major motivation for the propagation of myths of an inverted cultural superiority, the vanquished are forced to re-examine their identity, and to reconstruct their own history to explain the disaster that has befallen them (Schivelbusch, 2004: 35). In some of the examples above, the experience of defeat and conquest by a people deemed so utterly alien to those rendered 'subjects' by the conquerors, not only provided (and still continues to provide) an explanation for questions of 'backwardness' and under-development, it has also underpinned major social and political change in the societies that underwent this catastrophe. The rise of Muscovy, and the development of the Romanov imperium can be seen not merely in the terms framed by nationalist historians determined to prove any perceived inadequacies of their nation-state upon the ravages of the so-called "Mongol-yoke", but also in respect of the reconfiguration of Russian identity and society at crucial points (the reigns of Ivan Groznii and Peter the Great for example; Matushevski, 1984; Anisimov, 1993). The question might be that if it is not improbable that Gypsies could make such claims to a warrior inheritance, is there any support for this proposition? Could one examine the development of Romanī identity as outlined below, with the notion of their response to unremitting defeat and cultural destruction of large numbers of Indian people and their socio-cultural environment, in mind? If one can accept Schivelbusch's

argument that military disaster produces unprecedented psychological change in human societies, that shifts in identity follow such catastrophes (a suggestion that McCarthy has also posited in connection with the ethnic cleansing of Ottoman Muslims in the wake of Russian victory in 1878, that we shall return to in examining Balkan Gypsies in the 19th century; 1995: 227), the evolution of a distinct language and culture in the Ghaznāvid milieu that resulted in the eventual coalescence of Romanī ethnicity seems distinctly possible. Despite the certitude of Matras (2004:301), or the scepticism of Fraser and Mayall (1992:45; 2004:223-224), there are, I would suggest clear historical probabilities for such an assertion.

In considering such a question, it is essential that one assess, from a critical position vis-à-vis “history”, or “History”, any “evidence” and “facts”, before attempting to propose a plausible basis for this position. As a Romanī historian, it is my intention to outline in this section the historical material that I argue supports the contention that Gypsies can in part can be said to stem from ancestors who fought as warriors with differing military statuses, both in the armies of the Rajpūt princes who attempted to repulse the advance of Islam under Mahmūd b. Sebūktigin (387-421 AH/997-1030 CE), and his son, Mas’ud b. Mahmūd (421-431 AH/1030-1040 CE), and in the Ghaznāvid forces of the same period. I further argue that such elements that did not originate amongst the warrior caste, derived from the remaining auxiliary and associated groups that inevitably, and invariably accompanied mediaeval armies in this period and were likely to have been in the majority, given the impact of the subsequent defeat of the Ghaznāvid forces in 431 AH/1040 CE at Dandānqān. The havoc wreaked by the destruction of the elite warrior groups would have rendered their numbers much lower, weighting these in favour of those that were not directly involved in the three days of bloody struggle and the eventual calamity of defeat on the battelfield. This analysis, that problematises the overly polarised positions adopted by individual protagonists to date establishes the historian’s more common position with regard to all such questions, namely that the debate thus far fails to recognise the complexity of the factors involved. These have been hidden by the simple-minded dichotomous presentation of warriors or pariahs as the historical ‘parents’ of the Romanī peoples. I have attempted to present a more elaborate picture of Romanī origins in the difficult and sometimes contradictory interplay of 11th century northern and northwestern Indian Rajpūt principalities and the Ghaznāvid Empire that dominated what we would now describe as Afghanistan, Trans-Oxania and Khorasān. In short, it is in all these groupings that one must seek to find any kind of resolution to this discussion, not merely as a means of assembling some compromise that accommodates both positions to achieve some sort of

consensus, but precisely because of its historical plausibility. Patently, an explanation for the origins of Romanī identity and ethnicity that suggests a single factor, or military group as the primary genetic core (as it has been described that Hancock suggests, though this is not the case; see Matras, 2002:201; Hancock, 2006:84), cannot be considered tenable, any more than one that denies such a possibility as part of the picture overall. We must seek for a explanation of composite social and occupational origins (Hancock, 2006:70), in addition to the genetic variation identified by Kalaydjieva, Gresham and Calafell (2001).

4.2 Ghulāms, mawlā and ‘abīd; the enslavement of Hindūs in the Ghaznāvid state

WE KNOW THAT THE GHAZNĀVID SOVEREIGNS ORGANISED INDIANS among their troops, as we know from the *Tārīkh-i Yamīnī* that Mahmūd was in the practice of doing with all conquered “nations”, as exemplified in his treatment of the Khiljīs, Afghāns, and others (Elliott, 1867-77: II, 28-29). The ancestors of the Romanī peoples I suggest, were formed in the complex socio-psychological environment of being conquered Indian ‘abīd (slaves, singular ‘abd, albeit with a particular economic and military importance), under Ghaznāvid control and could only have come together as a result of external pressures that compelled otherwise distinct castes to respond to the unique situation they found themselves in. This was to identify the commonalities that separated them from the surrounding Muslim communities in the experience of slavery and servitude to the Ghaznāvid dynasty (in a similar way to the Turkish mamlūk soldiers of the ‘Abbāsīd Khalif’a), rather than maintain the internal divisions that marked them off from each other. This is not to suggest that such differences in status were rendered null and void. Clearly those Hindūs that were converted to Islam prior to their capture (and there must have been some from the Ismāīlī Sind principalities that were the target for Sebūktigin and Mahmūd’s initial raids in the early 400’s AH/1000’s CE), together with any that adopted the new faith as a consequence of their enslavement and the possibility for their manumission, must have been to some extent set apart from the majority of their compatriots, however suspiciously regarded or condescended to by their Sunni masters. The status that Ghaznāvid society, itself highly militarised, ascribed to the elite warrior group and the palace ghulāms, may also have had an impact upon this corps in their dealings with other Indians, elevating them above the common-or-garden infantry, men-at-arms and, almost certainly the auxiliary personnel that supported them (see the illustration below for a reconstruction of the image of Hindū ghulams).

The status of the troops that fought from elephants, one of the most prized elements of the Ghaznāvid army (they are consistently mentioned in the narrative sources amongst the booty, and on one occasion, awarded an honorific when at Kanauj an elephant belonging to the Rāja Chandar Rāī made its own way to Mahmūd's camp and was called Khudādād, “the gift of God”; Elliott, 1867-77b: 453), may well have had some impact upon the social standing of this group.

Entertainers, dancers and musicians probably did hold some social value for both their community and their rulers. It is recorded that these were present on the occasions when the Ghaznāvid sultāns and their immediate companions sought respite from the normal run of activities in drinking parties (*majālis-i nashāt u sharāb*), at which Turkish epic poems were recited, musicians, dancers and

clowns performed (Bosworth, 1963:138). Given our knowledge of the pattern of households in other Islamic polities (Hathaway, 1996), the likelihood that such entertainers were sought after by those emulating their leaders in the upper echelons of Ghaznāvid society is high. In some ways it may have been these individuals or groups of entertainers that found it most easy to cross the barriers of status, religion and ethnicity, catering as they probably did to both the Ghaznāvid elites and the lower classes, in the Persianised courts and the Hindū mahalles. Merchants and traders who are recorded as accompanying the Sultān Mas'ūd on his disastrous Dandānqān campaign in 1040 CE, must also have been present in the Hindū community in Ghaznā and on Mahmūd's earlier campaigns and razzias 997-1030 CE (Bosworth, 1973:139-40 for a descriptions of the Ghaznāvid bazaars). Their status was probably similar to that of other conquered mercantile populations; as 'abīd they may have been entrusted with a high degree of autonomy, frequently running their master's businesses and often having dependent clients or mawlā of their own (see Crone, 2003: 290). There were also the 'invited' sons and daughters of Hindū rulers who owed allegiance to the Ghaznāvids at the sultān's court; these occupied a privileged, though sometimes precarious position as part of the elite in Ghaznāvid society. Finally, it is unlikely that the common wives, children, camp followers and domestic slaves were regarded especially highly by the wider group, given the emphasis placed upon martial qualities and the degree of military organisation in the society at large and the importation of Persian-Arabic cultural norms as regards the seclusion of women (Bosworth, 1973:138). In this instance, the class distinctions that existed previously to the capture of large numbers of Hindūs and their relocation to the centre of the empire, were possibly further reinforced by the attitudes of their conquerors to this group, as defeated and non-military 'abīd. The position of the auxiliaries and military servitors was probably much higher; Mahmūd held his Hindū engineers in high regards as essential contingents in his campaigns, often relying upon them to reduce cities and opponents rather than resorting to a pitched battle (Bosworth, 1961:112). Skilled artisans, of whom there were literally thousands involved in the building of palaces and the "Bride of the Heaven" mosque in Ghaznā, may also have had a socially elevated position above the mass of domestic and military labour.

In order to provide the basis for a more informed, and ultimately more tenable 'narrative' outlining the particular context of the ancestry of Romanī people, in relation to both the notion of the kshatriya warrior caste and the more nuanced picture of a reconfigured, militarised society in 11th century Ghaznā, it is necessary to discuss the record that does exist for Hindū Indians in the empire, in some detail. The problems of examining the Ghaznāvid Empire revolve around the issue of

sources and accessibility. Those such as al-'Utbī's al-kitāb al-Yamīnī (Abū Nasr Muhammad b.' Abd al-Djabbār, d.427 AH/1036 CE or 431 AH/1040 CE; see Bosworth, 2000: 945; Elliott, 1867-77b: II), the Tārīkhu-s Subuktigin of Baihakī (Elliott, 1867-77: III), or the Tarikh-i Firišta (see Briggs, 1829; Dow, 1768-72), provide much narrative material (and this should not be underestimated as to its worth in modern historiography), but what else exists that might corroborate the suggestions outlined here offer far less detail than might sufficiently support these propositions, leaving what many could argue are the most unwarranted of speculations. It is in order to contextualise these that a comparative picture has to be drawn, one that allows a degree of 'reconstruction', or the suggestion of the most likely of outlines for the book that I have proposed here. The main engine of change in constitution of originally diverse Indian populations was the defeat and forced migration of differing groups of Hindū people to Ghaznā, where they were reconstituted as a new militarised, composite group and forced to develop both new linguistic and cultural formations in response to the enormous changes they faced. The imperial heritage for this group, as for so many others in the mediaeval period and since, provided the basis for the emergence of a new ethnicity in the 12th century, an identity that has remained with us to the present as the Rom.

The institution of slavery in all Islamic polities was, of course not completely without nuance in the relationship of master and slave (see Lewis, 1994: chap.1; Brunschvig, 1986: 24-40), but given the numbers of those enslaved and the decline in the price of individuals in this state during this period, it is hard to imagine that an especially beneficent attitude prevailed on the part of the conquerors, even when they were moved in individual cases to manumission upon conversion to Islam. In the context of those defeated by the Muslim forces, their status as captives and domestic or artisan slaves was altered by manumission to that of mawlā (freed men and retainers; see Crone, 1991:874-882). This process was a common feature from the Sufyānid Khalif'a onwards (660-683 CE; see Crone, 2003:287), originating in the tribal protection offered to ethnic and occupational "pariah" groups in pre-Islamic Arab society (Crone, 1991:874). Though most mawlā were converts, being non-Muslim was not necessarily an impediment to the validity of a mawlā relationship (Crone, 1991: 876), or to holding positions of responsibility (Brunschvig, 1986:31). Once a mawālī, [sing.] the opportunity arose for payment as military combatants (Crone, 2003:287), or to follow other occupations and trades. The appearance of regiments of these client soldiers in the Muslim armies was increasingly a feature of the post-conquest Islamic forces, especially after the 2nd Civil War that undermined the Arab monopoly of military power and authority (Crone, 1991:877). As discussed in the previous section, the Hindū Qiqāniyya regiments were conscripted as soldiers in their own right,

along with Berber Waddāhiyya and Iranian Bukhāriyya who provided special corps with particular skills (Crone, 2003: 287; 1991:878). Significantly, contingents were often led by mawālī who themselves claimed non-Arab and aristocratic origins (Crone, 1991:877). I would suggest that we can see this heritage lasting indirectly, also influenced by the impact of the sojourn in the Armenian lands with the arrival of groups of Gypsies in western Europe in the early 15th century, that clearly reflect this type of organisation (Fraser, 1992: 66).

In the context of the organisation of Muslim armies and in particular the forces of Ghaznā, their composition and structure retained this status of some Hindūs as mawlā regiments hierarchically structured, as distinct from those who maintained their ‘abd status. Whilst their status and pay was never equal to that of the muqātila or ‘regulars’, they were enrolled, together with their sons, slaves and clients of their own to carry forward ghazā or Holy War, sometimes with little choice in the matter (Crone, 2003: 287). The complex question of the movement of Hindū groups from north western and northern India into the region of Khorasān and Persia proper can be exemplified in this process; recruited as ‘native’ regiments of converts, or conscripted after capture, enslavement and manumission, their deployment was into the frontiers of the Muslim territories to carry forward the conquest of new territories for Islam, in those situations where the use of groups originating in these lands would be avoided because of local or tribal loyalties. The deployment of Indians in the western empire’s territories was a deliberate policy to ensure no local ties obstructed the will of the sultān (Bosworth, 1963:107) and that “the logic of the system seems to have been that people were recruited from those furthest removed from the establishment” (Lucassen & Zürcher, 1999:5). Thus, the consistent perception of Hindūs and Romanī people as resistant to the Muslims must be ameliorated by the evidence of their participation in the advance of Islam for some several hundred years, as soldiers and supporters of the faith in the Ghaznāvid and Ottoman states. I suggest that this perception has a great deal to do with the need for 20th century Hindū influenced, Roma nationalism to identify anti-Muslim groups who resisted and were dispossessed by the Islamic invasion and incursions (Thapar, 2000). The subsequent coterminous development of Romanī evangelism and political organisations, with the leaders of the former extending their influence and authority into the latter, identifies an ‘intrinsic’ Christian identity as part of a modern definition of Romanipé (the Romanī ‘way’) and seeks to perpetuate this notion, sometimes explicitly (Strand, 2001:47). The opposite notion, when presented to groups of modern Pentecostal Roma evokes a strong response (“I understand this, but I don't like it” as a Finnish Kalo once remarked to me).

Conceptually, the notion that one can define with certainty the absence of any historical “evidence”

for the proposition of a warrior caste origin for the Gypsies relies upon a number of positivist assumptions about the nature of such evidence, and then proceeds to argue from those assumptions as if they indeed represented the totality. It also ignores the possibility that groups in the Islamic world were both soldiers and servitors, even slaves. As I have outlined earlier, this wider epistemological position is one that has become not only untenable amongst historians in the past twenty or so years, it is inconsistent with the current discussions regarding history as an expression of collective identities, and suggests that a more “scientific” approach in fact exists (that which underpins linguistics, in this instance) and would clearly identify through the analysis of a particular lexicon, the difference between groups of people with differing statuses and functions in any past society, in an uncomplicated and accurate manner. Such an approach would it seems (to present one example), allow us to differentiate between the various “components” that make up the Mongol population of the present to determine those who descend from the warrior elites, those who stem from those groups that provided what might be termed “auxiliary services”, and those whose status clearly separated them out as slaves, concubines or camp followers.

The comparison is not accidental; the organisation of the Mongol state, a highly militarised form of reconfigured tribal structures, represented the maximum effective military power available to Çingiz Khān and his descendants that made it possible to mobilise almost the entire society outside of the conquered, sedentary populations for warfare. The highly stratified nature of the Mongol military machinery (based upon the tümen or decimal system of multiples of 10), recognised an elite surrounding the person of the khān and an imperial guard of 10,000 cavalry made up of individuals from a wide variety of tribal backgrounds, bound by ties of personal loyalty. This structure included commanders of decreasing status depending on the force they led, the tamma contingents (stationed as border units on the perimeters of the steppe-sedentary limes Mongolica) and the locally recruited infantry and garrison troops (see Morgan, 1993:232-233; 1986:78). The Ghaznāvid state in some ways prefigured this organisation under Sebüktigin and Mahmūd. The degree to which one can support this particular comparison will be detailed below; the point here is that it would not be possible to categorise the present Mongol population into groups upon the basis of being descended from either the elite warrior corps (the imperial guard), the more general cavalry or the large body of tent-makers, fletchers, armourers, cooks, herders, and others making up the support structure of the Mongol armies of the past. I would argue on the basis of such a comparison (and there are many others that could be made), that the absence of particular language structures that allow a clear definition of the descendants of a warrior elite within the modern-day, identifiable

speech-community (as linguists such as Labov suggest exist; Gordon, 2006) of Mongols, cannot be taken as the basis for stating the historical absence of such. To concentrate the point still further, any shared military terminology that exists in modern-day Mongol-Turkic clearly cannot derive only from groups that may have been merely “associated” with those for whom these were concepts with a concrete reality, rather than an awareness of the objects they represent.

Any apparent linguistic concentration around, or presence of military terminology does not and cannot demonstrate in and of itself proof positive of the social, military or political status of individuals or groups of speakers in the past. What this does do (as with all historical “evidence”), is to offer an opportunity to further support what might be the historical context for the fragments of the past that remains to us. Clearly Hancock’s position as it has been most frequently presented (though not by him), posits a plausible relationship between the lexical “borrowings” from a variety of Indic languages, deriving from Middle Indo-Aryan forms, that are identifiably “military” and present in modern Romanī, with an original Rajpūt warrior caste in the 11th century. If this were indeed the heart of the debate it would prove short-lived, as obviously any language that contains military terminology in its modern form cannot be said to demonstrate that all the speakers of that language currently descend from military personnel. Undeniably however, some do and others may well count from their ancestry those that were amongst the elite formations of any military organisation in the past, however distant from those individuals in the present. Elements of the present-day, Mongol-speaking population are clearly the descendants of the warrior elite from the past whilst others are not (the persistence of ethnic and ‘tribal’ groupings in modern Mongolia maintains these divisions; see Keyser-Tracqui et al, 2006:272-281). To suggest otherwise would surely posit an unbroken heritage of military duty in families or groups going back centuries, which of course exists in some cases, as the only legitimate corroborative of the linguistic presence of terms for weaponry, manoeuvre or equipment in the modern lexicon. The argument that an awareness of the concepts for “sword” or “spear” amongst a current “speech community” (arguably as imaginary as any other community), fails to prove social status in a past military (or militarised) society, cannot disprove that members of the present community that share these terms in the wider context of a definable language or dialect, are not indeed descended from those that did once hold or acquire such status. As I have argued earlier, the development of any war idiom takes such terminology well beyond the confines of military personnel and into the apparently non-combatant sphere. The use of a wide range of military terms in common parlance in specific situations during wartime, is an aspect of the dramatic changes caused to language in such conditions.

4.3 “Speaking to the scribes, talking to the troops...” The development of the Ghaznāvid koīné

IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRESENT DISCUSSION, there is significant continuity in the approaches of the chanceries of the Ghaznāvids, the Saldjūkids and the Ottomans, to the question of a need for a language in particular to be used amongst the military and scribal classes that come to significantly differ from the “common tongue” of the wider society. It is especially interesting that all three polities resolved the problem through the incorporation, either wholesale or in part, of Persian as the language of government and military command. Whilst Arabic remained the language of jurisprudence and religious writing (and to some extent of continuing exegesis, with the development of sufism), the impact of Iran upon Islamic civilisation fundamentally altered the direction of its growth (Crone & Cook, 1997: 56), and nowhere more so than in the realm of governance. The Ottomans developed a version of Turkish using an Arabic script and infused with much Persian and Arabic that effectively created an unbridgeable gulf between written and spoken forms (Kramers, 1993: 918). The active promotion of Ottoman culture and arts, as a means of strengthening their particular identity vis-à-vis the Byzantines and the development of Ottoman Turkish as a language in its literary and scribal forms, were characteristic of both their admiration of the renaissance of Persian culture under the Tīmūrids at Herat and Samarkand (Tekin, 1995: 211), and the highly competitive atmosphere of the various Anatolian principalities in the earliest period (1300-1453 CE). As a world empire at the opening of the 16th century, these literary concerns were suitably imperial, political and worldly. The translation of older Islamic and pre-Islamic texts were frequently undertaken, often through adaptations or translations of religious works, medicinal texts or collections of love stories popular all over the Islamic lands (Nizāmī’s *Khusraw wa Shīrīn* for example c.581 AH/1184 CE; see Mu’ayyad, 1977), and narrative epics such as Firdawsī’s *Shāhnāma*, (c.401 AH/1010 CE) was a prime concern of a number of Anatolian begs and emīrs as a means of establishing a particular court culture and wider literature. It also helped to standardise the kind of language used, as did the production of dictionaries that translated terms between Çagatay and Ottoman, for example. It is beyond the scope of my book to examine this particular point more closely, but it is important to establish the fluidity and malleability of the differing Turkic languages or dialects during this mediaeval period (Tekin, 1995:210). The development of what has been mistakenly labelled as “Old Ottoman”, and more correctly known as “Old Anatolian Turkish”, is the product of the evolution of Turkish after its entry into Asia Minor, under the political patronage of the Rūm Saldjūkids, but the language of the court remained predominantly Persian although the descriptions of the Saldjūk Sultān Muḥamad b. Mahmūd’s (511-525 AH/1118-1131 CE) drinking

parties record the fondness for his hearing recitations of Turkish epic poetry (Luther, 2001:126).

The Saldjūkids adopted Persian as the language of chancellery and court, almost as soon as they had displaced the Ghaznāvids' control of Khorasān and Iran, in the wake of the collapse at Dandānqān (431 AH/1040 CE; Bosworth, 1963:250). Although initially using the surviving Ghaznāvid officials and scribes to communicate their victory after the three-day battle to the wider Islamic world, the great vizier Nizām al-Mulk (408-485 AH/1018-1092 CE) undertook to create an effective administrative machinery that he outlines in his *Siyāsat-nāma*, or “mirror for princes” (al-Mulk, 1956; Darke, 1960). The Ghaznāvid machinery of war and administration, the latter being to an important degree an arm of the former, were incorporated into the Saldjūk polity without significant alteration to the basic structure, thanks to the continuity of people like Nizām al-Mulk, whose family had been part of the administrative class that survived the vicissitudes of Ghaznāvid state-building (Bowen, 1995:69-73). Taking the previous Ghaznāvid state organisation as an ideal model, and in particular praising the multi-ethnic composition of the army (Kai Kā'ūs b. Iskander, writing in the late 11th century notes, “he [Mahmūd]... constantly overawed the Hindūs by means of the Turks and the Turks by means of the Hindūs, with the result that both nations submitted to him through fear of each other”, Levy, 1951:153; Bosworth, 1963:107), Nizam al-Mulk's advice for his Saldjūkid masters makes it clear that the languages of government, religion and literature were Persian and Arabic, not the rough Turkish they had brought with them from central Asia as the tribal Oghuz or Ghūzz. He also notes with approval that “the army should be composed of troops of all races” and organised by nationality separately under their own commanders (al-Mulk, 1956:107), again supporting the notion of a koīné developing that would facilitate command and communication in such circumstances. The prestige of Persian in the eastern Iranian world had brought about a state of affairs that can be best described as bilingualism, with the continuing use of Arabic in Ghaznāvid culture and the chancellery influencing those that defeated them (de Blois, 1995:970-972). Indeed, the continuity of governance of Khorasān, Herāt and other regions of the Perso-Islamic world was a key factor in the changes in rulership during this period; protecting the interests of merchants and peasants was of utmost importance in securing support in the Iranian heartlands (Bosworth, 1995:955). The Ghaznāvid failure to do so in the face of the Türkmen ravages convinced the population of this region to desert the dynasty for the Saldjūkids, as better able to control this unruly element (Bosworth, 1995:955). The impact on the Saldjūkids of these complex negotiations was to intensify the process of sophistication that was they were undergoing and further increase the influence of Persian as the preeminent language in the discourse of power.

In these three cases, the linguistic configuration of the elite underwent significant changes throughout the administration and military spheres; in the Ottoman case the shift was from “Old Anatolian Turkish” to Ottoman over two centuries, with profound influences from Persian and Arabic as the Ottomans confronted the Byzantines and Greco-Roman culture. In the case of the Saldjūkids, the language of state and government increasingly became Persian as the move from nomadic tribal confederation to Muslim power-state took place, whilst Arabic dominated the religious discourse as the dynasty moved in to the place vacated by the Ghaznāvids, as defenders of the faith. In Ghaznā, the shift was, I argue, reflected in the initial orientation of the state westwards towards Khorasān and the early use of Persian (as with the Saldjūkids), and latterly eastwards towards India, but nevertheless the development of the military koīné that underlies the emergence of Romanī identity suggests not only the use of Persian as the language of the military and government, but a clear separation from Arabic as the language of religion and religious literature, that would only be accessible to those that had converted to Islam.

The fact that Mahmūd maintained the Indian contingents as non-Muslims is attested in to the bitter complaints of the anonymous chronicler of Sīstān (see below and Bosworth, 1963:89, 110). Clearly, the conversion of these Indians to Islam was not countenanced by Mahmūd and his encouragement of the Karāmiyya sect in Khorāsān, to persecute the Ismāīlīs, suggests a rather more complex personality than that represented by the title awarded him at the opening of his reign in the official laqabs (Haig, 1993:133; Bosworth, 1973:185-9). What is most important here however, is that the exposure to the language of Islam and of Allah’s revelation for his chosen people, was not permissible to those who were not of the ummā. This was a result of the highly stratified Ghaznāvid polity and the absence of any Arabic loanwords in Romanī does not necessarily reflect the more frequent assumption that the ancestors of the Gypsies passed through territories as yet untouched by Arab Muslim culture or influence. Despite the acceptance by scholars that Romanī itself has been and remains to some speakers, a language to be restricted to a particular group (or even age range, as acquisition can be a rites de passage amongst some groups), the notion that Arabic was limited outside of the Arab lands to those who were a people chosen by God and part of a community of believers, seems to be unconsidered. The absence of Arabic in the Romanī lexicon is an illustration of the degree to which the Hindūs experienced a separation from the surrounding religious community, the ummā, indicating that as soldiers and auxiliaries in the Ghaznāvid forces the Indians maintained their primary religious orientation without converting to Islam (except in a few probable cases such as the Hindū commander Malik bin Jai Sen, described in Ahmad's *Tabakāt-i*

Akbarī; Elliot, 1867-77b,III:4). This was both as a matter of deliberate policy on the part of the sultāns, in ensuring loyalty to their persons and avoiding the establishment of any local allegiances that might compromise this loyalty and as an effective means of the control of rebellious local Muslim and Christian populations by regiments that could be expected to act punitively, as a result of their enforced participation in the ghāzwarā (Holy War) against their quondam homelands (the suppression of the revolting Christians and Muslims in Zaranj for example; see Bosworth, 1963:89, 110). This last point is redolent of the earlier argument for seeing the development of the Romani ethnicity as stemming from psychological dislocation and the necessary reconfiguration of identity, resulting from catastrophic and consistent military defeat (Schivelbusch, 2003; McCarthy, 1995). The savagery of the suppression of the Zaranj and Sīstān rebellions can be seen as a consequence of the frustration of the Hindūs sent to deal with it; in an act of displaced revenge against those who first defeated them, and then forced them to fight for the continuing “Holy War” of their Ghaznāvid overlords, the Indians unleashed their fury upon the Muslims, Jews and Christians of the city.

The development of the Ghaznāvid koīné represents both a means of efficient command across ethnic and class boundaries, in the context of a multi-ethnic army and a vehicle for the Hindū groups from a variety of differing petty-states and principalities to communicate across dialectical differences. The incorporation of a significant Persian lexicon must be understood in the context of Ghaznāvid administrative and political structures, where Persian was the language of the state in the wider Islamic world. In the context of 11th century Ghaznā, the control of language was one more mechanism for detaching the Hindū contingents from their wider spiritual and social community, ensuring a dependence upon the person of the sultān for patronage and protection. As his loyal servants, the Hindūs could expect to be rewarded directly and maintained in spite of criticism against the use of pagans and idolaters in the armies of Islam (Bosworth, 1963:110). The later Byzantine army, with its Varangian Guard originating from differing Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon ethnic communities, was in some ways analogous with this picture of the Hindū regiments of the Ghaznāvid army. Separated by language and culture, the Varangians maintained an elitism (partly through being expensive to join), a distinct code of discipline, dress and battle equipment, were physically distinctive and often notoriously loyal to the person of emperor (Kazdhan, 1991:2152) and were part of the military re-organisation of the imperial forces into the tagma structure under the direct command of the emperor, as opposed to the regiments under the control of the strategoi from the themes. The Byzantine Emperors developed these regiments that were detached from the surrounding Greek population, court and administration, to act as a counter-

balance to the interests of the bureaucrats, and the military comes and dux, in the struggles for power and control that frequently beset the empire (Norwich, 1993:87). The most important difference was, of course, the status of the respective formations; the Hindūs were captured slaves and remained so in the Ghaznāvid structure, whilst the Varangians exercised an independence of action (choosing not to fight upon the occasions of palace coups, for example), as paid soldiery. Another example, perhaps closer to the Hindūs would be the Tourkopouli of the Byzantine army, captured Turkish children raised in the tenets of Christianity and trained to fight under their own officers (Vryonis Jr. 1956:433n.)

The koīné that became Romanī, has been identified as being closest to Urdu in its structure and lexicon (see Hancock, 2005:7-20), and it is in the context of the Ghaznāvid military formations and structures that we must look for the relationship between them. The basis for their development is I would argue the same, in the military koīné of 11th century Ghaznā. The process by which this one lingua franca separated is to be found in the events of 1040 CE, when the Saldjūkids not only defeated the Ghaznāvids, but detached the western empire entirely. This resulted in the fleeing of those troops who remained after the defeat (the ancestors of the Romanī peoples) and their complete loss of contact with those that had been on duty in the eastern territories. As both these sections of the army would, I suggest here have shared the koīné, the trajectory of its development was such that two distinct branches emerged over time resulting in Urdu in the eastern lands, and Romanī in the territories of Byzantium and the west. It is not possible in this book to examine the development of Romanī more exactly and it may be that a task for linguistic analysis of the language in the future would be to test more thoroughly this proposition. Historically the suggestion that I have outlined here may represent a plausible alternative trajectory of development for both languages in their origins, in the context of the Ghaznāvid milieu and given the subsequent separation of differing speech communities. However, without further support from Romanī linguistics' scholars such as Hancock and Matras, this remains a speculative picture at best.

4.4 State and structure; palace and chancellery in the ghazī emirate

IN SUMMARY THEN, THE POSITION OF HINDŪ ‘abīd and mawlā in Ghaznāvid society was similar to that of any mamlūk groups in Muslim polities. Some would have had the opportunity to rise in status and found their way into the very heart of the Ghaznāvid military and administrative structures (as the case of Tilak the Hindū general during the reign of Mas’ud b. Mahmūd illustrates). Those and the palace ghulāms would have held rank and honours in the militarised society that the Ghaznāvid state represented and maintained their position by dint of the patronage of the sultān, and were dependant upon him for their survival. In return, they were deployed not only on the numerous campaigns against the Indian rajas and princes that resisted Ghaznāvid invasions, but also against the rebellious subjects of the sultān who balked at hardening centralised rule and increasing tax burdens. In this role, the suggestion I have made is that the complex tensions of remaining a defeated, dislocated Hindū in a militarised Muslim society, being used in campaigns against their original homelands and against their former places of worship and holding a status that, for some was possibly elevated as warriors and may have been concomitant with their former place in Hindū society (though clearly only a minority of those captured by the Ghaznāvids) though reaping the benefits of these campaigns, meant that nevertheless they were a conquered people, enslaved and despised as infidels or heretics (if they had been Ismaīlīs previously). The barbarism that was visited upon the rebellious subjects of Zaranj and Sīstān, all ‘people of the book’ as the anonymous chronicler complains, may have been a venting of these tensions, an opportunity for retribution as the Zanj rebels had earlier sought retribution from the conquering Muslims in the 9th century ‘Abbāsīd state.

Furthermore, the Ghaznāvid state, like the Ottoman state of the 14th and 15th centuries was a military state, a state whose entire resources were channelled into prosecuting war and securing the plunder that resulted in order to sustain itself. Not all the Hindūs captured by the Ghaznāvids were engaged in direct combat but practically all who were not sold as personal slaves were at the service of the state and the vast military machine that Sebūktigin and his heirs constructed. Military terminology was part of the daily life of these people as an idiom that permeated every aspect in ways that went beyond the mere necessity of command and order. For a militarised state such as the Ghaznāvid Empire, the war idiom would have been the normal means of communication, from the court to the streets of the cities themselves, war must have imbued the very breath of the inhabitants.

The importance of the division of the Islamic political formation, in both its forms as dīwān-ī a‘lā

(chancery) and dargāh (palace) underpins all structures of eastern Muslim states in a continuous tradition until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the 20th century (Barthold, 1928:227). The intensely personal notion of power in many of these polities meant that there was often significant overlap between the chancery and palace bureaucracies, so that this picture is something of an oversimplification as the division of competencies of officials shifted according to various state and individual rulers' needs, and in the case of the Ghaznāvids, the distinctions between the two were frequently blurred. In achieving the necessary level of co-operation between the bureaucracy and the military, competencies were rarely so clear-cut as to allow us to accept Bosworth's rather rigid description of Ghaznāvid government unreservedly (1963:82). It is reasonable to agree with the more general arguments made about state, society and military, especially in the context of innovation as it is arguably as a result of military necessity that bureaucratic reform takes place in any mediaeval or early modern polity (Aksan, 1999:23-34). The state's need for those who will prosecute war on its behalf whether by conviction or coercion, has been and remains one of the key factors in the relationship between the polity and the population (Lucassen & Zürcher, 1999:8). The ability of mediaeval and early modern Islamic states to mobilise their resources for military expansion or defence was formidable, not least because the bases for the creation of effective bureaucracies necessary to support such military formations and societies were incorporated with the conquest of Iran by the Arabs in the 7th century CE. The period after the disruption of the 2nd Civil War saw the acceleration of the centralisation policies of Abd al-Malik (65-86 AH/685-705 CE) (Lapidus, 1988:59-65; Wickens, 1976: 71-77) and the "classical" development of the Muslim polity and government. From this period, the development of an efficient dīwān (chancery) was an essential prerequisite to the successful expansion of any fledgling Muslim principality or emirate (an established political and military structure led by an emīr or commander; Lampton, 1983:332). I would suggest here in a broader context of the political-military development of Muslim Persia, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, that those emirates and border beyliks (generally frontier polities centred upon a bey, beg or tribal leader, such as in the Saldjūkid and Ottoman cases), that failed to develop this element of state structure were ultimately absorbed by those that did (the examples of the Denizli emirate, c.1261-1278 CE, the Eşrefoğulları in the Beğshehir area c.1250-1325 CE, the Sahıboğulları in the region between Kutahya and Akşehir and the Pervaneoğulları at Sinope illustrate this point as they were all relatively short-lived and eventually absorbed by the Ottomans; see Vryonis, 1971: 138). Paying for the army drove rulers to develop bureaucracies that could organise and efficiently levy taxes, or secure sufficient surpluses from merchants and the peasantry to be able to do so. The Ghaznāvid solution to the problem was in itself unusual; very few Muslim

rulers had access to the sort of wealth that could be provided by raiding India on a regular and consistent basis and in a sense, the military capacity of the empire was both a product of and a response to the opportunities offered by the Indian states' resources. In economic and military terms, Mahmūd's vast standing army was necessary to extract maximum plunder from the Indian lands, but could not be sustained without those resources and the ability to dragoon large numbers of troops into the army from subject populations across the empire. As Bosworth notes, a little ironically, "...it was in his time an institution geared to the exploitation of India" (1963:255). It was a structure that Mas'ūd b. Mahmūd (421-431 AH/1030-1040 CE) and his heirs could not maintain; the loss of the western empire meant the reservoir of potential recruits for the army from outside India was gone. Given the relocation of the empire's focus from Ghaznā to Lahore that the sultān attempted after 431 AH/1040 CE, the need to conscript personnel had to be met from the territories that were much more proximate to the new heart of the empire, with the consequent disruption of loyalties and outbreaks of rebellion from individual emīrs and rajas able to mobilise their own forces locally. Structures of command that were maintained in Ghaznā could not longer be imposed by dint of geographical separation and cultural distance. Mahmūd's success was in disrupting the patterns of loyalty and allegiance of all his troops and assimilating them to the structures of the Ghaznāvid state by creating a bias towards India without becoming embroiled there. Over time this pattern was reversed as the relocation of the empire forced successive sultāns to compromise this model, whilst they themselves became more enmeshed in the regional relationships of power and influence. In effect, the empire became an Indian, albeit Islamic polity rather than the Turco-Persian state it began as. Although the notion of the ghazī state as one exclusively mobilised for the prosecution of war has been taken to extremes in the analysis of Islamic empires and emīrates (see Kafadar for a discussion about the importance of the ghazī book in relation to the rise of the Ottoman state, 1995:38-59), the impact of this principle nevertheless had a profound effect upon Ghaznāvid, Saldjūkid and Ottoman administrations throughout their histories.

The razzias themselves were the main source of the early Hindū troops, booty and slaves for the empire. In describing the numbers of captives, the narrative sources available to us suggest the scale of the enslavement of defeated peoples. The conquest of Peshawar (392 AH/1001 CE) and Tāhnesar (402 AH/1011 CE) resulted in apparently enormous numbers of captive Indians (see the discussion above). The descriptions from the aftermath of the conquest of Kanauj in 409 AH/1017 CE (where Mahmūd allegedly took 53,000 captives, according to the *Tabakāt-i Akbarī*; Elliott, 1867-77e: XL, 179), is that in addition to his own Indian troops, Mahmūd could rely upon those of his "allies", in

this case the Rāī of Kanauj Kooowur Ray (Briggs, 1829, I:40), sacrificed to the vengeance of the Hindū confederacy. Killed for his allegiance to the sultān by the combined forces of the Chandel Rajpūt Rājas, Pūr Jaipāl and Nandā, the sultān undoubtedly used the former Rāī's troops in his defeat of both at the battles of the Jumma, and of Rāhīb during 421 AH/1021 CE (Elliott, 1867-77b: D,456). The later examples of the reign of Ma'sūd b. Mahmūd (see below), show that the reliance of the Ghaznāvids upon their Hindū contingents continued unabated.

4.5 The ideology, military organisation of the Ghaznāvid state and the Hindūs

THE HISTORIC “MISSION” OF THE GHAZNĀVID POLITY was the prosecution of ghāzwarā, as a legitimating ideology of the state and dynasty (Bosworth, 1977:8). In his message to the Qārāqānid Ilēk Khān in 390 AH/1000 CE (Briggs, 1829: 29; although Bosworth suggests some confusion over the date, see 2001:166 n.9), Mahmūd emphasises his role as ghazī “[w]e continually undertake to wage holy war in the regions of Sind [sic.] and the remote areas of India” (Luther, 2001: 30). It is not my intention to oversimplify the significant differences between this ideology and the reality of Ghaznāvid patronage of the ascetic Karrāmiyya sect in Nīshāpūr (as a means of overawing the ‘Alids, the Ash‘arī-Shāfi‘ī ulamā and the Sūfīs; see Hurvitz, 2003: 31; Bosworth, 1990: 669; 1973:163-205), their own Hindū commanders and officers, or even Mahmūd’s complex motivations in patronising that most famous poet of at his court, the Shi’ia Firdawsī. The banner of “Holy War” was one that most Islamic states raised in their justification for conquest and military expansion, even at the expense of other Islamic rulers (Bayezīd Yıldīrīm’s conquest of the Central Anatolian beyliks in the 1390’s CE, for example; Vryonis, 1971: 138). The highly militarised and centralised Ghaznāvid state was clearly of a different order than the much more diffuse, tribal and patrimonial early Saldjūkid polity centred upon Khorāsān, which ultimately maintained many of those traditions despite its later sophistication and transplantation (Bosworth, 1986: 939). Yet both used the legitimating claim of defeating the infidel (or heretic) in their promotion of the dynasty and its right to rule. Both also governed peoples for whom the notion of descent from the family of the Prophet (peace be upon him), or an affiliation with the subjects themselves had provided a key to the effective assumption of power and authority, yet neither could claim such. The Ottomans in many ways moved from the ideology of ghāzwarā as the sole legitimation for the activities of the dynasty, to a more complex doctrine of imperial rule reflecting the inheritance gained from their conquest of the Byzantine Empire. The awarding of titles reflecting the image of warrior for the faith was important to Mahmūd and his successors; the notion of the ghazī was at the heart of the Ghaznāvid sultāns’ self images, and their conception of the state. Legitimation lay in the subjugation of the infidel and, perhaps more importantly, the heretic.

The key to sustaining the Ghaznāvid enterprise however was to meet the demand for fiscal resources to support the state and army, and those resources derived almost entirely from campaigns into the Indian subcontinent. They were essential to the florescence of the state and its continuing expansion, and the ideology of ghāzwarā legitimated and justified the campaigns of Amīr Sebūktigin (366-387 AH/942-997 CE), Amīr (later Sultān) Mahmūd (397-421 AH/997-1030 CE),

and their successors in plundering the wealth of India. These were promoted to the wider Islamic community, which in return provided further legitimation through the awarding of titles like “the right hand of the Khalif” or “defender of the faithful” (Yamin ad-Dawla wa-Amin al-Milla). Al-‘Utbi describes the receipt of this honour thus

Kádir bi-llah Amíru-l-múminín, the Khalífa of Baghdād, sent a Khila't [sic] (a variety of fine garments, embroidered with inscriptions or tirāz; Stillman, 1986: 6-7), such as had never before been heard of, for the use of Sultān Saifu-d daula, and he entitled Mahmūd in his imperial rescript [decree], “Yamínu-d daula Amínu-l millat, the friend of the Amír-l múminín,” which had not yet been bestowed upon any prince, either far or near, notwithstanding their intense desire to receive such an honour (Elliott, 1867-77: II, 20)

There is an illustration (above) of Mahmūd donning the khila't surrounded by the ulemā from an MS of Rashīd al-Dīn's Djāmi al-Tawārīkh in Edinburgh University Library (Stillman, 1986:6-7). The relationship between the dynasty and the ulemā or ulamā [Ar.] had originally been one of legitimation and support; the appeal to Sunni orthodoxy had been bolstered through the patronage of the ulamā and the support of the Khalīfā by defeating the Shī'ite Būwayīds and reclaiming Baghdād (Lewis, 1995: 94). This, together with the establishment of medresse (madrasas Ar. the earliest in Islamic history), under the Ghaznāvids, allowed the dynasty to claim a legitimacy detached from ideas of consanguinity with the family of the Blessed, ethnic, or regional claims (Lapidus, 1966: 345). The Karrāmiyya were frequently accused of heresy in their pursuit of a more ascetic Islam, yet they can be better understood as part of what Lewis calls “the anti-Shī'ite Sunni revival” (1995: 95). Yet the complexity of Mahmūd's personality, alluded to earlier, is to be seen in the apparent contradictions to this imagery and ideology. The poet Abu 'l-Kasīm Firdawsī was initially encouraged by Mahmūd in the production of his epic, and the much bruted account of his inadequate reward may owe less to the meanness of the sultān, or Firdawsī's implicit Shī'ism, as much as to the association between the poet and Mahmūd's first vizier, Abu 'l'Abbās who was disgraced shortly before the poet arrived in Ghaznā (400 AH/1010 CE). The wider considerations of Mahmūd's beliefs and complexities as a character must be left aside, but the question has to be borne in mind when we consider the actual place of Indians in the Ghaznāvid system, and the challenges to the orthodoxy of the antagonistic timbre of Muslim-Hindū historiography, as suggested earlier in this book.

The administration of this system needed to be efficient and effective in the collection of revenue. The inheritance of the Sāmīnīds was invaluable, as many of the previous scribes and paymasters

remained in place after the succession of the Ghaznāvids to their territories after 366 AH/977 CE, maintaining the mechanisms necessary for the distribution of the iqtā istiklal (or iktā' istighlāl Ar.) dispensations to the army (Lapidus, 1966: 346). The nature of the land-holding regime under the Ghaznāvids is not entirely clear, nor is the participation of the bureaucracy in this system, it being much better documented for the Saldjūkid era, but it does appear that the means of supporting troops by providing revenues directly at source, continued throughout the Ghaznāvid period (Lapidus, 1966: 346). At some point during the reign of Mahmūd this system no longer functioned with its previous efficiency and abuse became commonplace, so much so that the alienation of the population of Khorāsān becomes widespread, through excessive taxation and the rapacity of the Ghaznāvid revenue agents (Bosworth, 1963: 242). The Saldjūkiyān were able to capitalise upon this in their conquest of Ghaznāvid cities such as Nīshāpūr, during the latter part of Ma'sūd's reign;

Ghaznāvid rule was doomed, not by the defeat at Dandānqān in 1040, but by the the ulamā and ghāzis of Nishapur, Marw and other cities who received the Saldjuk leader Toghril Beg as their new Sultān... (Lapidus, 1966: 346-7)

The grievances of the ulemā, merchants and traders of Nīshāpūr were expressed when Tūghril Beg, the Saldjuk Sultān, issued his proclamation protecting the citizens of the city in Ramadān (June-July), 429 AH/1038 CE. "Tūghril Beg came to Nīshāpūr and sat upon the throne of the realm of Sultān Mahmūd", ordering his troops to avoid having "anything to do with the inhabitants of the city, and the peasants, and let no-one molest a living thing." (Luther, 2001: 37) The consequences of this were disturbing indeed to Mas'ūd, who launched his campaign against Tūghril Beg and the Saldjūks that ended at Dandānqān, but the implication in the Saldjūk-nāma is clear; the Ghaznāvid treatment of their subjects had deprived them of their loyalty in Khorāsān due to excessive and abusive taxation (Lapidus, 1966: 346).

Unlike the Saldjūk and Ottoman polities however, the ideology of conquest was not a major part of the undertaking for the Ghaznāvids in India. It was a source of slaves who were both domestic and military, craftspeople and artisans, entertainers and labourers, many of whom were forcibly removed from their homelands and original domiciles throughout the northern Indian regions and resettled as the Sultān's servants in the empire's centres at Bālkh and Ghaznā. It was a source of political kudos and further propoganda of the pre-eminent position of the dynasty as warriors for Islam, especially against the heretics of Sindh, but most important it was a source of fabulous wealth, of riches untold in elephants, spices, silks, precious metals and jewels. The notion that the Ghaznāvid Empire was an "army with a state" is an extremely apposite one (Bosworth, 1963: 98);

more than any other Islamic polity since the inception of the period of Muslim expansion in the seventh and early eighth centuries, the Ghaznāvids represented the ultimate application of the principle of *ghazwārā* to the organisation of a state. Society was mobilised to support the prosecution of war, and the state controlled production of many vital goods, being the primary consumer of many others. Distribution was largely aimed at servicing the needs of the state, the court, the army and the bureaucracy (Longworth-Danes, 1993: 153). The infrastructure of communication and services was built and maintained almost exclusively by slave labour to ensure the rapid deployment of troops along campaign roads into India and Khorāsān, with the maintenance of trade routes frequently secondary to the efficient movement of mounts and men (Bosworth, 1963: 118).

The army under Mahmūd b. Sebūktigīn was the most highly professional of its day. The *ghulāms* or slave commanders and palace elite, were the core of the military structure, commanding units that were frequently ethnic in composition and often specific in function or specialism. The Arabs and Kurds for example, were grouped under one commander and usually formed the bulk of the vanguard during marches, with a prominent role on the campaign in Marw al-Shāhidjān (Bosworth, 1963: 111). The Indians were commanded by their own *Sipahsālār-ı Hindūyān* and occupied a distinct quarter of Ghaznā, or *mahalle* (Bosworth, 1963: 110). At the heart of the Ghaznāvid forces were the *mamlūk* (slave) elements, comprised of Turks, Tajiks, Khorāsānians, Dailamis (a mountain people from the Caucasus region), and more importantly for our purposes here, large numbers of Indians. These were captured, or received as tribute from outwith the empire and often trained as converts, but with the Indians this was usually not the case (see the *Tabakāt-i Akbarī* for an example of captives and converts being taken by Mahmūd in Kashmīr 404 AH; Elliott, 1867-77: D, 446). The reasons for this will be discussed more fully, but the Indians together with the Turks provided one half each of the sultān's household *ghulāms* that numbered between 6,000 (under Mahmūd c.421 AH/1030 CE) and 4,000 troops (under Ma'sūd b. Mahmūd c.431 AH/1040 CE) (Bosworth, 1963: 105). Given the structures of mediaeval Muslim Hindū or Christian armies, this figure will have represented about one third of the actual number of troops involved, as each elite warrior will have had a number of lightly-armed retainers, groom, shield and sword-bearer, armourer, tent-maker, cook, and body servant, bringing the total figure up to three times that of 4,000-6,000 palace *ghulāms*. In the sultān's household alone during the period of Mahmūd, the numbers of Indians could have been some 15,000 troops and retainers in total. Baihaki notes that at the battle of Dandānqān (421 AH/1030 CE), there were some 16,000 *Türkoman*, each with four other family

members (Bosworth, 1986: 938). This ratio would appear not to have been unusual, if we consider the figures from other, though admittedly later, sources (see Vryonis, 1971: 260-267), and we might conclude that there were somewhere in the region of 64,000 Türkoman present upon the Saldjūk side.

The provisioning of Ghaznāvid armies required lengthy baggage trains, strings of elephants and numerous camp followers, all in addition to the actual combat troops (Bosworth, 1963: 249). It is therefore likely that the armies of the sultāns were larger than the 10,000 or 20,000 warriors described in the accounts of campaigns of Waihind, Nagarkot (399 AH/1008-09 CE), or Mathura and Kanauj (409 AH/1018 CE), and included the attendant auxiliaries, merchants, wives and children, sweethearts, prostitutes (both those officially “licensed” and other, more opportunist sex-workers), washer-women, laundresses, cooks, foragers, carriers and nurses for the sick and wounded. As Hale notes, “...armies, as populous as all the major cities, were self-contained societies on the move.” (1989: 62-3) Women were a major part of these mobile “nations”, carrying weapons and, in the case of Turkish nomadic groups, effectively mounted warriors in their own right (Vryonis, 1971: 261). The example of the bahdjyan-i Rum, the Türkoman women of Anatolia mentioned by the Ottoman historian Aşıkpaşazade that carried out military duties along with their maternal concerns (see Angiolello, 1873: 94). if we accept the ratio as suggested by Bosworth, the numbers of people in Ghaznāvid armies might have amounted to 80,000. This figure may also have been close to double on the return from successful campaigns, with slaves and captives included. In the instance of the defeat of Djaipāl at Peshawar, 8th Muharram 392 AH/27th November 1001 CE, al-‘Utbī records a figure of five hundred thousand slaves, “beautiful men and women” (Elliott, 1867-77: II, 21), although Firishta suggests that these were later released, upon payment of a large ransom (Briggs, 1829: 30)

Ghaznāvid infantry, unlike its predecessors, was a permanent force and the first non-mercenary, standing army of any size and sophistication of the Muslim world. Firishta notes that Mahmūd fielded 30,000 foot soldiers (along with 12,000 cavalry and 300 elephants), for the campaign against the Rāja of Lahore (Briggs, 1829: 29). The Arab armies of the conquest period had been based upon the tribal levy and the mawālī retinues of Arab chieftains. The later developments of the Khorāsānī army of professional mercenaries under the Abbāsīds “...brought an element of technical reform which had been missing in the Umayyad army.” (Cahen, 1983: 505). The predominance of the Turks in Muslim armies, as mamlūk, rather than ‘abd, was a significant development in the replacement of the Khorāsānis and the advancement of Islam in general (see Lewis, 2001: 86-102).

The dominance of the Turkish element of Muslim armies up to the advent of nation-states, was never seriously challenged after this. The remedy for unruliness and disorder amongst the troops was to counter-balance one ethnic element with another (Cahen, 1983: 506). The mountain peoples, such as the Dailimīs, Kurds, Africans and Hindūs were all deployed to achieve this balance between various elements. The Qābūs Nāma (A Mirror for Princes) of 475 AH/1082 CE, praised the use of this method for controlling both elements in the Ghaznāvid forces whereby Mahmūd "...constantly overawed the Hindūs by means of the Turks and the Turks by means of the Hindūs, with the result that both nations submitted to him through fear of each other..." (Iskandar, 1951: 176). The Siyāsāt Nāma of Nizam al-Mulk (408-85 AH/1018-92 CE) also favoured the Ghaznāvid model, in a chapter entitled "The army should be composed of troops of all races", he describes how soldiers should be organised by ethnicity and encamped under their own guards on campaign to encourage competition in battle between the different "nations" (Bosworth, 1963: 107). The ethnic diversity of the Ghaznāvid army was more than just a way of utilising particular "native" skills, it was a mechanism of sophisticated "divide-and-rule", much favoured by later imperial administrators such as the British (Bosworth, 1963: 107), though he does not suggest the incorporation of Hindūs into the Saldjūk forces.

The Indians resembled the Turks in that they were divorced from their origins and apparently maintained no ties of loyalty to their "home" (though, as evidence about the Ottoman devşirme system has shown, connections with the original families and kinship groups of these palace kūl were frequently maintained; see Kunt, 1983). As captives they were especially separated from the wider population by both their ethnicity and their belief system, as pagan Hindūs. Their presence during the suppression of rebellions was the cause of outrage amongst Muslim commentators; the anonymous historian of Sīstān (now in western Afghanistan) complains bitterly of the violence and slaughter caused to Muslims and Christians in Zarang (Zaranj) by Mahmūd's Hindū troops in 393/1003 (Elliott, 1867/2: 59-60, 130-131; an illustration from an MS of Rashīd al-Dīn's Djāmi al-Tawārīkh in Edinburgh University Library shows the campaign, and depicts an Hindū siege-engineer in the lower left-hand corner of the miniature). Because of this absolute loyalty to the person of the sultān, Bosworth suggests that the Hindūs were regarded as more reliable, and certainly during the turmoil of the period following Mahmūd's death in 421 AH/1030 CE, when the succession was moot, the Hindū troops commanded by one āy, remained loyal to Sultān Muhammad b. Mahmūd during his brief reign (1963: 110). This proved no badge of dishonour for Sultān Mas'ūd Abū Sa'īd, who eventually came to control the empire. Mahmūd's

eldest son relied even more heavily upon the Hindūs of the empire's forces in his efforts to roust the "old guard" of his father who had shown him little loyalty initially, and used the Indians as a prime means of enforcing his will against partisans of his brother, fifty days after his father's death, according to al-Baihakī (Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 57). Mas'ūd also unleashed his Hindū troops upon the rebellious Turkish governor of Lahore, Ahmad b. Niyāttigīn, or Nīālti-gīn in 426/1034. Despite Ahmad's defeat of the first Hindū general sent against him, five years later, in the words of al'Utbī, Ma'sūd sent another Hindū general named Tilak (also recorded in the *Tabakāt-i Akbarī* bin Jai Sen; see Elliott, 1867-77b: 110), who was victorious (Nizam, 1993: 400). On this occasion the victory was owed to a group of Jhāts mobilised by Tilak against the rebellious governor (Elliott, 1867-77b: II, 54). On another occasion, he sent a force of 500 Indian cavalry and infantry to capture a rebellious general, whilst he used Indian troops to guard his imprisoned uncle, presumably again because of their absolute loyalty to the sultān (Bosworth, 1963: 110).

Our most interesting source for information about Hindūs in positions of authority in the Ghaznāvid state is the *Tārīkh-s Subuktigīn* of Abū-l Fazl Muhammad ibn al-Baihakī (see Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 53-127), also known as the *Tārīkh-i Baihakī*. As well as the references to campaigns, where the capture of Hindū populations is described (as in 424 AH/1033 CE when the women and children of Sarsutī in Kashmīr are "carried of by the soldiers as slaves"; Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 56), Baihakī relates the histories of two senior military commanders, Ariyāruk, the commander of the army of Hindūstān during the reign of Mahmūd (Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 89-96), and General Tilak the Hindū (Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 106-112). The fates of the two are very different; one a morality tale of vanity, drunkenness and eventual disgrace, the other, one of martial success and military glory. The common point of the two is their depiction in the work as high-ranking Hindūs, clearly demonstrating that there were such. In Ariyāruk's case, he is portrayed as being powerful enough to defy the injunction of the sultān; "when he was arraigned in the time of reign of Muhammad, he did not submit" (Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 89), and as being a drunkard, arrogant and presumptuous. He had been promoted earlier by Mahmūd (Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 90), and had been one of the partisans of Mas'ūd when the throne had been contested between himself and Muhammad in 1030 CE. In the tale of the downfall of Ariyāruk, the chief of the guards is mentioned as one "Muhtāj" (Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 94), whilst the capture of the bibulous Indian also involved other Hindū officers and some three hundred soldiers (Elliott, 1867-77b: 95). Interestingly, the news of the removal of Ariyāruk is suppressed, according to al-Baihakī, "so secretly that nobody knew he had been dismissed", which implies that Mas'ūd was concerned about the possible reaction to this arrest

(Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 96). The question that arises in this instance is whom the sultān feared – perhaps the loyalty of the Hindūs was not entirely secure.

The second of the generals mentioned by name in *al-Baihakī* is Tilak the Hindū, in the context of the rebellion of the Governor of Hindūstān, Ahmad Nīāltigīn. Tilak was commissioned with the task of subduing the disobedient Ahmad, by the Amīr Mas'ūd Abū Sa'īd b. Mahmūd (421-431 AH/1030-1040 CE) in 427 AH/1036 CE, though the other commanders were clearly not happy about this. *Baihakī* records a message from Mas'ūd to Tilak, in which he expresses his perceptions of the situation; “You have shamed them all... You shall be raised to a higher rank... They are greatly annoyed at your exaltation” (Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 107). This suggests that the Hindū general might have been one of those who had initially supported Muhammad in the contest for the throne against Mas'ūd during the period immediately following their father's death in 421 AH/1030 CE, and not part of the intimate circle of “boon companions” who would be “greatly annoyed”, but clearly Mas'ūd tied the Hindū officers to him through patronage and favour as a balance to the Turkish “boon companions”. The text does not refer to the earlier expedition sent by Mas'ūd that was defeated (Nazim, 1993: 424), but it does refer to Tilak as studying in Kashmīr, where he “...acquired some proficiency in dissimulation, amours, and witchcraft”, the latter an unusual skill for a general perhaps, and his role as interpreter between the vizier and the Hindūs, enabling him to gain great influence at the minister's court (Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 107-8). In this capacity he would be one of the necessary conduits for communicating with the troops, and perhaps one of the architects, if we could describe them as such, of the *koīné* that would eventually become Romanēs. He would appear to have been noticed in this service by Sultān Mahmūd himself, although when this took place is not recorded. His service was such that he was able to persuade all of the Hindū “...and many outsiders under his rule”, by which *al-Baihakī* appears to refer to a body of troops organised as part of the Ghaznāvid armies under Mahmūd (see Elliott, 1867-77b: A, 403-404, for his conjectures upon the origins of these amongst the Central Asian *Chī*, and their relationship to the *Jhāts*). Tilak is elevated at the expense of another Hindū general, Sundar, just before his campaign against Ahmad Nīāltigīn, and here may be the reference to the earlier defeat, as “Sundar, the general of the Hind, was not in his place.” (Elliott, 1867-77b: III, 109) As mentioned above, Tilak was able to accomplish his mission thanks to being able to mobilise numbers of *Jhāts* against the rebel and utilising their skills as sailors.

The Ghaznāvid army was frequently commanded by Indians, made up of many contingents and Hindūs, and attended on campaigns by *Jhāts* and other Indian auxiliaries, some of them tributary

troops (such as those received from the ruler of Hind, two thousand men annually; see Elliott, 1867-77b: D, 444). The numbers of troops were substantial and the attendant community in the capital, in its own mahalle, correspondingly large. Even after the defeat at Dandānqān, the Amīr Mas'ūd retained many Indians in the Ghaznāvid military machine, coming to rely upon them more heavily than other groups for support against rebels and those dissatisfied with his continued rule. This book argues, in the context of the earlier discussion (Hancock, 2006; Matras, Hübschmannová, 2004, Fraser, 1992), that these Indians, in both their military capacity and their auxiliary or domestic roles, are the ancestors of the Romanī peoples, and that furthermore, the current debate about the military or non-military origins of the Gypsies is misplaced, if it is seen to rely upon a single causal factor, language. As Thapar has argued in relation to the Aryans, “[t]he historically relevant question [is] not the identity of the Aryans (identities are never permanent), but why and how languages and cultures change in a given area... ”(Thapar, 2000: 15).

My suggestion that Gypsies had a particular status as a taxable community in the complex ethno-religious mosaic of the Ottoman Empire, related to a series of economic (if we count war as the acquisition of wealth by another means, to paraphrase von Clausewitz, 1908) and social niches, engages directly with this debate. The process whereby this was fundamentally undermined was the intrusion of western European orientalist imperialism. This dramatic deterioration eroded a set of relations that had existed since the earliest times in the east under Islam, and Oriental Christianity for centuries, and that was not reflected in social and economic relations western Europe. The conditions that nurtured the emergence and development of the Romanī peoples were set in place during the Ghaznāvid period. The mechanisms and processes of this emergence are those that I have attempted to outline here, to challenge the imprecision and inaccuracies of the previous histories, and to respond to the studies of Hancock, Matras, Fraser and Hübschmannová in some meaningful way. The detailed articulation of the Ghaznāvid system is a means of illustrating the processes to establish the patterns that have underpinned the Romanī experience under Islam and Oriental Christianity (Armenian and Byzantine Orthodoxy, in this case), as the model for the Ottoman picture prior to its change. The place of Hindūs as warriors, auxiliaries, entertainers, slaves and servants of the sultān in this earlier phase profoundly influenced the social structures both of the proto-Romanī and later Romanī groups in the East, and the treatment of them by those states in which they found refuge (as opposed to Western Europe where refuge from enslavement turned rapidly into repression). A detailed understanding of the degree to which Indians were integrated into Ghaznā, even to the extent of being part-and-parcel of the razzias against their quondam

homeland, exemplifies the complexity of the debate about origins, military and non-military, and the importance of seeing the period under Muslim rule for these particular groups (c.997-1040 CE), as the “cradle” of the Romanī people.

The nature of the campaigns that Hindū commanders led, and Indian troops (see the illustration above of the Ghaznāvid forces besieging a city from an MS of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Djāmi al-Tawārīkh* in Edinburgh University Library; Stillman, 1986:21-2), were engaged in will be discussed in more detail in the next section, but here it is important to note that there are clear distinctions highlighted by the British historians of the 19th century, in their portrayal of Hindūs in these different contexts. These interpretations had a profound impact upon how these events were viewed subsequently, and depended upon an interpretation of the campaigns as exclusively Muslim conquerors pitched against tenacious, but ultimately unworthy opponents, the Hindūs. Elliott condemns the ignorance of the latter in relating the circumstances surrounding the first campaign of Sebūktigīn near the Lamghān valley, when he suggests that a snow-storm had confused the Indians and they had suffered badly in the ensuing cold and frost. The explanation for this in the *Kitābu-l Yāmīnī* of al-’Utbī and the *Jawāmi’u-l Hikāyāt wa Lawā-mi’u-l Riwayāt* (c.607 AH/1211 CE) of Muhammad ’Ūfī at Delhī (see Elliott, 1867-77b: IV), a “Collection of Stories and Illustrations of Histories”, is that a miraculous spring in the vicinity emitted thunder, storms and freezing weather when the “Yedeh” stone was thrown into the water, and the “minds of the natives of India would naturally have tried to account for such a supernatural phenomenon... and superstition was at hand to render her assistance.” (Elliott, 1867-77b: D, 435) The magical stone however, derives from a Turkic legend that was still current amongst the Mongols in the thirteenth-century, that Marco Polo records in his *The Book of Ser Marco Polo the Venetian concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East* (Yule, 1903: 206), yet Elliott clearly sees the “superstitious” Hindūs as in a different category to those like Tilak the General in the Muslim armies of Amīr Sebūktigīn, Sultān Mahmūd and Amīr Mas’ūd (Elliott, 1867-77b: D, 435). The actual nature of these campaigns, like the armies that undertook them, is far more complex than this simple dichotomy allows.

4.6 The Ghaznāvid campaigns in India: *ghazawāt* and *razzias*

THE NARRATIVE SOURCES RECORDING THE ASSAULTS on the region of northern and central India following the assumption of power of Amir Sebūktigīn in 367 AH/977 CE (see Briggs, 1829: 11-27), and later Sultān Mahmūd of Ghaznā (387 AH/997 CE), provides us with some descriptions of Indian peoples in the empire as captives, slaves, commanders, generals, cavalry, infantry, elephant-drivers, prisoners of war, craftspeople and artisans. They also celebrate and glorify the victory of Islam over the heretic and infidel, and exaggerate the weight of booty, numbers of slaves and destruction of cities that the Sultān inflicted upon his enemies, as Thapar has argued (2000a:31-3). The incorporation of these texts into the British colonial discourse provided some justification for the imperialism and the expansion of the Empire, and it is interesting to see the shifts in rhetoric that accompanied this project, the collusion of scholarship in the colonial enterprise. Elliott's editions of the sources do not decry the "Hindū trauma" in the way that the earlier Governor General, Lord Ellenborough had done in the 1840's. They promote the opposite view, in that the Hindū had been subjugated by the might of the 'ferocious' Mahmūd and that his rule paved the way for the British, almost that the Hindū peoples deservedly were ruled by others, not being fit to do so themselves, according to Elliott (1867-77:3). This picture of irreconcilable conflict and endemic ancient hatred was part of the discourse that it was believed, justified the British colonial administration and rule over India – as peace-keepers protecting the interests of the merchants and ultimately the Crown, but by the time the Elliott editions had been printed in the early 1880's, the logic of imperialism and the post-Darwinian notions of progress, advancement and civilisation had all come to 'ennoble' the 'White Man's Burden' as Kipling would come to call it (though initially a poem for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, it was subsequently addressed to the American's after the conquest of the Philippines; 1899). The manipulation of this discourse was itself an aspect of British domestic party politics (Thapar, 2000a:44-45), with the 'usable past' being deployed to ultimately ensure the profits from trade remained at their maximum (see Spiegel, 1993 for notions of "romancing the past"). The fostering of an antagonistic duality of Muslim-Hindū relations, through scholarship such as Elliott and Dowson's *History of India...* and their interpretations thereof, was integral to the colonial project. The campaigns carried out by Mahmūd were driven by the same economic forces and justified by the same sort of rhetoric.

The sources do record the capture of Hindūs by Mahmūd's forces and the necessity of this element of Ghaznāvid *razzias* both as a source of human labour and fresh troops, and for the commercial value of the slaves (Levi, 2002:281). The campaigns against the Hindūs were expensive, with

months in the field and the support of large numbers of troops, auxiliaries and animals draining the treasury. The primacy of recouping those costs and returning a profit on each venture is clear in the chronicles; Firiṣṭah frequently refers to the amount of treasure, the numbers of slaves and animals captured. In Bhatea, during the campaign against Beejy Ray (1004 CE/395 AH), Mahmūd successfully defeated the prince and took the city, capturing “Two hundred and eighty elephants, many slaves, and other spoils, obtained in the town”(Briggs, 1829:28). Even when the motive for war was purportedly religious, the financial rewards were always close behind such considerations:

“The King, in his zeal to propagate the faith, now marched against the Hindoos of Nagrakote, breaking down their idols and razing their temples. The fort, at that time denominated the Fort of Bheem, was closely invested by the Mahomedans, who had first laid waste the country around it with fire and sword. Bheem was built by a prince of the same name, on the top of a steep mountain, where the Hindoos, on account of its strength, had deposited the wealth consecrated to their idols by all the neighbouring kingdoms; so that in this fort there is supposed to have been a greater quantity of gold, silver, precious stones, and pearls, than was ever collected in the royal treasury of any prince on earth...” (Briggs, 1829:29)

Indeed the plunder in this period was such that Firishta laconically remarks that recording “the details of which would be tedious...” (Briggs, 1829:29).

The incorporation of large numbers of slaves into the Ghaznāvid state was a consequence of this need for warriors, artisans and labourers, in the same way that other non-Muslim peoples had been coerced or co-opted during the period of the early Islamic conquest of Sindh (93 AH/712 CE; see Gibb, 1932). These ghazawāt or razzias were a continual aspect of their policy of campaigning in the sub-continent against Shi'ite Multan and other centres of the Ismā'īlī Muslims of Sindh, and the infidel Hindūs. Sources suggest that this policy was first embarked upon by Amir Sebūktigīn, whilst he was still under the command of Alptigin, the Sāmānīd mamlūk who seized control of Ghaznā after 351 AH/962 CE (Bosworth, 1991: 66). Firishta writes that “Alptigin... retained his independence fifteen years, during which period his general, Su-booktugeen, being engaged in frequent wars with the Indians, as often defeated them (A. H. 365/A. D. 975)” (Brigg, 1829:11), but the dates of these earlier incursions are not clear. al-'Utbī records that the Amir Sebūktigīn “...made frequent expeditions into Hind, in the prosecution of Holy Wars” (Elliott, 1867-77b:16), and suggests (incorrectly) that these were the first incursions by Muslims, when he states that the “cities in Hind, ...had up to that time been tenanted only by infidels, and not trodden by the camels and

horses of the Musulmāns” (Elliott, 1867-77b:16). Firishta suggests that Amir Sebūktigīn made several raids upon Hind, in addition to those he described in more detail at Lamghān and Kusdār (see below). From the very first, it would appear that Mahmūd had an important role in these, albeit by proxy, as his father celebrated his birth by destroying the idols of Sodra on the Chināb river, in 361 AH/971 CE (Elliott, 1867-77b: Note D, 2; Bosworth, , 1991: 65). Al-‘Utbī describes the assault and plunder of Lamghān in 369 AH/988 CE, in pursuit of the Raja Djaipal (Jaipāl), whom he eventually defeated (Longworth-Danes, 1993: 155). Djaipal’s resistance to the Islamic incursions earned further punitive raids in 378 AH/988 CE, this time with both the Amir and his son Mahmūd, whom al-‘Utbī describes as “...like a lion of the forest or a destructive eagle...” (Elliott, 1867-77b:17). This zeal was the cause of conflict between the two, as Sebūktigīn appears to have censured his son's refusal to negotiate with Djaipāl’s envoys by a short imprisonment afterwards, for presumably challenging his father (Longworth-Danes, 1993: 155). This may have been behind the unusual decision of Sebūktigīn to appoint his younger son Ismāīl as heir, upon his death in 387 AH/997 CE (Haig, 1993:133). Mahmūd defeated his brother and assumed the title of “Amir” in 389 AH/997 CE, also being awarded the laqab (honorific) of Yamīn al-dawla Amin al-milla (hand of the Khalif and defender of the faithful) by the Khalifa al-Kadīr, one year later (Cole, 2003; Haig, 1993: 133; Longworth-Danes, 1993: 155). A pattern begins to emerge in the reign of Amir Sebūktigīn that is followed by his son with enormous success, and that sets the seal upon the dynasty and its orientation, as a whole. The wealth of India is suborned by the sultāns to meet the needs of the Ghaznāvid state, under the banner of legitimate ghāzwarā against the infidel Hindūs. Mahmūd would appear to have conducted almost yearly cold-weather campaigns into India during the entire period of his rule, although the exact number is unclear (Longworth-Danes, 1993:155). Elliott notes that Nizāmud-din Ahmad's *Tabakāt-i Akbarī* mentions twelve but actually records sixteen, whilst Dow's 1792 translation of Firishta notes twelve initially, but enumerates fifteen (Elliott, 1867-77b: D, 1). Elliott himself details some seventeen (1867-77: D), and a more modern historical examination by Haig (1913-1936) agrees with this figure (1993:133-135). The difference in number relates both to the lack of sources, and the confusion over what constituted individual raids and at what times they took place. As Elliott notes in his introduction to “Mahmūd's Expeditions to India” (1867-77: D, 434-466)

The times places, and numbers of Mahmūd’s expeditions to India have offered great difficulties to those who have dealt with the history of that ferocious and insatiable conqueror. We look in vain for any enquiry on the subject from the native historians of this

period, who, in their ignorance of Upper India, enter names and years without the scruples and hesitations which a better knowledge or a more critical spirit, would have induced...”
(1867-77: 434)

In spite of the obvious prejudice of this statement (the record of 11th century Britain is hardly a less confusing record; see Insley, 2000), the observation of the paucity of contemporary non-Muslim records is initially striking, suggesting a calamity too terrible to be remarked upon by those whom the Ghaznāvids despoiled. Yet this image of the absence of a Hindū perspective upon the period may, in fact, tell us more about the justification for British rule than about the lack of contemporary Hindū historians of Indian history. In his obituary for the noted Hindū historian and scholar Bishambhar Nath Pande (1906-1988), F.M. Faruqi reiterates the question asked by Elliott regarding the paucity of Hindū sources, and suggests that “Sir Henry, and scores of other Empire scholars, went on to produce a synthetic Hindū versus Muslim history of India” (1998). The distortion of Indian history, suggested Pande, served the interests of the British colonial governors in both dividing the population of India and in neutralising antagonism towards themselves by re-directing hostility towards each other. Faruqi quotes Lord Elgin as Viceroy of India (1862-63), cynically remarking that “We have maintained our power in India by playing-off one part against the other and we must continue to do so...” (1998:22). In this context, Elliott's History... is an exercise in colonial rule, rather than a history conducted “with better knowledge or a more critical spirit...” (1867-77: D, 434). The wider discussion of bias and misinterpretation in Indian history writing (and its promulgation in “nationalist” textbooks under the BJP government; see Deb, 2003), have been discussed above, but the implications for Romanī historiography, particularly the re-writing of Romanī history, are profound. The centrality of Mahmūd of Ghaznā's razzias to the Indian ethnogenesis theory are well-established, and almost universally accepted (outside of the “Dutch school”; see Mayall, 2004: 220-29), as the major factor in the migration of the Gypsies from India (as opposed to the ancestors of groups who coalesced and emerged as a distinct Gypsy identity in Anatolia, the position adopted in this book). If, as seems clear, the picture of Muslim incursions, and enslavement of huge numbers of Indians needs to be qualified by the perspective of Pande, Faruqi and others, how are we then to account for the presence of these Hindūs in Ghaznā and thus provide a plausible context for the “origins” of the Romanī peoples? The answer to this may lie in the trope in Romanī historiography of the Gypsy as victim, as pariah and outcast. As suggested earlier in this work, the political importance of claiming such a status has to a large extent determined the kind of history produced in support of such claims. This perspective would require

that the understanding of the social and economic position of Indians in Ghaznā would be a consequence of their capture and enslavement. As I shall describe below, this image is challenged by the evidence we have of Hindū participation on a broader scale and their positions of authority that they occupied in the structures of the state and army. It is also a picture that is problematic in view of Mahmūd's own behaviour, as suggested above; his sponsorship of heterodox Muslim groups in Khorāsān and his wholesale incorporation of artefacts and motifs from India in the construction of the most important mosque in Ghaznā, the Arūs al-Falak, or “Celestial Bride of Heaven” are not entirely consistent with the ghazī image, nor the Hindutva picture of the rapacious, tyrannical Hindū-killer.

The interests of those writing for the sultān about the razzias were clearly to celebrate the superiority of Islamic arms against the infidel, and al-‘Utbī is fulsome in his praise of Muslim arms, as when Amīr Sebūktigīn invades Hind in 369 AH/979 CE. During the Lamghan campaign, “he... captured other cities and killed the polluted wretches, destroying the idolatrous and gratifying the Musalmāns... wounding and killing beyond measure...” (1876-77, II:18). Whilst Bosworth notes that his [al-‘Utbī] “ornate and verbose style” does not ignore the darker side of the sultāns’ reigns (2000: 945), his confusion of dates and lack of knowledge about the territory concerned makes him less reliable (Elliott, 1867-77: C, 429). His depiction of the “darker side” of these episodes is not unambiguous, but it is hard not to see these descriptions as merely triumphalist. Elliott echoes al-‘Utbī’s perspective of the accounts of Hindū defeat, when he comments on the ease with which “...the hardy warriors of Zabulistān had overcome the more effeminate sons of India” (1867-77: D, 434). As Lal has pointed out, the contrast for the British between the colonial “administration” (rather than “rule”) and its subjects, is frequently portrayed in terms of “vigorous” and “improving” government, as opposed to “ancient” and “religious” (read “degraded” and “effeminate”) society (Lal, 1993). Clearly the imperial project of the British sought antecedents in the Muslim conquest of India eight centuries earlier. Conversely, the early nationalist struggle chose to ignore this dichotomy in favour of portraying a pre-colonial society where,

“[w]e have chapter and verse given to us by Hindū historians and by Mussalman [sic] historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindūs and Mussalmans in the villages are not even today quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all.” (Gandhi, 1931)

In this light, the campaigns of the Ghanāvids were to be subsumed under the notion of a “comparative peace”, in the interests of opposing those who sought to claim their spirit as

“ferocious and insatiable” conquerors, masquerading behind a discourse of advancement and improvement, the British. The actual nature of the campaigns themselves is difficult to ascertain in the writings of the Muslim chroniclers, filled as they are with the assumptions of superiority and “the subversion of idolatry, so shall their reward be in heaven” (Firishta, quoted in Elliott, 1867-77: D, 448).

The Indian troops in Mahmūd's army engaged in the Indian raids made up a sizeable element of the infantry forces, the *piyādagān-i dargāhi*, mounted on camels for long distance campaigns, pitched battles and sieges (Bosworth, 1963: 114). These slave corps were commanded by the *Sālār-i Ghulāmān*, an officer second only to the commander-in-chief, usually but not always a Turk (Bosworth, 1963: 99). These were armed with a variety of weaponry, some of it specialised (Indians used the lasso, for example), and produced in India, such as steel cuirasses and sword blades (Bosworth, 1963: 120-1). In addition to these troops, locally recruited soldiers also played a part in the campaigns, together with auxiliaries who were blacksmiths, carpenters, stone-breakers and siege engineers. As suggested earlier, the army also brought along supernumerary personnel such as astrologers and large numbers of merchants in the *bāzār-i lashkar* or ‘army market’ (Bosworth, 1963: 119). One of the major logistical problems for an army on the march was the control and management of these additional (and not always welcome) civilians (Hale, 1989: 63).

The accounts of the assaults on India provide some idea of the scale of the plundering of temples, cities and the country. For example, after narrowly defeating a combined force of Gukkars (Ghūr-kās) and “the Rājas of Ujjain, Gwāliār, Kālinjar, Kanauj, Dehlī, and Ajmīr” (Brigg, 1829: I,32) at Ūnd in 399 AH/1008 CE, Mahmūd plundered the wealth of the temple of Nagarkot, or Kot Kāngrā (Haig, 1993:133). Additional treasure was gained by the fact that the “Hindoo females, on this occasion, sold their jewels, and melted down their golden ornaments (which they sent from distant parts), to furnish resources for the war” (Brigg, 1829:I,32). Firishta notes the extent of the temple's treasures as

...700,00 golden dinars, 700 muns of gold and silver plate, 200 muns of pure gold in ingots, 2000 muns of silver bullion, and twenty muns of various jewels, including pearls, corals, diamonds, and rubies... (1400lb. of gold and silver plate, 400lb. of golden ingots, 4000lb. of silver bullion, and 40lb. weight of pearls, corals, diamonds, and rubies) (Brigg, 1829:33)

The fabulous treasure secured from the temple at Somanath in the campaign of 415 AH/1024 CE, was seized with the troops and large numbers of irregulars, such as the “...30,000 youths of

Toorkistan and the neighbouring countries, who followed him [Mahmūd] without pay...” (Briggs, 1829: I, 42). This element was a constant factor in the Ghaznāvid forces, and no doubt influenced the choice of missions undertaken for plunder. The army under Mahmūd was an enormously effective institution, comprising of a differing elements of professional soldiers, elite palace guards and a militia from the tribal Türkoman who assembled at the start of each raid, for plunder and booty. The auxiliaries were augmented by local forces of various Indian origins, and allies, as well as ethnic units of the kind that had been present in Muslim armies from the earliest times (see Crone, 2003: 287-285; 1991: 877). In these complex elements we may find the origin of the Romanī people.

4.7 The city as theatre: Ghaznāvid culture & literature

THE EXPANSION OF GHAZNĀ DURING MAHMŪD'S RULE, especially following the important razzias of 408-409 AH/1018-1019 CE against the cities of the northern Ganges, Kanauj and Mathura (see Elliott, 1867-77b: D, 450-455, for a summary of the sources and a discussion of the probable route), was financed by the immensely valuable treasures of India. Looted and carried by captive Hindūs, this wealth supported not only the military, but the cultural and literary growth of the Ghaznāvid state. Historians of the period, such as Firishta, record the splendour of palaces and public buildings endowed by the Ghaznāvid nobility, after Mahmūd's construction of his great central mosque, the "Celestial Bride of Heaven". The complex also included a university "...supplied with a vast collection of curious books in various languages... [and]... a museum of natural curiosities" (Briggs, 1829: I, 39). In order to support this educational endowment, Mahmūd is described as bringing what Firishta describes as the "learned men who lived at the court of Mahmūd..." (Briggs, 1829: 50-1). The *Shāh-nāma* of Firdawsī belongs properly to this period (c.401 AH/1010 CE), when scholars, poets and philosophers were brought to Ghaznā after Mahmūd's conquest of Khwarzmshah in 408-409 AH/1016-1017 CE, though not always willingly. The historian and scholar, al-Bīrūnī, the mathematician Abū Nasr Mansūr and the physician, Abul-Khays were all members of this group. Firishta writes of the four hundred poets and learned men, besides the university students at Ghaznā (Briggs, 1829: I, 51). The festivities surrounding this erudite company, including the *majālis-i nashāt u sharāb*, or wine-drinking sessions, often featured recitations from poets and scholars, as well as the clowns, musicians and dancers (including Indians), that accompanied such events at the palaces (Bosworth, 1963: 138). Bosworth suggests that the mosque complex, and the palaces and other buildings in the city, bore clear influence of Indian craftsmanship, and incorporated objects made from precious metals and Hindū statuary in their fabric, captured as war trophies (1965: 1049), a surprising feature in an orthodox Sunni environment. The ruins of the *lashkarī bāzār*, or army market, still display frescoes of rows of palace *ghulāms* surrounding the sultān's throne in the principal audience chamber, amongst whom appear images of the Ghaznāvid Hindūs (Sourdell-Thomine, 1983: 1054). Again this suggests a more complex character than the rapacious and fanatical Muslim war-leader portrayed in text referred to earlier. The construction of towers of victory, or more possibly minarets of very particular design and execution, in the later Ghaznāvid period under Mas'ūd III (1099-1115 CE) and Bahrām Shāh (1118-c1157 CE), reflect the impact of the skilled craftsmen and artisans of India "...as Zābūlīstān had no artistic traditions of its own." (Bosworth, 1983:1049)

The military expeditions to India undertaken after this conquest were accompanied by al-Bīrūnī, who learnt Sanskrit and some of the dialects to produce his *Description of India* or *Tarīkh al-Hind* (421 AH/1030 CE), a remarkably balanced work for its time. Unusually, the cycle of stories relating the exploits of Bahrām Gūr (Shāh Varakhan V) contained in Firdawsī's *Shāh-nāma*, and most especially those relating to the "injustices of the King of Hind" may have reflected not only the Ghaznāvid perception of Indians as enemies, but their complexity of views towards Hindū Brahmans and Rajas. More importantly perhaps, the cycle contains the interesting episodes of some length, about the relations between the Shāh and Shangul, the king of Hind (VII, 109-148), including of course, the episode of the Gypsies. In the context of the genre of "mirrors for princes" such as the *Qābūs-nāma*, it might be argued that Mahmūd consciously strove to imitate some qualities of the Iranian king (Bruijn, 1987). The image of the Ghaznāvid state was clearly meant to rest upon notions of culture and learning, not merely the acquisition of wealth and plunder, or the military success of Islam. The later award of titles to Mahmūd by the Khalif at Baghdad in 417 AH/1027 ("Guardian of the State and of the Faith"; see Briggs, 1829: 47), and to his sons, the Amīrs Mas'ūd and Yūsūf, reflect the esteem the Ghaznāvid court was held in by the wider Islamic world, notwithstanding the sometimes difficult relations with the Khalif (Bosworth, 1991: 66). This court was to be celebrated not just in its heyday, but by the Ghaznāvid's successors, the Saldjūkids through the work of Nizām al-Mulk, their great vizier, who would refer to them as a model of efficient rule and organisation in his *Siyāsat-nāma* or *Siyar al-mulūk*, the celebrated *Book of Government* or *Rules for Kings* (Darke, 1960). It is to this state that superseded Mahmūd and his heirs in the western Muslim lands, that the next part of the history of the Gypsies belongs.

5.1 The Saldjūkids, Armenia and Byzantium; “the divine-rebuking wrath of God... the savage nation of infidels called Turks...”

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT of the arrival of what can be described as a proto-Romanī speaking, (Hancock, 2005: 25; Matras, 2004: 278), or Rajputic (Hancock, 2000: 23) peoples in the lands of Byzantium, it is necessary to briefly examine the ‘origins’ of the Saldjūk, Selcük or Saljuq Turks (referred to above by Matthew of Edessa, describing their first appearance in the Armenian lands in 467 AE/1018 CE; see Dostourian, 1993: 47). This princely Turkish clan were descended from the Oghuz Türks (see Cahen, 2001: 21-65; 1968, 19-119; Luther, 2001; Bosworth, 1986: 936-959; Houtsma, 1993: 208-213; Talbot Rice, 1961), or Ghuzz Turks as they are known in the Arab sources (see Holt, 1983: 1106-1111). In the context of 11th and 12th century Asia Minor/Anatolia, it is also important to reflect upon the relationship between the Saldjūks, the Türkmen or Turcomans, and the Ghaznāvids (Houtsma, 1993; Langdon, 1992; Vryonis, 1971; Barthold, 1945). This is in order to establish a clear background for the primary intention in this chapter, viz, render a plausible trajectory of movement for the proto-Romanī from Ghaznā to Constantinople, and a time-scale that, although rapid, confidently pursues the arguments referred to and established previously in this book. Hancock has most recently summarised the debate and his earlier arguments in what he has called “the Seljuq factor” (2006: 83-84), in opposition to scholars who have disputed the speed with which this population is likely to have moved (Hübschmannová, 2004; Ioviță and Schurr, 2004: 275). This book additionally makes the argument for a rapid dispersal of proto-Romanī into Anatolia, and attempts to elaborate on the likely historical context of such a migration, including the role of the Türkmen, led by the Saldjūks, as the significant factor in the migration of these groups. Here, I will also investigate the possibility of these proto-Romanī being involved as mercenaries, in the defence of early mediaeval Armenia, before the kingdom's destruction by the combined intrigue of the Byzantines, and military defeat by the Saldjūkids in 1064 CE.

The role of the Saldjūks in the Turkification of Byzantine Asian Minor is also referred to, as it has been the source of some heated debate, especially amongst nationalist Turkish historians (see Bosworth, 1995: 937), who see the Saldjūk empire as the primary Muslim Turkish power to establish itself in the central lands of Islam. This perspective, still at the heart of Turkish teaching and textbook histories today, treats the Ghaznāvid and Qaraqānid polities as peripheral, in favour of a lineage stemming from the sons of Saldjūk b. Luqmān to the Republic of the present (see Kafesoğlu, 1988; Bosworth, 1999). The Turkification of the Byzantine lands has also been discussed by Vryonis extensively in his monograph (1971), a process that he suggests was

unusually long, as a "...drawn out period [that] subjected Byzantine society to repeated shocks and dislocations... in a continuous process that lasted four centuries." (1971: 143) The loss of Asia Minor to Byzantium, the destruction of the mediaeval Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia and the establishment of the Sladjūkid Sultānate of Rūm, as an appanage of the Great Saldjūks of Persia, can all be traced to the defeat of the Ghaznāvids on the field of Dandānqān (431 AH/1040 CE), as the Ghaznāvid Empire had acted as a bulwark against the incursions from the Türkmen from Central Asia.

This crucial period in Romanī history is the most difficult, in that there are literally no sources that can be cited, referring to Hindūs, Indians or any group that one might suggest may be proto-Romanī in any guise, apart from one intriguing reference in the chronicle of Matthew of Edessa to the numbers of refugees and destitute people flowing through Asia Minor in the mid-to-late eleventh century (Dostourian, 1993: 144). In this context, the historian's task is most akin to White's suggestion of an exercise in "constructing" a narrative from fragments of the past that remain to us, and thus can be challenged as producing the most speculative and conjectural of "histories" (White, 1987b: 8). Acknowledging this to be the case, nevertheless, what is presented here is an attempt to explain a suggested relationship between the remnants of the Hindū soldiery at Dandānqān in May 1040 CE, and the appearance of groups of people defined as Egyptians or Aigupta (Aigupta) in the Byzantine capital of Constantinople in the late eleventh-century. In order to "reconstruct" (or "construct") such a relationship, it is inevitable that a "narrative of journey" is established (which I have described as the dominant trope of Romanī Studies scholarship). This, to use the terminology of White, is the "poetic mode" in which the discourse is framed, and "tragedy" becomes the major device for "emplotment" of the narrative (see White, 1975: xi). In a sense, this exemplifies White's discussion of the Chronicle of St Gall. The Chronicle proceeds to record a series of events in the form of an annotated list of dates, such as "709 (CE), hard winter, Duke Gotfreid died", "710 hard winter and deficient in crops", and "712 flood everywhere" (White, 1987b:6-20). The point of reference here is not the "events" listed, but the years when nothing is recorded at all; 711, 713, 715, 716 and 717. The absence of any narrative content is taken by White to be an illustration of how "...social events are apparently as incomprehensible as natural events. They seem to have the same order of importance or unimportance." (1987b:7). As White goes on to argue, "...narrative strains for the effect of having filled in all the gaps, of having put an image of continuity, coherency, and meaning in place of the fantasies of emptiness..." (1987b:11) The exercise here is to "fill in all the gaps", having acknowledged that to desire to do so, is itself an attempt to give meaning to a

series of events, recorded without mention of groups I can suggest are connected to my overarching narrative, to what might be described as years when nothing is recorded at all.

The trajectory, or narrative of journey outlined here is then, a construct, an alternative vector of coherency and continuity, and it must be recognised as such in order to avoid being judged as if it were indeed a “real” series of events being described, and subsequently argued over in opposition to alternative, and equally conjectural, trajectories. The very structure of the debate around the “Seljuq factor”, as Hancock typifies it, is one that assumes it is possible to connect the history of the Gypsies in a meaningful way with that of the Saldjūks, to demonstrate the place of one group in relation to the other. To date, no secure information has been drawn from sources (narrative or documentary), to allow us to infer the kind of positions currently being adopted, nor to refute those of others. All these must be measured as providing more or less informed conjectures about the period in question, and consequently their likelihood as sufficient attempts to address the problems posed by scholars. As Acton has remarked, “with sociologically informed questions prompted by archival research, we end up with a greater capacity to discriminate between speculations...” (Acton, 2004: pc) The multiple questions raised by scholars might be summarised as can we find enough information, in the context of the turmoil and chaos of mediaeval Anatolia, to suggest a connection between those identified groups of Egyptians that appear in Byzantium in the late 11th century with those we have identified in Trans-Oxiana in 1040 CE? The underlying problems of whom we are defining, and in what manner these definitions have been assumed, must also be carefully considered. It must also be acknowledged that the mode, form and emplotment used have been selected a priori, though as Partner has illustrated, the point at which this has taken place is notoriously difficult to pinpoint (1997: 108-109), and is almost inherent in the approach to the work in its infancy, not a conscious decision once the material has been gathered, prior to its being ordered, rationalised and narrated. As I have outlined it above, this narration moves from a brief consideration of origins of the particular group of Oghuz we know as Saldjūk, to a consideration of the circumstances recorded by the chronicles (some contemporary, some not) written about the region in question. By this means, I hope to illuminate salient points that will allow me to challenge some aspects of the “Seljuq factor” arguments from scholars engaged in making or refuting them, and propose a likely scenario for a relationship existing between Ghaznāvid Hindūs and Byzantine Egyptians.

5.2 “...destiny decided that he should live a reign of pain and vexation...” Mas’ūd b. Mahmūd and the fragmentation of Ghaznāvid authority

THE CAMPAIGN THAT LED TO THE DEFEAT OF MAS'UD'S ARMY in 431 AH/1040 CE at Dandānqān was itself troubled by numerous problems, with roots in the very earliest days of the reign of Amīr Mas'ūd. The initial power struggle between the Amīr and his brother Abū Ahmad Muammad, had left a legacy of division and instability in the Ghaznāvid state, after 421 AH/1030 CE. Those who had remained loyal to Muhammad, including many of the Hindū troops, were at first treated fairly by Mas'ūd after his deposition of his brother, but subsequent executions and imprisonments of elements of the elite undermined this. Muhammad 'Ūfī relates a story of a conversation between Abū Nasr Miškān and Sultān Mahmūd, as a device to explain the fall of the House of Ghaznā:

...Mas'ūd," he continued, "is a proud fellow and thinks there is nobody better than himself. Muhammad is stout of heart, generous, and fearless, and if Mas'ūd indulges in pleasure, wine, and the like, Muhammad outdoes him. He has no control over himself, has no apprehension of Mas'ūd, and is heedless of the important concerns of life. I fear I find but little satisfaction in the thought of Muhammad succeeding me; for woe to him at the hands of Mas'ūd, who will devour him, and woe also to the generals of my army, for Mas'ūd is a very covetous man and has great love of money. If he should hear of any officer possessing a little property, he will be sure to destroy him in a few days, and appoint some worthless fellow in his place." (Mohamed Khan, 1835: vol.2, section 45)

Mas'ūd chose to insist on his position by the frequent use of force, but unlike the Sultān Mahūmd, this came to be seen as tyrannical and arbitrary, primarily because the Amīr's efforts were seen to be acting without God's approval. Baihakī emphasises this aspect of the understanding of Mas'ūd's failure when he writes,

Let wise men reflect upon this... that man by mere labour and exertion, notwithstanding that he has property, armies, and military stores, can succeed in nothing without the aid of Almighty God. In what was Amīr Mas'ūd deficient in all the appurtenances of a king? Pomp, servants, officers of State, lords of the sword and pen, countless armies, elephants and camels in abundance, an overflowing treasury, were all his, but destiny decided that he should live a reign of pain and vexation, and that Khorāsān, Khwārizm, Rayy and that Jabbāl should depart from his hands... "man has no power to strive against fate"... (Briggs, 1829: 127)

The power-play between differing groups within the highly militarised state structure was exacerbated by the Amīr, as the example of Tilak the Hindū (quoted earlier) illustrates. Mas'ūd

sought support from those who would help him challenge the authority of his father's generals and viziers, and in consequence, he came to rely heavily upon the Indians, further alienating the Turkish *sübaşı* and *ghulāms*. This was to prove fatal to the outcome of the battle in 421 AH/1040 CE, as many of these high-ranking soldiers (and their retinues) were to become renegades by changing sides on the battle-field itself. Mas'ūd's eastern orientation, together with his failure to secure the support of his father's lieutenants and integrate his own commanders into the power structure left him consistently vulnerable to rebellion and dissent, as the frequent challenges to his reign show. Unlike his father's deposition of his brother Ismā'īl in 997 CE, Mas'ūd was not universally acknowledged as the legitimate claimant in his contest with Muhammad in 1030 CE. The passage above refrains from recounting the previous acclamation of Mas'ūd as the heir to the throne in 406 AH/1015-16 CE, and his subsequent appointment as governor of Herāt in 408 AH (Nazim, 1993: 400). Although at one time he had been openly recognised by his father as the heir to Ghaznāvid throne, in an episode that seems to reflect his father's own life, Mas'ūd fell from favour and was imprisoned for a short time in Mūltan sometime in 411 AH (Nizam, 1993: 400). He subsequently was able to regain his father's trust, was awarded the governorship of Rayy in 420 AH, and had succeeded in fully conquering the Buwaihīs' Isfāhān, preparing for a new campaign against the Türkmēn, when Mahmūd died (Briggs, 1829: 31). Muhammad can only have assumed rule with the support of elements of the court, and in this sense, his accession reflected the dominant interests of sections of the Ghaznāvid elite at this point, in fulfilment of the perceived wishes of Mahmūd, as the passage from Muhammad 'Ūfī suggests. This may have been for a number of reasons, but clearly the wider interests of dynastic politics came into play; Muhammad was effectively appointed by Mahmūd's brother-in-law, Amīr Ali b. Kuzil Arslān (Briggs, 1829: 31). Muhammad 'Ūfī suggests that the military support for the accession of this prince was lacking (Elliott 1867-77: vol.2, section 45), and the events that followed would indicate that Prince Mas'ūd was accepted by the generals and officers as their preferred claimant, as Firishta relates (Briggs, 1829: 31). Fifty days after Mahmūd's death, a group of nobles and officers, led by one Abū-l Amīr Ayaz (noted as "son of Isaac" by Firishta and therefore a convert), convinced the household *ghulāms* to rebel against Muhammad and seek service with Mas'ūd in Nīshāpūr. This episode is interesting in the context of this book, as the Prince Muhammad "despatched Sewund Ray, an Indian chief, with a numerous body of Hindoo cavalry, in pursuit of them" (Briggs, 1829: 31). Despite their defeat and the consequent escape of the rebels to Mas'ūd, Muhammad continued to rely upon Hindūs for military support, which would suggest that the household troops that absconded to his brother were primarily the Turkish *ghulāms* and that, as suggested previously, the Hindū troops remained loyal to

the reigning prince, until his deposition at Herāt, some five months into his reign, Shawwāl 421 AH/October 1030 CE (Mohamed Khan, 1835: chap.5, section 4). Mas'ūd's coup was legitimised by the award of a number of laqabs from the Khalif al-Kādir bi'allāh (Nizam, 1993: 401)

Factional rivalries at court were reflected in the divisions apparent in urban Muslim society between differing groups that became articulate in local leadership and the contestation of authority with the dynasty. The process of founding wāqfs (Ar.) or vakıfs (Tur.), had enabled the religious scholars or 'ulamā/ulemā to become increasingly independent of the centralised control of the Ghaznāvid state, as this form of pious endowment provided incomes from monies left by wealthy merchants, landowners and office-holders. These alliances brought the ulemā into the social and political sphere as "notables" (aḥyān), negotiating with the aşabiyyāt or popular factions, the various schools of religious law, the differing and increasingly popular sufi sects (who provided a more accessible form of the practise of Islam amongst the populace). The politics of Khorāsān saw these groups competing for leadership with their rulers, and the ability of the former to organise elements of the local population into militias further enhanced their role (Lapidus, 1966: 347). The competition that existed between differing urban groups, so palpable during the reigns of Sebūktigīn and Mahmūd and in their manipulation of the heterodox Karāmiyya sect in Nīshāpūr for example, evolved into increasingly identifying the rapacious demands of the fiscal revenue collectors as a common threat (Lapidus, 1966: 345).

Part of the impetus for increasing urban organisation was the disorganisation of the rural society, with whole sections of the rural population resorting to banditry and exactions from the peasantry. The ever-present ghāzīs, so intrinsic to the Indian campaigns, became problematic during the periods when no major assaults upon the riches of the Hindū kingdoms were being undertaken. The 'ayyārs and hadīthān added to the independence of action that these parts of the empire's population began to exercise, sometimes in alliance with the ulemā but often at their own behest (Lapidus, 1966: 346). An increasingly centripetal tendency emerges during the latter part of Mahmūd's reign and particularly after Amīr Mas'ūd assumes power in 421 AH/1030 CE, the beginnings of a definite urban identity and culture in counterpoint to the rulers at Ghaznā became apparent (Bosworth, 1963: 254). Mohamed Khan suggests this stark division of the empire's social groups, and the particular disorder brought by the Saldjūks, when he writes that

“...in his {Mas'ūd's} absence, the power of his formidable enemies had increased; the property and lives of his subjects were made their sport; and, as one of his nobles said, “though once but ants, they had become adders.” (chap. 5, section 4; Briggs, 1829: vol.1,

section 11)

Despite frequent advice from his ministers and advisers, the Amīr continued to pursue a policy of assaulting the Hindū states, allowing the incursions of the Türkmēn to plunder the western portions of the empire and give rein to the aspirations of the previously subjugated Buwaihīs, lieutenant-governors of Rayy, Isfāhān and Persian Irāk, to independent rule (Mohamed Khan, 1835: chap.5, section 4). Mas'ūd's obstinacy in the face of his responsibilities, as described by the commentators on his reign, is regarded as contumacy in the face of divine will, and hence the loss of charisma that fatally undermines his right to rule. The visitations of pestilence and plague in the Persian lands, in the year 424 AH/1033 CE was seen in retrospect, as further indication of divine displeasure (Briggs, 1829: vol.1, section 11). The defeat of Tatiāh "an Indian chief" at the hands of the rebellious Ahmad Nīāltigīn, the governor of Hindūstān, prior to the latter's eventual destruction by the Hindū general Tilak, was another example of the unravelling of Ghaznāvid authority amongst its own competing power-groups. The struggle for control of the entire Hindūstān army, between Ahmad and the incumbent general Kāzī Shīrāz, underpinned the governor's rebellion using the army of Lahore; in addition Ahmad's success in the field exacerbated the competition between these two and the Amīr Mas'ūd, and drove him to rely upon Indian commanders and troops to carry out his will. Clearly, the fractured relationship of ruler and elites lay behind the catastrophe at Dandānqān, at the close of this turbulent period in 1040 CE.

The incursions throughout Mas'ūd's reign had inflicted some shameful defeats upon the Ghaznāvid armies, and local populations were clearly resentful of the inability to defend them against the raids of the Türkmēn (Briggs, 1829: vol.1, section 11). The situation deteriorated further after 426 AH, and in 428 AH Mas'ūd heard the complaints of his subjects in person when he arrived in Balkh, and determined to eradicate the threat of Tūghrīl Beg and the Saldjūks in a campaign beginning that winter (Briggs, 1829: vol.1, section 11). His plans were thwarted both by the weather and his ignorance of his own commanders' advice. The two major groups of Saldjūks, in Irāk and Trans-Oxania required dealing with in this order; those under Jakūr Beg had successfully raided Khorāsān and defeated Ghaznāvid forces consistently, whilst their "cousins" under Tūghrīl had constantly raided across the Oxus, only to melt away at the approach of any Ghaznāvid expedition, yet Mas'ūd "by no means listen to the advice of his officers". Having bridged the river, Mas'ūd occupied the territory of the Saldjūks, but to no avail, as they had meanwhile attacked Ghaznā itself, raiding the Amīr's own stables and causing much damage to the outskirts of the city, before being repelled (Mohamed Khan, 1835: chap.5, section 4). In Ramadan 429 AH/June-July 1038, the Saldjūks took

Nīṣāpūr, and Tūghrīl Beg “sat upon the throne of the realm of Sultān Mahmūd at Ṣādhyākh”, an unacceptable affront to Mas’ūd, who “when this news reached... [his]... ears, he was beside himself and extremely anxious and upset.” (Luther, 2001:37) Despite his earlier intransigence over the advice from his generals, this was a challenge the Amīr could not ignore.

The march to Dandānqān led through the almost waterless desert of the Sarakhs region, when the drought in the area had been exceptional (Bosworth, 1963: 250) Mas’ūd, re-occupied the city of Nīṣāpūr in late 430 AH/1039 CE and surviving the subsequent famine, marched into the Tūs region to try and secure supplies, but the years of depredations by nomads and finally by exhausted Ghaznāvid armies had reduced the region to bareness; neither bread nor barley could be found and the Saldjūks had stopped-up the wells, or spoilt them (Luther, 2001: 38). On the passage to Merv, almost all of the horses died, leaving the heavy cavalry and ghulāms inexpertly on camels, along with many of the infantry (who usually travelled that way on campaign; see Bosworth, 1963: 113). In the Saljūq-Nāma an interesting story about how Mas’ūd wished to stop Çağrı Beg and Tūghrīl Beg joining forces in Tūs, and hastened to the location on a forced night-march. However, he fell asleep on his elephant and the elephant driver, fearing to awaken him, drove the elephant slowly and allowed the Saldjūks the advantage (Luther, 2001: 37). The battle itself saw desertion of the former Turkish household ghulāms of Sultān Mahmūd to the Saldjūks, and left the Hindūs as almost the only troops at Mas’ūd's command. Baihakī mentions some 16,000 Türkmen (64,000 including family members; see Bosworth, 1986: 938), but we have no clear indication of the numbers of Ghaznāvid troops actually present; the march had exacted a terrible toll upon the armies of Mas’ūd (Bosworth, 1963: 250), so it is difficult to postulate how many of the soldiers were likely to be Indian in origin. The pattern of the Amīr's reign would suggest that the majority of those who fought for him, and who consequently suffered the worst casualties, would have been the Hindū ghulāms, (see plate right of a Ghaznāvid Hindū palace ghulām; Nicolle & McBride, 1982:27), and elephant drivers. These troops, with no ties of loyalty other than to the person of the sultān and without connections of ethnicity or religion that would allow them to ally themselves with the Saldjūk Türkmen, would have been decimated. Arguments have been made that the defeated Hindūs would have been incorporated into the Saldjūk armies “Indian troops passed from the Ghaznāvid to the Seljuq [sic] armies” as an opportunistic move, common after the defeat of an enemy (Bosworth, quoted in Hancock, 2005: 26). Such acquisitions of one's former enemies was, and still is common practice, and recorded frequently; in this case the shift of allegiances from Mas’ūd to Tūghrīl Beg at Dandānqān is a good example. However, the sources do not mention the incorporation of Indian

troops into the Saldjūk forces, nor is it likely that it took place. The organisation of Saldjūk warfare was clan-based, mobile family units at this point, only later developing what might be described as the classical Islamic ghulām structure and then only partially. As Bosworth argues elsewhere, “the sultāns never conceived of themselves as despotic rulers over a monolithic empire, rulers in the Perso-Islamic tradition of the power-state as it had developed... under the early Ghaznāvids.” (1999) Furthermore, he goes on to write

They had risen to power as the successful military leaders of bands of their fellow Oghuz tribesmen and at the outset depended solely on these tribal elements. The position of the Saldjūk Sultāns was thus fundamentally different from their predecessors in the East... the Ghzanawids, themselves of slave origin and dependent on a purely professional, salaried standing army; likewise their opponents in the West, the Būyids and Fātimids, had come to depend upon professional, multi-ethnic armies.” (1999)

Unable to sever their connections with the Türkmen tribal elements, even when it became a matter of dynastic control, the Saldjūks never divested themselves of their steppe origins, nor it would appear, aspired to do so, maintaining tribal custom in partnership with their role as Muslim rulers (see Lampton, 1968: 218). No record of Indian commanders or officers comes to light in the Saljūq-Nāma of Zahīr al-Dīn Nīṣāpūrī, or comparable sources, in the way they do with al-’Ūtbī, Baihakī and other Ghaznāvid narratives. Thus the “Saldjūk factor” must be limited to the impact upon the Indian qiqānīyya and ghulām (see plate left, Nicolle, Hook & Turner, 1998:38) units at Dandānqān in 1040 CE, and their subsequent role as a “motor force” in driving refugees from this calamity into Anatolia, as an increasingly composite group fleeing the “savage nation of infidels called Turks...” (Dostourian, 1993: 44).

5.3 “...no sultāns greater or kinder to the reāyā [flock]... than the kings of the house of Saljuq...”

The Persian geographer, Mahmūd al-Kashgarī, writing in the 4th century AH/10th century CE, enumerates the twenty-four tribes of the Oghuz or Ghuzz in his *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* (Houtsma, 1993:208; Rice, 1961:25). Their fascinating, though complex lineage is described comprehensively elsewhere (see references in the previous section), and it is unnecessary to review here, but it is important to note that they descended from the Qınıq tribe, a leading clan in the Döküz (Nine) Oğuz and holders of military office (*sübaşı*) under the great commander of the right-wing of the horde, the Yabghu (Bosworth, 1999). In the conflicts of steppe society, the Oghuz were one of the groups that became displaced in the late 3rd century AH/10th century CE and migrated westwards. The *Saljūq-nāma*, after praising their treatment of their subjects (quoted above; see Luther, 2001:3), records that

...it was learned thus from historians and authors, that Saljuq b. Luqmān was from the Saljuq family of the Qiniq tribe...The house of Saljuq was a great family and very numerous. They had innumerable possessions, complete provisions, and well-organized regiments and retinue. (Luther, 2001: 29)

The later Saldjūks reconstructed a more illustrious heritage at a later date, as Tüghrīl Beg's vizier Abu 'l-'Alā' Ibn Hassūl (d.450 AH/ 1058 CE) made claims for them to be related to the legendary Afrāsiyāb (Bosworth, 1995: 938). By the beginning of the 5th century AH/ 11th century CE, the Saldjūkids had migrated from their abode in on the Volga steppe, to the Trans-Oxania region, and had come into contact with the Ghaznāvids, to the concern of both the Qarāqānīd İlek Khan and the Sultān Mahūd of Ghaznā (Bosworth, 1995: 938; Luther, 2001: 30; Talbot Rice, 1961: 28). The latter not adopt the strategy suggested by his Hādjib (a military commander) and arrange for the amputation of the thumbs of the Saldjūk archers (Talbot Rice, 1961:28). Instead he did require the depositing of hostages with him, after hearing that the Saldjūks could raise 100,000 troops merely by sending two arrows amongst the tribes and as many as were necessary if a bow were sent (Bosworth, 1999; Houtsma, 1993:208). The conflict between the Ghaznāvids and Saldjūkids became exacerbated when Isrā'īl (or Arslān), the leader of the Saldjūks at that time, was taken back to Ghaznā as Mahmūd's guest and thence imprisoned in the Kālandjār fortress in Mūltan, sometime in 1025 CE. This event is recorded in the *Saljūq-nāma* as an act of supreme betrayal by Mahmūd, trusted as he had been by Arslān Isrā'īl, his son Abu 'l-Fawāris Qutlumuş and “...three hundred youths of good appearance and pleasant form...” (Luther, 2001:30).

These measures failed to curb the turbulent behaviour of the rest of the clan, or what Bosworth describes as the "...unimportant chieftains of what must have been rather shaggy bands of Turkish nomads." (2001:8) Despite their relative importance in the Islamic world at this point, their withdrawal from Ghaznāvid jurisdiction into Khorāsān, Irāk and Ādharbaidjān caused extensive disruption to Muslims elsewhere, as the Saldjūks began to raid extensively (see al-Baihakī, 1862:544). Matthew of Eddesa records a raid in the year 467 of the Armenian calendar (1018-1019 CE), by Çagri Beg, as the first appearance of the Turks, causing widespread fear and distress (Dostorian, 1993:47). This raiding remained a pattern throughout the rest of Mahmūd's reign, for those called the 'Irākī Ghuzz by al-Baihakī, in contradistinction to those known as the Trans-Oxania Ghuzz. These latter, referred to as the people of Tughrl Beg Muhammad b. Mīkā'il b. Saljuq by al-Kashgarī, remained in Nūr Bukhārā, under the former's leadership. As pastures and resources grew scarcer in this region they were expelled from Khwarizm for their depredations, and the Saldjūkiyān and Ināliyān sought permission to move into Faronā and Nasā as mawālī, which was denied them by the Amīr Mas'ūd (1035 CE, see Houtsma, 1993: 209). Despite the offer of sending more hostages to the Ghaznāvid court, the Amīr was intransigent in his rejection, and the Saldjūks began raiding Khorāsān in earnest, also defeating a punitive expedition against them in 426 AH/1035 CE (Bosworth, 1963: 242). Eventually forced to recognise what was by then a de facto control of the region around Merv by the Saldjūk clan and their Türkmen tribes, Mas'ūd only maintained any room for negotiation by exploiting their internal divisions.

The deterioration of relations, together with the perfidious behaviour of Mahmūd and the perceived arrogance of his son, are cited as justification for the demise of the Ghaznāvids, their loss of authority and rulership through charisma (see Bosworth, 2001: 8; Luther, 2001: 35). The notion of charismatic rule, the particular "good fortune" attached to a dynasty, is of course, well-known from Central Asian nomadic societies, and most especially the Mongols (Hartog, 1989: 35), and it is interesting to see Zahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūr deploying it in the pursuit of legitimising the replacement of one Sunni Turkic dynasty by another (Luther, 2001). The result of this increasing acrimony was eventually open warfare between the Saldjūks and their Ghaznāvid overlords, in which the former were consistently superior, "...their lightly-armed and highly-mobile cavalry force proving more than a match for the more heavily-armed but cumbersome Ghaznāvid army..." (Bosworth, 1995: 938). Clearly at his point, the Saldjūkid clan and their Türkmen followers became extremely influential in the Muslim world, as they were able to inflict one of the most serious defeats upon a major Islamic polity, thereby altering irrevocably the development of the mediaeval Arab and

Christian lands of the whole region. More importantly for this book, the question of the so-called “Saldjūk factor” and the suggested role of the Türkmén in the early history of the Romanī peoples, becomes clearer, in relation to the events of 431 AH/ 1030 CE.

The primary contention I am making here is that the Hindū regiments of the Ghaznāvid army would not have even been in Trans-Oxiana, on the plain of Dandanqan near Marv, had it not been that they were a major and important part of the Ghaznāvid army and palace guard. The continuing challenge of the Saldjūk Turks had been less of a priority for the Amīr to this point, than had the continuing campaigns into India. The reasons for this are not made clear in the narrative sources; indeed Baihakī and others clearly ascribe to fate the choices made by Mas’ūd; “The star of the King's fortune had now reached its zenith, and he would by no means listen to the advice of his officers...” (Briggs, 1829: 97). Yet there are other intimations about the reasons why the Saldjūks failed to attract the attention of their overlords. As nomadic, uncultured tribes people living on the fringes of the Ghaznāvid Empire, their seemingly insincere requests for settlement in the borders of the empire as mawlā, clients of the Amīr, whilst ravaging the settled lands periodically, were regarded as indicative of their inferior status. In 425 AH/ 1034 CE, the generals Hussein and Boğtüdi were sent against the Saldjūks, at that time in the Nīşāpūr region. A petition from the Türkmén to the generals stressed that the Saldjūks and their followers were “the King's servants” who desired only to live at home with a subsidy from the royal coffers, and be led as ghazīs in warfare for plunder. They wished no harm on his subjects, only his enemies (Briggs, 1829: 95), but the message was clear enough, it was the traditional strategy of Central Asian nomad confederacies in extracting subsidies by threat (Barfield, 1989: 24). The generals’ reply was “imperious and haughty”, informing the Saldjūks of their duty to submit to the authority of the Amīr, cease their depredations or suffer the penalties (Briggs, 1829: 95). This rejection meant that the Saldjūks attacked and would seem to have adopted another classic nomad strategy, the feigned retreat, to inflict a defeat upon their imperious opponents, Hussein being captured and Boğtüdi fleeing with news of the disaster to Ghaznā.

Here is the key to the relationship between the Saldjūkids, their Türkmén followers and the Ghaznāvids. The descendants of the Oghuz are recorded as operating in ways that are clearly derived from Central Asian nomadic practice, in relation to a more sophisticated polity, where the complexities of their dependence upon a strong empire were as necessary as their stable social structure (Barfield, 1989: 20). That the Saldjūks developed the latter is obvious in that they had the ability to build both their own imperial system, and maintain the traditions and customs of the

steppe when these did not conflict with political necessity (Bosworth, 1995: 939). Without that stability, this would not have been possible, and it was clearly not apparent in their capture of Nīṣāpūr in 429 AH/1038 CE, which they could only hold temporarily. This suggests that the experience of this event, and the defeat of the Ghaznāvids in 431 AH/1040 CE forced rapid changes in the social structure of the Saldjūks, encouraged by the acquisition of significant experience from those renegades who abandoned the Ghazānvid amīr. As with the experience on what Barfield calls “the perilous frontier” of northern China, the administrative collapse of the sophisticated polity (in this case, western Ghaznā and Khorāsān), forced the Türkmen nomads to replace the previous system with their own revitalised and hybrid organisation (1989: 36). The organising principle of the Türkmen was the logic of charismatic rule, and the particular “morning of fortune” of the Saldjūkid clan, as Zanīr al-Dīn Nīṣāpūrī’s *Saljūq-Nāma* tells us, it “...shone from the pages which told of their circumstances, and the splendour of good fortune glinted from the leaves which related their condition” (Luther, 2001: 35). A more prosaic explanation (though admittedly less poetic), lies in the dynamics of Central Asian steppe-sown politics.

The implications of this for Romanī history are profound, in that had Mas'ud thought less of imposing his direct will upon the Oghuz Türkmen, rather than adopting the strategy that the Saldjūks themselves developed with regard to the turbulent tribes people, of utilising them in raiding external lands, he may not have lost the western empire. The Saldjūks themselves may have been effectively deployed as governors of the border regions, thus continuing their dependence upon the dynasty, and forcing them to address the depredations carried out by their erstwhile cousins. In effect, the defeat at Dandānqān in 431 AH brought large numbers of Hindūs into the region as troops and servitors whose dependence upon their Ghaznāvid patrons was severed by the latter's abandonment of the survivors, and withdrawal to India. It would not be overstating the case to say that without the Saldjūk defeat of the Ghaznāvids in 1040 CE, there never would have been any Gypsies, as these are the descendants of those Hindū warriors, fletchers, armourers, grooms, blacksmiths, tent-makers, cooks and sundry others attached to the Ghaznāvid army that had lived through the campaign and marches.

That these survivors may have included few warriors is highly likely; traditional Rādjpūt tactics meant that the Hindū ghulāms would have relinquished their lances, dismounted and, binding their shirt-tails together, fought to the last with maces, axes, daggers and clubs. The fiercest of the combat would have been around Mas'ūd's elephant, where the Indian troops would have congregated to defend their commander, the death or disappearance of the Amīr being taken as a

sign by both sides of the defeat of the Ghaznāvids (Rizvi & Burton-Page, 1986: 202). Nīṣāpūrī tells us that the weight of Mas'ūd, together with his weapons, and armour were too great for a horse to bear, but that he was pursued by several Türkmen and forced to mount a horse to defend himself alone, presumably after his elephant had died or he was struck from it, and his guard were all dead (Luther, 2001: 38). Despite Mas'ūd's "Rustam like blows", the battle was lost, as was the western empire, but this passage indicates that the battle would have been deemed lost once Mas'ūd was no longer mounted on his elephant, and that the likely carnage amongst the Hindū ghulāms was appalling.

The "Saldjūk factor" is crucial then, but not in the way that has been identified by other scholars; there were no large-scale incorporation of Hindū warriors into the Saldjūkid forces after Dandānqān (Bosworth, quoted in Hancock, 2005: 27), and indeed, the mechanism by which such personnel would then become independent groups of "Egyptians" arriving in eleventh-century Constantinople is not explained in this notion (Hancock, 2005: 25-27). As captives and slaves, the Indians may have ended up in the markets of the region, being sold as domestics and labourers to individual owners, but again such a scenario fails to address the problems of how these individuals would have made their way to Byzantium (presumably as escapees), and reformed as distinct "units" that arrived in the capital sometime later, through chaotic and dangerous territory swarming with Türkmen bands and refugees from their attacks (Dostourian, 1993: 144). Finally, the linguistic evidence fails to support such a contention, as there are frequent references in the literature to the absence of Turkish loan-words in the Romanī lexicon (see Fraser, 1992: chap.2). The use of Persian amongst the Saldjūk elite was something that happened after the conquest of Khorāsān, as was the development of a ghulām army (as suggested above). The language of command developed into Perso-Turkic, or "Old Anatolian" (as did the language of administration), but the renegades were from the Turkish ghulāms associated with Sultān Mahmūd, not the Hindū ghulāms and generals that Amīr Mas'ūd relied upon to replace the influence of his father's commanders (as testified by Mas'ūd's refusal to listen to their advice; Briggs, 1829: 96). The common tongue between these renegades and their new overlords was, of course, Turkish, not Persian, and the language of Islam, Arabic. Both these would have become incorporated in some terms into the Romanī lexicon, had the Hindūs been a subsequent part of the Saldjūkid forces. In the conquest of Armenian Anatolia, the Hindūs would have been associated with the "blood thirsty beasts" that Matthew of Edessa records, and extremely unlikely to have developed a close enough association with the Armenian survivors of these raids, to account for the influence of this language upon the basic Romanī lexicon

(Dostourian, 1993: 47).

The Saldjūks, or more correctly their shamanistic, tribal, nomadic Türkmen followers that were the main military component in the early, Saldjukid polity (see Bosworth, 1999) were the motor of change, the literal driving force behind the proto-Romanī migration. These tribes people almost “herded” the survivors, pushing ahead of them the remnants of the defeated Hindū qīqāniyya regiments after the bloody conflict of Dandānqān in Ramadan 431 AH/May 1040 CE. Their path would have followed the “silk route” from Merv, Nīshāpūr, the southern Caspian coast, Rayy and into the Ādharbaidjān and Armīniyan lands, the ancient roads of East-West communication and trade. In the chaos of the borderlands between the emerging Saldjūkid empire and the contested lands of Armīniya, the groups of Hindūs, Persians and others moving on the roads of the Iranian lands passed unrecorded, and it is only possible to suggest their passage through informed speculation. The Türkmen flooded into Khorāsān, Armīniya, and eastern Anatolia as a result of the complete collapse of the Ghazniavids in their western empire, ahead of them an increasingly composite group of Indians, Persians, Armenians, Greeks and other “refugees” fleeing from what Matthew of Eddessa describes as the “crazed and pernicious nation of the Turks” (Dostourian, 1993: 101). The practice of “chasing” defeated populations ahead of advancing forces in Mongol-Turkic warfare, was designed to instil terror and disruption in the threatened communities. The use of the hunt or şayd, as a method of training for war was common to most Mongol-Turkic groups, including the Ottomans, who carried out large hunts as “training” during the periods between campaigns, and this form of warfare, or *manière de combattre* appears in later accounts of nomad tactics (Vryonis, 1971).

The Saldjuks were not interested per se in Anatolia initially, except to distract the wild and woolly Türkmen from ravaging the Persian lands and causing enormous distress for the sedentary population (which they often did anyway), by sending them into the lands of Rūm. The control of the nomads was continually problematic, and ultimately undermined the fabric of the Great Saldjuk Empire. Frequently insubordinate, the Türkmen tribes people were often unreliable in warfare, either leaving campaigns when they had gathered “enough” booty, or fleeing battlefields altogether (Bosworth, 1986b: 197). Their campaigns against the Armenians and Byzantines were in the nature of deep, and highly destructive raids in search of plunder, slaves and as exemplary expeditions to convince their own vassals of the power and might of the Saldjūk sultāns (Cahen, 1968: 72). The view from the Armenian side was, of course, very different, and the chronicles of Matthew of Edessa and Michael the Syrian, amongst others, record the apocalyptic terror, the perception that the

end of the world had come. When King Senek'erim sought an explanation for the arrival of the "infidels" in 1018-19 CE, he found amongst the prophecies of the Armenian vardapets confirmation of his despair, in the words "...at that time they will flee from the east to the west, from the north to the south, and they will not find rest upon the earth, for the plains and mountains will be covered with blood." (Dostourian, 1993: 45)

It is Acton's suggestion that it is an event like this that is referred to by Romanies in mediaeval Italy, when questioned about their origins (Acton, 2004: pc), suggesting the conquest of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, or western Armenia by the Ottomans in the final years of the fourteenth-century and early fifteenth-century. In examining the context of this period, it is my contention that it is the destruction of the centres of the mediaeval kingdom of Armīniya, Akhalk'alak and Ani, during the years 513 AE (Armenian Era)/1064-5 CE, that these Romanies referred to. The calamitous events would prove the second major defeat of the ancestors of the Gypsies by the Saldjūks, and all but eradicate the remainder of the original Hindū warrior caste, whilst leaving their descendants with a "folk-memory" of this apocalyptic scenario. It is to this that we now must turn.

5.4 “...those wicked and abominable children of Ham...” the irruption of the Saldjūks into Armenia

The first of the Türkmen groups to move westwards to begin raiding the Armenian lands, as Matthew of Edessa records, did so in 467 AE/1018-19 CE (Dostourian, 1993: 44), although this is contested by more modern historians (Bosworth, 1995: 938). Certainly, there is no reference in the chronicle of Vardapet Aristakes Lastivertc’i, to this event. The Armenian cleric Matthew describes the attack in the most calamitous of terms as the first appearance of “...the bloodthirsty beasts... the savage nation of infidels called Turks...” (Dostourian, 1993: 44). The timbre of the sources is however similar, in that this period is one of dreadful events, of appalling disasters that befall the Armenian people at the hands of “foreign people around us” as Aristakes suggests in the title of his narrative (Bedrosian, 1978). The rapacity of the Romans (Greeks) of Byzantium is matched only by the cruelty of the Persians (Turks), in these sources. In the same year that the Türkmen first despoil the territories around Lake Van, the northern parts of Armenia and southern Georgia was under assault from Basil, Emperor of Byzantium (976 – 1025 CE), who proceeded to “make the well-cultivated country devoid of people, a devastated wasteland...” . The king of that country, Georgi had refused to submit to the Emperor, and suffered the consequences; “...Alas this narration, alas, this wicked deed” (Bedrosian, 1978: 14). The destruction of the Armenian kingdoms is related as a result of the perfidy of the Greeks, and the wrath of the Saldjūks, as a sign from God that the behaviour of the Armenians as Christians is at fault (Bedrosian, 1978: 63), and in this sense the sources have to be examined with this in mind, produced as they are by Miaphysite clerics embattled by Orthodoxy and Islam.

The resistance to the first of the Türkmen incursions was led by the son of King Senek’erim, David. They were fierce, though ultimately unsuccessful, and resulted in many casualties due to the arms and appearance of the unknown Saldjūk forces, “...until that time the Armenians had never seen Turkish cavalry forces. When they encountered these Turks, armed with bows and having flowing hair like women, they found them strange looking.” The Armenians were forced to retreat to Lake Ostan (Van), despite inflicting great damage with their swords (Dostourian, 1993: chap.48, 45) Matthew laments that the wrath of God had been awakened, “the fatal dragon with deadly fire rose up and struck those faithful to the Holy Trinity.” (1993: chap.47, 44). The Saldjūks, led by Ibrahim and Kutulmuş, mounted a series of raids that extended their range deep into Armenian and Georgian territory (Talbot Rice, 1961: 30-31), causing widespread slaughter in the various towns they assaulted. Matthew records that the Emperor Constantine Monomachus, in the years 497-498 AE/1049-50 CE, “perfidiously and by false oaths” forced the ceding of the Bagratid kingdom,

removed the Armenian troops (in order to defeat the rebel Leo Tornices; see Vryonis, 1971: 86), and left the country unprotected. The Byzantine commanders, referred to as “eunuchs” by Matthew, did nothing to stop the forces of the “infidels” falling upon the populous and wealthy, but unfortified city of Artsn (Artze) near Erzerum, which resulted in huge slaughter of the townspeople and garrison (Dostourian, 1993: 76). The Byzantine governor of the region had in fact to resort to a ruse to defeat the Türkmen forces, falling upon them whilst they pillaged the Byzantine encampment at Kapetru, as they were not sufficient in strength to meet the Turkish forces in open battle. Whilst awaiting reinforcements from Georgian vassals, the Saldjüks were able to lead the sack of Artze, with the following confrontation being indecisive (Vryonis, 1971: 86). Both Aristakes and Matthew refer to this event as the beginnings of a major assault on the commercial centres of eastern Asia Minor:

“In the same year, the gate of Heaven's wrath opened upon our land. Numerous troops moved forth from Turk'astan, Their horses were as fleet as eagles, with hooves as solid as rock. Well girded, their bows were taut, their arrows sharp, and the laces of their shoes were never untied [i.e., they were always on the move]. Having arrived in the district of Vaspurakan, they pounced upon the Christians as insatiably hungry wolves devour their food. Coming as far as the Basen district and as far as the great estate called Vagharshawan they demolished and polluted twenty-four districts with sword, fire, and captive-taking.”
(Bedrosian, 1978: 66)

Matthew writes that “...going forth full of rage... like a river swelling up with tempestuous rage and like a beast crazed by its bloodthirsty nature...” the Saldjüks subjected Armenia and “Albania” (Abkhazia) and “Iberia” (Georgia) to the sword and enslavement (Dostourian, 1993: 101). Vryonis also identifies this as the beginnings of the destruction of “the important urban centres of Byzantine Anatolia”, occasioned by the inept military policies of Constantine IX Monomachus (1042-55), that resulted in the dissolution of indigenous troop units in these themes (1971: 86).

The picture of this period is one of increasingly desperate circumstances in eastern Anatolia, where defences were being irretrievably weakened by internal Byzantine disorder and rebellion, conflict with the Armenian and Georgian kingdoms of the region, and raids from both the Saldjüks, their Türkmen followers, and a host of other nomads into the Thracian theme (Ostrogorsky, 1986: 334). In order to defend the Balkan frontiers against the Pečenegs or Patzinaks, it was Constantine's policy to withdraw troops from the Macedonian and eastern Anatolian themes, as a consequence of the disloyalty of the western commanders (Vryonis, 1971: 87; Ostrogosky, 1986: 334-5). Michael

Attaliates, a Byzantine statesman and historian, describes the situation as happening

...because of the venality of the king. It was a large army in Iberia that was sustained from the taxes of those countries [Armenia, Georgia and Abkhazia], the king seized the taxes, and by this means he lost a great deal of power, because not only did he forsake his allies, but transformed them into powerful enemies, adding them to the power of his opponents [Saldjūks], so making them completely irresistible... (Koukounas, 2004)

The point here is that the eastern Byzantine Empire was in chaos, and that soldiers were in short supply for the defences. Given the drafting of all and sundry into the Byzantine armies at the time, had any contingents of Hindū warriors been available, it is highly likely they would have been employed by the Emperors, yet none appear in the sources. The Byzantines used a multi-ethnic army at this stage, even paying the Pečeneg mercenaries, however unreliable they proved as frontier garrisons (Ostrogorsky, 1986: 334). Able to secure some sort of alliance through the award of court titles and land grants, the Pečenegs were only one of a number of peoples “bought” by the imperial treasury in an effort to make up the military levy, heavily reduced by battles between rebels and the emperors, which were to grow worse with the rebellion of Isaac Comnenus and the remaining Anatolian aristocracy in the years 1056-57 CE (Vryonis, 1971: 87). The suggestion from some Romanī Studies scholars that Indians were part of the military machinery of Byzantium, deduced by their appearance in much later Venetian sources as companies defending the Serene Republic's island territories against the Ottomans, cannot be borne out (Lee, 2004: pc).

The alternative notion of the remaining Indians, Persians and others (or what we may now describe as the proto-Romanī), being involved in the defence of Armenia may have more substance to support it, though it is still extremely speculative. The end of the Armenian Bagratid Kingdoms came in the year 513 AE/1064-65 CE. Alp Arslān Muhammad b. Çağrī Beg (455 – 465 AH/1063 – 1073 CE), whom Matthew of Edessa mistakenly records as brother of the Sultān Tūghrīl Beg, collected a vast number of troops from Persians, Turks, “all of Khūzistān [south-western Persia] and Sijistān [eastern Persia, bordering upon India]”. Marching to Armenia and “Albania”, he subjected the whole region to fire and sword, enslaving many and causing countless deaths “at the hands of the crazed and pernicious nation of the Turks” (Dostourian, 1993: 102). His major objective was the most important Byzantine-Armenian city in eastern Anatolia, and “the Sultān came like a threatening black cloud, and descending upon the royal city of Ani, surrounded it completely on all sides like a vicious serpent” (Dostourian, 1993: 101), forcing the population into the confines of the walls with his first violent assault. Perceiving that the entire population were within, the Saldjūk

sultān ordered a prolonged investment of the city, whilst the inhabitants began to fast and pray. The city held for some time, except for an area described by Matthew as being on one side, about a bow-shot away and of temporary dwellings, which was destroyed quickly by Turkish catapult-fire (Dostourian, 1993: 103). The tragedy unfolded when the garrison of “Romans” (Greeks) withdrew into the citadel, presumably leaving the walls to the citizens, causing mass panic. The Saldjūks seem to have lifted the siege just prior to this, but realised the city was now vulnerable and renewed their assault, “cutting down great numbers of them [the inhabitants] like green grass and piling up their bodies...” (Dostourian, 1993: 103). In a curious reference Matthew tells us that the cathedral was desecrated, the cross torn down by a Turk who climbed the dome and also

“...hurled down the crystal lamp onto the floor of the cathedral, causing it to be extinguished; Smbat the Conqueror [King of Ani, 977-989] had this lamp brought from India, along with an indeterminate quantity of precious objects. When the Sultān learned the fate of the lamp, which was crystal and without equal, he was distressed.” (Dostourian, 1993: 104)

The population that survived this apocalypse were enslaved, brought chained before Alp Arslān, “beautiful and respectable ladies... innumerable and countless boys with bright faces and pretty girls” were carried off to the slave-markets of Persia “...together with their mothers”, whilst priests were burned alive or flayed (Dostourian, 1993: 103). These types of narratives are common enough from accounts of Viking raids on the holy isle of Lindisfarne in the ninth century (see Sawyer, 1994: 78-9), to the accounts of Mongol attacks in the thirteenth century (Marshall, 1993), and illustrate the psychological impact of these events upon communities, interpreted through the prism of religious belief. Nevertheless, the “folk memory” of events, captured in the later chronicles of Matthew and others, finds its counterpart in the accounts of Romanies in Europe in the fifteenth century. I would suggest that the fall of Arni and Artsn in the middle of the eleventh century, are the substance behind these “tales” (see Fraser, 1992: 87; 1990: 51).

The possibility that relatives of the Hindūs who fought at Dandānqān (1040 CE), also were caught up in the destruction of Armenia twenty-years later, may lie in the description of the dwellings outside the Ani city walls (see above). The chaos of eastern Anatolia was not just limited to that related to Byzantine and Saldjūk devastation, as the petty principalities of the Bagratid kingdoms were also involved in conflicts with each other. The collapse of central authority after the initial abdication of the King Senek’erim in 1019 CE, the competition between various petty princes accelerated, exacerbated by the interference of the Byzantine Greeks (see Bedrosian, 1978: 61-68;

108-110, for examples). One of the outcomes of this situation was the increasing use of mercenaries by all those involved, and these were frequently Türkmén, Persians, Dailamis, Franks, Normans, Varangians and, I would suggest, the remnants of the ghulāms and other Hindū Ghaznāvid troops after 1040 CE. The description in Matthew of the community outside the walls of Ani in 1064 CE, bears a similarity to that of pilgrims encountering “Egyptians” encamped outside Modon in the mid-fourteenth century (Fraser, 1992: 45), in temporary dwellings beyond the city walls. The prospect that these were the habitations of proto-Romanī groups must be considered carefully however, as there are no direct references that would allow us to positively identify this group at Ani in 1064 CE.

There is one further intriguing reference in Matthew of Edessa's Chronicle that may indicate the presence of the remnants of the Indians from Ghaznā. The curious story of a caravan is told in Matthew's chronicle (Dostourian, 1993: 148-149), arriving in Antioch “twenty years before this time [1064 CE]” when this group of people described as “from the East” set up in the market place of the city and began to “make merry”. The Antiochenes pounced upon them and beat them, ejecting them from the city; we are not told why. The men of the caravan, eighty in number, retaliated by fighting with truncheons and forcing the Antiochenes from the city gate at Sewotoy to the Church of St Peter, where the townspeople swore on the Gospels to leave the caravan in peace, and “the caravan returned to its place of origin” (Dostourian, 1993: 149). The caravaners were trading in a variety of goods including dried fish, but not apparently especially valuable commodities, so it is unusual that the Antiochenes set upon them, as it would not appear to be for economic motives. It isn't possible to do more than indicate the curiosity of the this story, set as it is after the description of the destruction of Ani, and the strangeness of the circumstances that would influence Matthew to relate it.

In summary, the evidence for the presence of proto-Romanī groups in the Armenian lands is circumstantial if it could be claimed that there is any indication of them at all. The logic of the narrative I have constructed previously would suggest that it is highly likely that there would have been a passage through these lands at this point in their history, and the likelihood of this group or these groups being involved in the events described in the sources is also high. It cannot be argued with any certainty however, and must remain conjectural, even if informed by the context of the wider history of Romanī people at this time. It may be that further research being undertaken in the archives of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem at present, could further inform these perhaps, unwarranted speculations, but the generalised nature of the sources that essentially portray these

dramatic events as a battle between good and evil, may not allow us to do more than make suggestions as to the possible experiences of those people who emerged as “Egyptians” in the late eleventh century in Constantinople.

6.1 “Accidents, evil omens, and ugly spectacles...” the collapse of Byzantine Anatolia 1071 CE –
1176

The establishment of the Seljuks of Rūm (as a cadet branch of the Great Seljuk Empire) in Anatolia, was a direct consequence of the defeat of the Ghaznāvids at Dandanqan (431 AH/1040 CE). The impact of this for the Armenians at Artsn in the year 498 of the Armenian era (1049–1050 CE), again in 513 AE/1064–1065 CE at Ani, was briefly examined in the previous section. More importantly, the defeat of the Byzantines at Manzikert (1071 CE) and again at Myriokephalon (1176 CE), profoundly influenced the development of the region (see Langdon, 1992, Bosworth 1991, Savvides 1981 and Vryonis 1975 & 1971). In particular, these developments are most apparent in the significant change in the ethnic balance of Anatolia in the wake of catastrophic defeats, military and political collapse, and the irruption of thousands of Türkmen tribes-people into the region of eastern Anatolia in the period. The sources may have stressed the extent of destruction and disruption caused by these nomadic peoples, as they were frequently compiled by ecclesiastical authors such as Matthew of Edessa (Dostourian, 1993), Bar Hebræus (Lane, 1999) and Aristakēs (Bedrosian, 1978), who saw the motivation for these raids for booty and slaves as divine wrath and punishment, but the picture of change during the establishment of Turkish beyliks (frontier emirates) must be evaluated carefully.

The notion of the confrontation between these new invaders (the Saldjūks and their Türkmen followers) and the Orthodox and Oriental Christian populations of Asia Minor/Anatolia and the Levant as one of incorporation (as happened later under the Ottomans) must be revised. As Vryonis (1971:155-161), and others have noted, the antagonism towards the Oriental Christians from the Orthodox Greeks of Byzantium was such that many Georgian and Armenian princes and aristocrats joined the Saldjūks in their campaigns against the Rhomaioi, as the Greeks were called (after Romans), utilising the disruption caused by Byzantine defeats to establish independent principalities (Canard, 1986:638). The complexity of relations affected the changes taking place in the region in many ways, beyond the simple dichotomy of Islam and Christianity in conflict (Vryonis, 1971:92-3). The predominance of the Greek population of Asia Minor (Anatolia), amongst the complex mix of Armenians, Syrians, Hebrews, Indians, Arabs and others was undoubtedly altered by this irruption, and henceforward, the Hellenic nature of Anatolia would be steadily undermined, although the process took place over many centuries and only ended with the population transfers of the 1920's. The particular circumstances of eastern Anatolia or Byzantine Asia Minor, were apparently far more dramatic however, with wholesale depopulation, destruction

of cities, towns and villages, decimation of livestock and the eradication of a centuries-old Oriental Christian culture.

In this context however, the likely adaptation of the Romanī language to the environment of Anatolia during this period would appear to support the more general picture. Historians who challenge the suggestion that Hellenic culture was eradicated and the Greek population over-run by Turks, a view especially popular amongst more nationalist Turkish scholars, cite the continuance of Orthodox communities as organised confessionally and administratively. The patriarchates of Constantinople and Antioch show a predominantly Orthodox population were still in place until the thirteenth century (Korobeinikov, 2003:197-214). The number of loan-words from Greek concerning counting and metal-working, amongst other subjects, is very high, whilst it has influenced grammar at “fundamental” levels (Hancock, 2005: 29). This presence of Greek in the basic Romanī lexicon, strongly suggests interaction with a continuing urban Greek population with whom proto-Romanī people needed to trade and exchange, either over a period long enough, or important enough to permanently establish these elements in the language as it evolved. Hancock suggests that in the multi-ethnic and linguistic milieu of Byzantium, children born into what he describes as the Rajputic speech-community, would have been exposed to variety of languages all around them (2005: 28). Here it is my intention to suggest the kind of communities that might be described under the label, proto-Romanī, Rajputic-speaking people.

I argue specifically that the proto-Romanī, Rajputic-speaking groups emerged as three related identities in the period between the destruction of Ani (1064 CE), and the second major defeat inflicted by the Saldjūks upon the Byzantines, Myriokephalon (1176 CE). These identities were ‘forged’ from elements of groups sharing the Ghaznāvid koiné, that might be described as early proto-Romanī, Hindū and Khorāsāni displaced by the defeat of the Ghaznāvids at Dandānqān, near Merv in 1040 CE (now Marv in modern Türkmenistan), and later, the defeated Armenians after the loss of Artsn (1049 CE), Ani and Kars (to the Byzantines) in 1064 CE. The resultant group was no longer an organized military force in the way Indians qiqanīyyā units were in the Muslim armies of the Ummayyads or Ghaznāvids, as the elite ghulām warrior components had been decimated by defeat, leaving the survivors from assorted sword and shield-bearers, grooms, armourers, smiths, bakers, cooks, tent-makers, wives, children and entertainers and others that made up the mediaeval army. A part of these proto-Romanī emerged as Rhomiti or Romittoi, as these people were later to describe themselves in Epiros, to those curious of their origins (Fraser, 1992: 53-54; Frescobaldi, 1818: 72). The exact composition of whom emerged as Romittoi groups in eleventh-century CE

Anatolia is of course, impossible to trace, but given the picture that emerges from the evidence of blood-groups and other genetic evidence (Kalaydjieva et al 2004; Ioviță and Schurr, 2004; Potts, 1976; Sunderland, 1976), would clearly suggest an intermingling of various peoples from outside these core groups as they moved through Persian territory westwards from Merv. I suggest that the Romitoi came to share a number of characteristics, namely a clan-based social structure, commercial nomadism as an economic strategy based upon the available skills amongst the group, and elements of culture derived from the Indian “core” membership. This hybridised set of practices and beliefs also acquired elements from the environments through which these groups moved, especially Khorāsān, Adharbāidjān and Armīniya, connecting Hindū symbols and associations, with Zoroastrian fire-worship, Georgian and Armenian Christianity and Türkmen shamanism. In acquiring the Ghaznāvid koiné that would develop into Rajputic, with membership of the group, Persians, Armenians and others added to the composition of both the proto-Romanies and their evolving lexicon as they moved into the western lands. At this point, I would suggest that the uncertainty of existence and disruption to trade, communication and transport in the region meant whatever goods and services were provided in the villages and urban centres of the region that they passed through, these were small-scale, rudimentary and unsophisticated. Only with increasing prosperity and security in the period of Saldjūk-Byzantine relations in the thirteenth century, would the kinds of goods and services develop into more sophisticated and diverse types. This group, or groups represents one element that survives the atomisation of mediaeval Armenia.

Another group can be seen to have emerged in the dissolution and destruction of the mediaeval Bagratid kingdoms in this period. As Matthew and others record, the roads and countryside of Anatolia was filled with refugees and runaways from the primary targets of Türkmen and Saldjūk ravages. The aftermath of Manzikert (1071 CE) saw desolation and devastation across the whole of Asia Minor (Anatolia), and “the Oriental peoples... [Armenian, Georgian and Syrian Christians] ...began to decline, and the country of the Romans... [Byzantium] ...became desolate” (Dostourian, 1993: 143). This state of affairs resulted in “very important and illustrious personages – nobles, princes and stately ladies – roamed about begging... Because of the famine and vagabond life, there was great mortality throughout the whole land...” (1993: 144). Here lies the solution to another of the puzzles in Romanī history; the appearance of bands of “Egyptians” in early fifteenth century western Europe, led by “dukes” and “counts”. The terms *doux* and *komes*, were two common military titles awarded frequently to Armenians in later Byzantium (Canard, 1986: 638), the former meaning military commander in the period 10th-12th century CE, the latter being given

to subaltern officers at this time (see Kazdhan, 1991: 659, 485). The term *doukes* is also, of course, associated with the lineage of Doukas of possibly eastern, Armenian origins according to Psellos (Sewter, 1952: 254-55; although Kazdhan argues this is impossible to prove, 1991: 659), that came to rule Byzantium under Constantine X Doukas (1059-1067 CE) and Michael VII Doukas (1071-1078 CE). The vagabond “princes, nobles and stately ladies” were, I suggest, the ancestors of the later leaders of the bands of Egyptians, by this time ethnically indistinct from their followers, but maintaining an elite status to differentiate them, as we see described in the Hildesheim and Parisian records (Fraser, 53-54, 66-67). Furthermore, it is not inconceivable that “Duke Andrew”, leader of the Egyptians was in fact an Andronikos Doukas, a descendant of those Doukai who had been nobles in Armenia and emperors in Constantinople, maintaining a hereditary linkage and title.

Such a suggestion leads me to make two other primary contentions here; the 15th century Egyptians recorded in western Europe, were descended from those survivors of the Byzantine dismantling and Saldjūk destruction, of the Bagratid kingdoms. As previous governors with their retinues they were able to establish themselves in Lesser Armenia (Cilicia and the Taurus mountains), and later were incorporated into the Fātamid Khalif’a of Egypt, where they were regarded with some favour (Canard, 1986: 638). The second contention here is that the atomisation of the Armenian kingdoms led to the shattering of the Hindū-Khorāsānian, proto-Romanī group, with leaderless remnants fleeing to the west and Constantinople, whilst others were cut off by the Türkmen incursions and migrated into Karabagh, Georgia and the Caucasus. The latter would develop a version of Romanī heavily inflected with Armenian, called Lomavren, whilst the former were to be destined to become marginalised, itinerant fortune-tellers, bear-leaders and sooth-sayers whom we find featured in the works of Byzantine ecclesiastics such as Balsamon and Theodore (Soulis, 1961: 141-2). It is possible that this group began to migrate westward as a consequence of the earlier destruction of Armenian cities in eastern Anatolia such as Artsn in 498 AE/1049 CE, arriving in Constantinople in the early 1050’s CE. The story of the Adsincani, according to the Life of Saint George the Athonite of Iviron (1062 CE; see Peeters, 1922: 36-37), might seem to confirm this arrival date, but again, caution is necessary identifying this group with those later Egyptians, mentioned in the sources (Fraser, 1992, 35; 45). These would be the small-scale traders and purveyors of goods that I discussed above, and from this period following a different route through Byzantium and south-eastern Europe, into central and western Europe, than the “dukes” and their retinues.

The narrative I would suggest is one of a tri-partite division of the proto-Romanī group from post-Dandānqān Trans-Oxiana, with one group maintaining a military function associated with military

leadership under Armenian *doux* and *komes*. A second group (or perhaps groups) make their way through Anatolia to Constantinople, and were made up of people with no military function, probably from the auxiliary personnel associated with the warrior group. These adopted commercial nomadism and purveyed small crafts and services to survive. Finally, a third group emerged from the chaos of eastern Anatolia in this period, who were cut off by Saldjūk incursions, and migrated into Karabagh, Georgia and the Caucasus, where they developed a distinct lexicon that evolved into Lomavren. This schematic description is an attempt to contextualise the complex factors involved in the emergence of Romanī identities in eleventh century Anatolia, and explain the variety and differentiation that the historical record begins to present us with from this period. It is of course possible that the survivors from Dandānqān were dispersed into small bands, travelling along the silk routes as “clans” that had varying compositions, in terms of personnel (predominantly military or auxiliary), with different trajectories through eastern Anatolia into Byzantium, Cilicia or Georgia. In some senses, this more complicated view could offer a better solution, as notion of various groups that making their way westwards would underpin the current linguistic view of a number of successive migrations into Europe, discernible in “three distinct historical layers of Indo-Aryan innovations” (Windfuhr, 2003: 415). As discussed earlier, it may also be the case that the movement of those groups speaking what became Lomavren might have been entirely separate to the those we know as Romanī speakers (Windfuhr, 2003: 415; Fraser, 1992: 41).

The over-emphatic application of linguistic models to the problem of ethnogenesis has provided a framework that the historical evidence has been required to fit, as I suggested in a previous section, imposing a unitary evolutionary model upon the historical reality (see Hancock, 2005 for a discussion of the “single migration book”, 3-20). In the context of mediaeval Anatolia at the time of Byzantine collapse and Saldjūk conquest, the possibility of differing groups of dispossessed, Indic dialect-speaking peoples in proximity to each other exists. Descendants of the earlier Ummayyad *mawālī* troops, the Indian *Oīqāniyya* units, may have been still present on the borderlands of south-eastern Anatolia and northern Syria. This contested territory had been the scene of continuing conflict between Arabs and Byzantines during the seventh to ninth centuries, where there is a documented presence of *Zotti* or *Jhāts* (Kenrick, 2004: 32). Possibly descended from groups related to the defeat and deportation to this region of the rebellious community from what are now the *Al Amarah* marshlands of the southern Tigris (*Dicle*, in Turkish) valley in 834 CE (Kenrick, 2004: 36), this region still reflects a complex picture of co-existent *Domari*-speaking and Romanī-speaking Gypsies in the *Diyrabakir* region. A perspective that suggests the Romanī-speakers arrived later

than the Dom, but that the two remained distinct (though indistinguishable by non-Gypsies, as is the case today), might be suggested in that the modern presence of differing linguistic groups may date from this relatively early period. Patterns of migration elsewhere (Roseman, 1971:589-98) suggests that a situation where proto-Gypsy groups arrived in areas where there was an already established community of a similar kind is possible, although the assumption that each community followed on directly in a continuous or 'chain' relationship is not necessarily one that I would suggest. The complexity of the actual mechanisms of migration and relationships between differing groups, speaking related languages that later emerge as modern Rom, Dom and Lom in Turkey, is beyond the purview of my current book to examine, but such questions as arise from these possibilities are possibilities for future study, I think.

The emergence of Romanī identities in the chaos of late 11th century Anatolia, during the collapse of Byzantine authority, Roman-Hellenic culture and the destruction of the Armenian kingdoms, is the pivotal point in the narrative of the Gypsy peoples. This is the historical moment when the coalescence of various elements from refugee Hindū and Khorāsānian soldiers, Persians, Ādharbāydjānis, Georgians, Armenians, Greeks and others came together to forge a new entity. The shattering of that emerging entity in its very formative process in the confrontation with Saldjūkid expansion meant that differing trajectories were followed, and that for one group, the future development of their language went in a fundamentally different direction, largely uninfluenced by the long sojourn in the Greek-speaking lands. For those groups that maintained a military function under leadership of Armenian counts and dukes (comes and dux, both military designation in origin), the direction of movement took them into the Cilician territories of Lesser Armenia, until the destruction of that rump-state and its incorporation into the Mamlūk Sultānate of Egypt after the Battle of Mari (1266; Stewart, 2001:33-4), and then the growing power of the early Ottoman Empire.

The Byzantine Empire was the next point of encounter for these groups of proto-Gypsy people who had not moved south after the defeat of the Armenians and the end of the Bagratid Kingdom proper in 1064 at Ani, as they fled before the advancing Türkmēn. The experience was the most important in the process of this coalescing, emerging identity as it was here that the confluence of their arrival and the notions associated with magic and sorcery came together to 'create' or construct the 'Egyptians'. The Empire was a complex and multi-ethnic polity that continued as a direct descendant of the Roman Empire in the East; indeed the term Byzantine is only a modern one that was never used by the Romioi themselves (Baynes and Moss, 1949:xxiv). The Empire was Roman

and Christian, the Oecumene as it was conceived of grew from this centre (Obolensky, 1971). The history of the Empire is no longer regarded as the “monotonous story of the intrigues of priests, eunuchs, and women, of poisonings, of conspiracies, of uniform ingratitude, of perpetual fratricides...” nor is the Empire considered “...the most thoroughly base and despicable form that civilisation has yet assumed...” (Lecky, 1870:13-15). The history of the Empire has been thoroughly rehabilitated from these kind of damning judgements, however it is beyond my purview here but clearly its central place in the formation of Gypsy identity and the impact of Byzantine Greek upon the emerging language of the Gypsies means that I would like to consider aspects of the East Roman state that may have been less well-investigated in the context of Romanī Studies previously. There are two areas of consideration I wish to undertake here; the question of the Gypsies and taxation in Byzantium, and that of magic and sorcery.

6.2 Taxation, Gypsies and status in the Byzantine Empire: the origins of the 'Egyptians'

The Byzantine Empire from the 8th to the 11th century had seen what Donald Treadgold suggests was a remarkable political and cultural revival, a recovery from the profound problems of the period 600 – 700 CE (1979:1245). The huge loss of territories to the advance of Islam in the east and the expanding Bulgarian Empire in the west (Treadgold, 1979:1246), had also caused a profound reduction in population and consequently revenues from taxation (and military forces). Revenues had also been reduced through the disruption to trade routes that Byzantine emperors had previously enjoyed the benefits of, as they ran through the Empire's territories. By the 11th century this had been reversed. During the century, some important changes occurred that had profound implications for the Empire and may even have weakened it once more, leading to the conquest by the Latins in 1204 (Hussey, 1950:71-2). The confrontation between the state, on behalf of the small landholders and farmers (groups that had traditionally formed the majority of the military and naval forces, through these hereditary classes) was won by the magnates, who proceeded to establish the very large estates that were to become a feature of Byzantine society. The tax burden that had previously been firmly placed upon the rich was shifted to the poor and immunities were increasingly granted to the great magnates and land-holders, both lords spiritual and temporal. Tax revenues were further undermined by the loss of control over the corn monopoly in the middle of the century to the elite who could exercise patronage through its manipulation. The gold standard was destabilised in the last quarter of the century, deeply affecting Byzantine trade (Hussey, 1950:71-75). The irruption of the Saldjūks into Asia Minor and its transformation into Anatolia was just one of the aspects of the decline in the east; the Danişmends established control in the north eastern regions after the Saldjūk defeat of the Armenians in 1064 and the Byzantines in 1071 CE (Vryonis, 1971:48). Other Türkmen dynasties such as the Karamānids also began to establish their power bases in a constellation around the foundation of the Sultānate of Rūm, whilst the rise of Lesser Armenia, or Armenian Cilicia under a cadet branch of the Bagratids further reduced the Empire's lands in Anatolia. All of this was to have a major impact upon the revenues of the Empire, and result in increasingly desperate measures to raise taxes on the part of the bureaucracy.

The question of taxation of Gypsy populations in Byzantium (or more broadly in the Balkan lands), has been one that has been discussed in the literature (see Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:16, 17, 18; White, 1997; Speck, 1997: 37-51; Fraser 1992: 45-9, 80, 82, 157, 223; Soulis, 1959:154-156; Panaitescu, 1941: 58-72 for examples). It has also been present in discussions of taxation of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire (Fraser, 1992: 175-176; Marushiakova & Popov, 2000; Şimşirgil,

2001: 266), most often as a basis for concluding that Ottoman officials (and by extension the Ottoman state) deliberately discriminated against Romanī groups as Gypsies (Ginio, 2004:118), but much less is known about the taxation status of Gypsies in Byzantium, as there is little surviving documentation. The taxation system itself has been the subject of much discussion during the period of the Byzantine Empire's existence (see Kazhdan, 1991:377-8; Setton, 1953:225-59; Sabatino Lopez, 1951:209-34; Andréadès, 1948:81; Sabatino Lopez, 1945:1-42; Katz, 1938:27-39; Ashburner, 1915:76-84), though the fiscal system as it related to the period following Emperor Diocletian's reforms remains unclear in many respects (Kazhdan, 1991:377). The need here is for a brief survey of some aspects of that system as a means of contrasting what I would suggest is the situation for the Gypsies, with the conclusion that these provided a model for the later Ottoman taxation system and the treatment of Gypsies in particular, somewhat challenging Ginio's argument that the differentiation in respect of the Gypsies during the Ottoman period was entirely based upon their perceived ethnicity. It was in effect an extension of earlier Byzantine practices, not specifically developed for Gypsies (and not applied to all Gypsies, as the many tax exemptions for particular occupational or service groups indicate; see Malcolm, 1996:115, 116 for examples), and in line with the policies of the Ottoman state towards groups that didn't easily fit into the standard system. Lidner has argued that nomadic (Yörük and Türkmen, wandering dervishes and holy men or hocalar) groups of all kinds faced increasing mistrust and discrimination on the part of the Ottomans, as the state became more cohesive and less based upon the tribal and ghazī elements (Lidner, 1983:22). Taxation in this context was both the means to control and restrict nomadic groups (through enforcing a tribal levy annually to extract taxes), and encourage sedentarism (Lidner, 1983:23-4). However, the operation of taxation collection in the Byzantine Empire did not deal especially efficiently with the numbers of nomadic groups that existed in the imperium (Kazhdan, 1991:378) other than the Gypsies and then perhaps only those that fell within the control of state and ecclesiastical authorities in Constantinople.

One of the arguments I make in this book that the taxation status of the Gypsies in the Byzantine (and later Ottoman) Empire was a significant indicator of their social and economic position but not, as has so often been stated, entirely a consequence of their ethnicity. In this context, I suggest that the combination of late Byzantine and Ottoman taxation systems placed the Empire's Gypsies in a very particular position with a particular status. The key point that is to be remembered is that taxable populations are those that have social and economic value in the context of the wider society here. Non-taxable groups of the Byzantine population were usually those at either extremes

of the social hierarchy, i.e. slaves, *colonii*, the elderly, women, children, or those granted tax-exemption on the basis of their status as members of the religious or military classes. The Byzantine taxation system was effective at extracting maximum surpluses from both indirect levies upon the rural population and direct revenues from customs and excise duties, retail dues, transit and port taxes and a bewildering variety of supplementary and extraordinary imposts especially during times of war (Andréadès, 1948:83). The extent of the Emperors' incomes from urban resources was substantial: all caravansaries and bazaars belonged to the state rather than being ceded to the merchants gratis for their use. Mines and quarries were equally part of the state fisc, and the revenues from customs duties and consumption could provide the Emperor with a sum of 20,000 gold pieces (*nomisma* or bezants) a day at the Empire's height. One of the most important trade goods that the Emperor controlled directly was silk, and the purple dye and gold embroidery used to embellish it, that formed not only a rare and precious commodity, but was an aspect of political power in addition, as Sabatino Lopez has shown (1945:1-42). The prominence of specie in the Byzantine Empire was such that, despite the mines and quarries, salt-pans and customs, together with the direct levies upon the agrarian population, the gold *nomismata* coin was used to pay most taxes (Sabatino Lopez, 1951:209-34). The major difference in taxes was based upon an urban/agrarian duality; where markets, ports or transit routes existed there were no hearth or capitation taxes (Andréadès, 1948:81). The other major source of public revenue in the Empire were the State properties; those industrial manufactories, agricultural estates and urban properties mentioned above (bazaars, caravansaries) owned and managed by the imperium. These provided foodstuffs for the Court, the bureaucracy and victualled the military in the capital and administrative centres. Arms were manufactured, including the mysterious Greek fire, in some industrial properties and the production of luxury goods both for the members of the Imperial household and as emoluments and gifts for distributing largesse was undertaken by others (Andréades, 1948:84). This fundamental distinction made in Byzantine taxation was between liabilities upon land – *jugatio* – and those upon human beings and animals – *capitatio* – in what might be described as hearth and poll taxes. The relationship between those that cultivated the land and the land itself was strictly controlled and subject to supervision by the state officials – it was not permitted for peasantry to leave or be removed and taxes were hereditary, though chiefly in kind. These had to be transported and distributed through state control.

One interesting point concerning the Gypsies might be connected to this aspect of Byzantine taxation; the division between those who were bound by law and duty to the land as peasantry

paying taxes and dues to the land-owners (Birkenmeier, 2002:153; Kazhdan, 1991:2015), and those who were not, or attempted to define themselves as independent of this system. The fundamental divisions that had existed during the 7th to the 10th century between those who inhabited the landed estates of the aristocracy, the *colonii* and the *paroikoi* who were largely dependent serfs, and the *georgioi* peasant farmers who paid taxes that supported the *stratiotai* peasant-soldier class, had become much undermined by the 11th century (Charanis, 1953:415). The aristocracy had successfully defeated the imperial attempts to limit their acquisition of landed estates, particularly through the mechanism of the award of *pronoiae*, originally intended as a land grant to soldiers to recuperate deserted lands and reinvigorate the army. However, these became invariably awarded to men of high estate, not the soldier-peasantry of earlier periods, and despite the prohibition of them becoming hereditary, by the 13th century they had become incorporated into a system of appanages amongst the great families or *dynatoi* (Charanis, 1953:419; Birkenmeier, 2002:148-154). Certainly, at the time of the Battle of Manzikert (1071 CE), the extent to which the traditional soldier peasantry core of the Byzantine army had been undermined was apparent to Georgios Kedrenos, when he wrote:

“The army was composed of Makedonians and Bulgarians and Varangians [Vikings from Kievan Rus’] and other barbarians who happened to be about... The renowned champions of the Romans [Byzantines] who had reduced into subjection all of the east and the west now numbered only a few [amongst these]... and these were bowed down by poverty and ill-treatment. They lacked in weapons, swords and other arms... ” (1839, II:652)

Clearly, the Byzantine armies of the later period were poly-ethnic, and multi-lingual but did not include the ‘Egyptians’, which strongly suggests the complete loss of any military functions amongst the residue population present in Constantinople and elsewhere in the Empire, concomitant with my earlier argument that the warrior class had been decimated in the confrontation with the Saldjūkids at Dandānqān and Ani. Had such remained, it seems likely that the Byzantines would have enrolled these elements into their fighting force along with Turks, Alans, Ossetians, Anglo-Saxons, Normans, Flemish knights, Pečenegs and others (see Birkenmeier, 2002:206-30; Treadgold, 1998:85; Bartusis, 1996). Yet as we know, there were bands of soldiers enlisted under Roman command by the Venetians in their campaigns against the Ottomans, defending their Greek territories in the 1440’s (Fraser, 1992:51). This gives us a further indication of the status of ‘Egyptians’ in the Empire, as neither taxable with the peasantry nor employable (or conscriptable) with the military.

I would suggest here that the debate around the term *gadjó/gadjé* and its etymology, that Hancock defines as “civilian” (2002:10), and that Matras argues is mistakenly glossed in order to support the warrior-origin book (Matras, 2002:205), is pertinent. Matras argues that there is no solid etymology for the word, though one author derived it from the Old Indo-Aryan word *garhya*, meaning ‘domestic’ (2002:205). This would appear to suggest that the ancestors of the Gypsies, or in this case the Egyptians of Byzantium, had an arguably negative concept of ‘domestic’, which seems highly unlikely as these people were not nomadic in their origins, nor during their sojourn in Ghaznā and surely even nomads have conceptions of domesticity, as applied to their own living spaces, however mobile. The more plausible origins I think lie in this Byzantine distinction between those who were tied to the land, un-free and obligated to pay taxes and perform services for the magnates and land-owners who owned the vast estates upon which they lived and worked, and those who were not part of this system and who would appear to have avoided paying taxes whenever possible. The latter point might be deduced from the various edicts indicating that extraordinary taxes should be collected from them (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:16), surely unusual in a highly regulated system where taxes and imposts were widely understood and levied. That such instructions indicate “from this time onwards Egyptians begin to be included in the category of the villeins (*parici* [*paroikoi*?]), the dependent feudal population in Byzantium.” (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:16). I would argue here that these “special taxes” (2001:16) are precisely that, part of the attempt of the Byzantine state to extract revenues from a problematic population that remained outside of the system, and in this distinguished themselves from those within. The attempt of Byzantine churchmen and administrators to include them with the *enserfed* peasantry in terms of taxation status was resisted in the development of the language, at the basis perhaps of the later assertions to be *Romioi* or *Romiti* (Fraser, 1992:53), distinct from the *paroikoi*, *georgoi* and *stratoikai*.

The state also made taxes upon some occupations hereditary, such as ship-owners, bakers and pork-dealers, but many occupations were controlled in terms of the organisation of the guild system and the state encouraged the transmission of artisan craft skills within families. The guilds functioned to facilitate commerce and provide services as required by the state, whilst the state regulated prices and quality. Frequently the guilds also provided labour for communal projects such as repairing defensive walls or constructing aqueducts, on a rotating basis. There seems to have been no incorporation of the Egyptians of the capital into these guilds, as happened in the Ottoman case. By the late Byzantine period the shift from an agricultural to an urban economy had taken place,

largely as a result of losses in territory and the concentration of land in the hands of magnates, creating an effectively enserfed peasantry or paroikoi. The major land owning class also came to include ecclesiastics controlling huge estates belonging to the monasteries, many of which were exempt from direct taxation. However, despite the attempts by both urban authorities and the Orthodox Church, the Egyptians appear to have existed as a group that attempted to remain beyond the control of the state and its agents, most especially the clerics and only indirectly paying taxes when these were specifically directed at them. That the state attempted to do so in the form of a differential tax, the kaphalition also levied upon other non-Christians (Muslims, Jews, heterodox Christians, Mazdians, Zoroastrians and others), illustrates that the Byzantine perception of these groups was primarily as being confessionally different (Andréadès, 1948:82). This was the basis for the continued differential treatment by the Ottomans, as I suggested above. Their recorded occupations are most frequently concerned with magic and sorcery, divination and charms, and it is the question of their relationship to the notions of magic and their identity that I consider next.

6.3 Magic and Romittoi in Byzantium; the construction of 'Gypsy' identity

In attempting to describe a trajectory for these Gypsy groups moving rapidly through Anatolia during the eleventh-century (1040-1071 CE), in a previous section, I suggested that the establishment of the Romittoi identity as a phenomenon, took place in the latter half of the eleventh century CE. As these elements coalesced that had previously been *mawālī* or client soldiers and their auxiliaries in the Ghaznāvid armies, others became added to these that were from the Armenian kingdoms, defeated by the Saldjūks after 1064 CE, and refugees from Türkmen incursions. The mechanism for the shift from these groups of former military function, through operating barter and exchange for basic goods and services as refugees after the defeat at Dandānqān (1040 CE), to peripatetic commercial nomads exchanging goods and services for cash, is to be found in the seminal contact between Romittoi and urban Byzantium. This contact fundamentally altered the nature of these communities and re-defined them as a distinct occupational groups with an ascribed, pre existent identities (Egyptians/Atsinganoi), servicing the urban markets of Byzantium, especially Constantinople, and altering their earlier relationship to political structures from client soldiers to service nomads. The impact of Byzantine technology and economics is to be measured by the importation into the Romanī lexicon of large numbers of loan-words associated with metal-working, counting and money. Reduced from skilled artisans producing high-quality armour and weaponry, using the resources and materials available to the highly centralised Ghaznāvid military, proto-Gypsies (if we describe thus the groups moving through Khorāsān and Ādharbaydjāni territory, speaking a language derived from the Ghaznāvid koiné) now worked with basic, portable tools and materials to produce low technology implements, probably for rural inhabitants and town-dwellers. Contact with the more sophisticated markets and technology of Byzantium produced a further profound change in language and, I would suggest, in the structure of economic relations and in the context of the stress and turmoil of conflict and chaos. This picture is to be seen in the context of the other process I outlined previously, of military contingents associated with displaced and dispossessed nobles able to establish petty principalities in the Cilician and Taurus regions that became known as Lesser Armenia. Their trajectory is more difficult to follow, and more speculative in that the existing sources give few indications of what this may have been, until later in the 15th century. It might be hoped that future research may indeed qualify or further refine the picture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in these lands through further investigation of documentary sources in the Turkish and Armenian lands. Until then, my suggestions must remain a constructed narrative around very few fragments drawn from linguistics,

however plausibly it may offer an explanation for the historical circumstances. I shall return briefly to this when examining the arrival of the Gypsies in fifteenth century western Europe, but here will attempt to define more closely the picture of Egyptians in Byzantium.

My argument in this case, is that Gypsy identity was initially associated with notions of magic, as far as the Byzantines understood there to be a connection with ‘magical’ Egypt, and a variety of Romittoi groups practised fortune-telling, sorcery and divination, whilst others occupied less exotic commercial niches (blacksmiths, cauldron-makers and farmers; see Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:18). The classical and Hellenic heritage of locating ‘fabulous peoples’ in India and Egypt, through the prism of Byzantine commentators like Procopius and descriptions of ‘barbarians’ surrounding the Empire, pre-disposed 11th century Byzantines, especially amongst the intellectuals, to this view (Kartlunen, 1989: 127). The initial identification of Gypsies was through a conflation with a group Judeo-Christian ‘heretics’ from eastern Asia Minor, known as Atsinganoi (Fraser, 1992:46). The question that arises is to what extent this can be seen to be justifiable, and Fraser has correctly questioned this point as being far too frequently resorted to by Romanī Studies scholars seeking evidence of Gypsies in Byzantium from a very early period (Fraser, 1992:46). As he remarks about much that passes for “evidence” of Romanī presence in various contexts, “such theories are not infrequently seasoned with a liberal measure of subjectiveness” (1992:32). The mention of Atsinganoi in a hagiography of St. Atanasia, records her giving food to foreigners described as such, in the year 800 CE, and is cited as evidence in an account of the origins of the Gypsies, drawn from a wide number of secondary sources. This account goes on to give the various attributed references to Atsinganoi, and explicitly assumes a direct link between the two. Apart from the mistake of the saint involved (St. Atanathios, rather than Atanasia; see Mango and Scott, 1997: 473), the text is representative of much of the conventional wisdom amongst some writers about early Romanī history (see Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:11-18). More important, it embodies the almost universal desire amongst them to establish a presence in Byzantium at an early date, and so fit in with the time-scale suggested by accepting the Harriott book regarding the description of the Lūrī in Firdawsī’s *Shāh-nāma*, that I analysed in an earlier section. Thus a 5th century presence in Persia would allow for the presence of Romanī people in Byzantium at the opening of the ninth century CE. The linguistic evidence clearly does not support such a view, and this book has argued that this trajectory, or “narrative of journey”, is fundamentally incorrect.

The question of the heretical group from the Phrygian region called Atsinganoi, remains important, despite, or perhaps because of, the obvious conflation with the Egyptians in Byzantium. Hamilton

and Hamilton have suggested that the Athingani (from which the former term is derived; see Fraser, 1995:46) made no secret of their beliefs, or attempted to make converts, and so were not deemed to be a threat to the Church (1998: 69). Euthymius of the Peribleton, writing in about 1050 CE, suggested that the heresy of the Atsinganoi, unlike that of the Bogomils, was both inherited and obvious, and not able to harm or upset anybody (Stoyanov, 1994: 139). Another factor is to be found in the association of ideas of divination and astrology practised by both the heretics and the later Gypsies, and the possibility exists of early groups describing themselves as from ‘the East’, thereby encouraging a false correlation in the minds of those who first met with them. Byzantine nomenclature was notoriously archaic in its ascription of ethnic labels, frequently resorting to classical writings to describe groups such as the Huns as ‘Scythians’ (Hoffman, 1973:1350), and in this context the use of the term ‘Atsinganoi’ for these new ‘semi-barbarians’ from the east is perfectly consistent. There also exists the possibility of some, though not all of these proto-Romitoi being in contact with communities related in the past to the ninth-century Atsinganoi. Their trajectory through Persia may have brought them into contact with Zoroastrians, Manicheans and other dualists; Asia Minor was rife with ‘heretics’ like Bogomils and Paulicians throughout this period of crisis, but it is significant that the charge of heresy was never made. Additionally, the influence of central Asian shamanist beliefs and practices, together with the emerging Anatolian Turkish culture may also have affected Gypsies, though only one reference is to be found in the story of the Atsinganoi recorded in the hagiography of Saint George the Athonite (Peeters, 1922:102-4). The notion of them being “a Sarmatian people” might suggest elements of shamanism, though it may equally be a Byzantine influence in this Georgian text (Fraser, 1992:46). The term continued to be used concurrently with Egyptians in descriptions of these groups, suggesting that there may have been internal differentiation that was not clearly understood by the Byzantines. The Patriarch of the Holy City, Gregorios Kyprios (1283-9) mentioned both in an ordinance relating to the collection of taxes (as mentioned in the previous section; Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:16), but the term Egyptian seems to have become more widespread at about the same time (Fraser, 1992:47-8) in similar contexts. The additional reference to Egyptians as acrobats might also indicate some difference in perceptions, in the case of the acrobats who arrived in Constantinople around 1314 CE and interviewed by Nikephoros Gregoras (Soulis, 1961:148-9), though it is also possible that these were Dom and not Rom, as they did indeed hail from Egypt. However, the connection with Egypt and magic was an important part of Byzantine culture at all levels from the 11th century onwards, as I shall show.

The question of the relative importance of magic in mediaeval Byzantium has been addressed by Maguire et al (1995), and has a direct bearing upon the history of the Gypsies in this context. The periodic attention that magic and magical practices received in Byzantine scholarly and ecclesiastical writings is an indication of the interest, both academic and popular, that the subject received (Maguire, 1995:10). Magical practices and sorcery had been indistinguishable and poorly defined in relation to Orthodox Christianity, despite the successive attempts by the early Church Councils to define and legislate against them. The concern with magic in Byzantium was first apparent in the 4th century CE, when it became the object of secular law (Fögen, 1995: 99). The study of magic continued throughout the Byzantine period, to a greater or lesser extent, until the fall of the Empire, and Greenfield has demonstrated that Paleologian magic was flourishing until the last days of Byzantium, perhaps understandable in the context of the collapse of the imperium and the daily insecurity of life in the empire (1995:117-153). Divination from weather, clouds, stars, portents and even the markings on the shoulder blades of sheep, were common practises, in addition to the bear-leaders, amulet-sellers, soothsayers, palm-readers and 'scrying-stone' diviners (crystal ball readers) (Rosser, 1997: 859). The question of definitions, both internal and external, during this time-scale is of course important; what was understood to be magic at any point in time varied, as did what was acceptable in the context of Orthodoxy, and what was "illicit" (Maguire, 1995:3). Curiously, the infamous malleus maleficarum, so central to the European Dominican Inquisition, never appeared in Byzantium (Rosser, 1997: 859). As Fögen amply illustrates, the significant change came in the 12th century, when the "domestication" of magic resulted from the greater precision in defining what constituted dealings with the supernatural, and altered these from being the province of secular law, and draconian punishment, to canon law, and the prerogative of the church, who came to see this as a question of indiscipline, rather than treason (1995: 99-104).

The initial reaction of secular and imperial authority to magical practices must be seen in the context of the challenges arising from heresies that, at points, undermined the authority of the Orthodox Church and the Emperor, as its head (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1998:12-17). The great Church Councils of Nicea (325 CE), Constantinople (381 CE) that had condemned the Arian heresy left unresolved by Nicea, and further clarified the position of the Holy Spirit by determining that it was "the Lord, the Giver of Life who proceeds from the Father..." thereby establishing the doctrine of the Trinity (Hughes, 1961:chap.2). The Council also approved the primacy of Constantinople (New Rome) over all other sees, after Rome, though this was never accepted by the Apostolic See and the papal legates refuted this at the Council of Chalcedon (November 451 CE). The Council of

Ephesus was also called to deal with the controversy surrounding Nestorianism (431 CE) and Chalcedon to counter the growth of further Nestorianism and the teachings of Eutychus. Attempting to clarify the decisions taken at Ephesus in 449 CE, at the so-called “robber council” (Hughes, 1961:chap.4), the Council became embroiled in disputes over the formula of adherence to the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ, thus precipitating the split between “Oriental Christianity” or “Orthodoxy” (Coptic, Syriac, Armenian and Ethiopian) and the remainder of the Church. These Councils were not concerned with magic so much as heresy, though they eventually came to consider magic and its practices with the Council of Trullo in 691-2 CE. The first Canon of the Council reiterated the findings of the Councils of Nicea, Constantinople, Ephesus, Chalcedon, the Second and Third Councils at Constantinople regarding doctrine, before proceeding to examine various matters including magic. The Council itself was not fully recognised by the Latin church in the west, as the Pope refused to sign the canons meaning that they were never observed in that part of the Church. Justinian II’s aspirations that this should have been a truly oecumenical council were never realised, as even in the east, the Trullo canons were treated as less than authoritative (Schaffer, 2005:503).

By the time of Balsamon’s commentary upon the canons drawn up at Trullo, the attitude of the Orthodox Church to notions of evil had been further clarified from the 4th century conceptions of the Church Fathers (Dickie, 1995:9-10). In some ways, the figure of Satan had come into focus as a result of deliberations regarding the nature of evil and the relationship between Satan and God (Stewart, 1991:113, 189). The refutation of any notion of dualism, in that Satan might be considered an equal power had established him as part of God’s Creation and therefore subject to Divine Will. Satan in fact had no independent power and any success he had in corrupting men and women was entirely due to their laxity or weakness, lapses of the determination to live according to the tenets of God. Satan was immaterial and not to be associated with particular locations, with very limited abilities to tempt or delude temporarily, in a variety of forms that were largely indistinguishable from him and certainly all of the same order. Importantly, the notion of a host of intermediaries was absent, there appeared no complex taxonomy of daimones or demons such as came to feature in the later Roman Catholic conceptions; such things were regarded as outside of the Christian order and dismissed. As such, the existence of ambiguous *xotiká*, or the Hellenic corpus of spirits, sprites and demons was not accepted and regarded as ignorant superstition amongst the masses (Lawson, 1910:130-41). In actual fact the notions of two opposing forces in the world, what Stewart calls “a world view [that]... is predicated on the existence of at least two opposing sides” (1991:99), would

seem to have existed in the Byzantine world, as a relic of the pre-Christian Hellenic beliefs and the influence of shamanism from the Pontic regions (Dodd, 1951:267-9), certainly in popular culture. The 11th century saw a scholarly revival of interest in magic, alchemy and astrology as an academic concern, particularly by intellectuals such as Michael Psellos. Duffy suggests that Psellos was instrumental in reintroducing major works on magic and magical practices that had hitherto been unregarded (Duffy, 1995:83-4). This concern with what was clearly in opposition to the teachings of the Church and Psellos' own position, was surprising, though Psellos himself seems ambiguous in his repudiation of the works he studied as pagan nonsense and Michael Italikos is contemptuous throughout (Duffy, 1995:86). The complex attitudes towards magic shown by some Byzantine intellectuals was however, not reflected in popular beliefs about the efficacy of magical practices, or what might be described as witchcraft as opposed to sorcery – that branch of magic pursued by scholars and intellectuals like Psellos and Michael Italikos (Greenfield, 1995:119; Duffy, 1995:91-97). In popular belief, the existence of demons, faeries and all kinds of *xotiká* was widely, almost universally accepted (Stewart, 1991:101).

One other factor needs to be further mentioned here (as referred to briefly above), the question of dualism and more particularly Bogomolism. The 11th century saw the rise of the Bogomols in the Byzantine Empire, a branch of what Runciman has described as the mediaeval Manichee (1947). The foundations of Bogomolism in the 10th century appear to be based in earlier Pauliciansim and Massalianism, according to Anna Comnena (Dawes, 1918:412-415). There has not been any connection drawn between the Gypsies and Bogomolism and it's not my intention to do so here, but to suggest the context of Byzantine society into which the 'Egyptians' arrived (for histories of the Bogomil movement see Fine, 1983:171-9; Hamilton & Hamilton, 1998; Stoyanov, 1994:191-207; Obolensky, 1948). No Byzantine documents assert the charge of Bogomilism or even heresy about the Egyptians, which in itself is perhaps surprising given the possibility that the proto-Gypsies are likely to have been in contact with Christianity in its Armenian miaphysite variation, as Hancock has shown (2002:74). This would suggest that the use of the notion of the Armenians as heretics was largely political, rather than religious, in the struggle for control of the Bagratid Kingdom in the 11th century. The Gypsies were clearly associated with sorcery, in the earliest reliable documentary reference to the *Atsinganoi* (Fraser, 1992:46), but it would appear that this association was more by inference than any suggestion they studied magic in the same way that intellectuals in Byzantium did. The further references note them as soothsayers, charmers and magicians, and more darkly as "teaching devilish things" (Soulis, 1961:146-7), but the context that I have outlined above would

explain why this was not perceived as socially disruptive or a threat to the oecumene – this was a product of ignorance and superstition, lapses in will on the part of the gullible but not the actual work of heretics from within.

The specific commentary of Theodore Balsamon on the edicts of the Council of Trullo, held in the late 7th century (691-692 CE), is central to aspects of the discussion of Gypsies in Byzantium, and is frequently referred to in the literature following Soulis (1961:142-65). The particular canon that is referred to is sixty-one, where he describes those who are mentioned in more detail:

“Those who expose themselves to soothsaying or to the so-called ekatontarxois [old, or wise-men who mislead the simple] or similar people, to hear what they wish to be disclosed, are to be subjected to six years of penance according to the rules of the early fathers. To the same penance one must submit those who drag a bear or similar animal after themselves for the enjoyment and the damage of simple-minded people and who tell the future, fate, horoscope, and whatever else may be the multitude of words of this erroneous trumpery. The same is true for the interpreters of the clouds, sorcerers, furnishers of amulets, and soothsayers. We decree that those who continue doing so, who neither show repentance nor avoid these destructive and pagan customs, shall be totally expelled from the church according to the holy canons. “For what communion has light with darkness?” [2 Corinthians 6:14-16]” (Fögen, 1995:103)

After mentioning the ekatontarxois, Balsamon refers to the bear-leaders, who are not merely showmen, but dyed their animals, cut strands of their pelt and sold them as amulets against the “evil eye”, a series of shifting notions about malign influences that stemmed originally, from envy (Dickie, 1995:12), and other baleful influences (Fögen, 1995: 101). Other magical practitioners are enumerated, but it would seem the Egyptians as Atsinganoi, are one of the primary concerns for the churchmen of the Byzantine Empire at this time, as Balsamon goes on to mention them again in canon sixty-five (Fraser, 1992:47). This time the connection with evil is more emphatic, as the Atsinganoi are inspired by Satan to false prophecy, and perhaps somewhat strangely, ventriloquism (which might indicate another sphere of entertainment that these groups were involved in; Fögen, 1995:102). Fögen argues that this enumeration and attempt to clearly categorise is a significant shift from the 4th century prohibitions against all those who practised magic, and away from secular punishments to a more accommodating perspective that saw this as within the purview of the church (1995:104-5). As lapsed Christians, those who consulted the Egyptians were to be seen as deserving of mercy and forgiveness after a suitably penitent period (Fraser, 1992:47).

The arrival of the Egyptians coincided with a number of important trends in Byzantine society, as outlined above. The earliest Church Councils had defined orthodoxy and faith in a way that, whilst not eliminating heresy altogether made it clearer who might be defined as beyond the oecumene, through wishing to harm or undermine it from within. In this way, those who practised magic and sorcery (superstitions) may have been deluded by evil influences temporarily, but ultimately their efforts were worthless and fruitless. Heretics by contrast threatened the very order of the oecumene and were to be treated differently, as they sought to subvert the Creation through distorting it by suggesting that Satan was coeval and in opposition to God as an equal, such as the Bogomils. In popular terms, the notions that sorcerers and magicians operated in the world of *xotiká* as an opposition did retain its hold on the imagination of everyday Byzantines, but as these existed beyond the bounds of Christian theology (unlike heretics), they could be dismissed or discussed by intellectuals and theologians in a way that defined them as superstition, not social disruption. The Egyptians were part of this world of *xotiká* and could be ultimately dealt with through bringing those who appealed to them back into the community of the faithful with penitence and prayer, attempting to neutralise them or their influence. As part of the *xotiká*, and through the association with Egypt, the Gypsies were intrinsically linked to notions of enchantment (and probably encouraged such notions in the interests of commercial advantages over other magicians and practitioners of divination and sorcery). The “uses of enchantment”, to quote Bettelheim (1989) may well be to

This I think suggests that unlike the Bogomils or other groups, the Egyptians were not persecuted in an attempt to extirpate them, but to some extent (as Fögen argues; 1995:115) incorporated into the round of day-to-day administration of the faithful:

“...the initial excitement and chaos, which the secular power first provoked and then did not get under control, gradually gave way to a professional handling which ended in a matter of routine. Canon law and its experts, step-by-step, by description and distinctions, transformed a home made political confusion into the normality of religious discipline. For magicians, their clients and judges, the world thereby became more calculable, less complex, and easier to understand.”

Part of this process of definition and incorporation was to ascribe the proto-Gypsies a place in society that made sense in the Byzantine worldview; as part of the continuum of popular belief in *xotiká* and intellectual study in magic, the people that had arrived from the east were to be associated with the source of all magic, Egypt. Increasingly the association with the older notions of

the Atsinganoi was to give way to a stronger identification with Egypt and magic, as a result of these changes and trends. The association was one that remained and eventually became the term by which these people and their descendants would be known, and in this sense the construction of Gypsy identity can be traced to 11th century Byzantium and the interest in magic that remained a feature of its culture until its fall in 1453 CE.

7.1 Ottomans and Gypsies "...my Lord has created a city..." Hacı Bayram Velī, d.1430

"The Turks are a barbarous people borne to the destruction of cities, arts and learning, have prospered more by our vices than by their own "virtue". This public calamity of the world, by barbarous violence, multitudes of men and obedience to severe discipline had grown great" John Barclay, The Mirrour of Mindes, (1633)

EXAMINING THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IS, in many ways an opportunity to see a different way of being, a society based upon precepts other than those we see as inextricable with our own sense of ourselves. These perceptions of Ottoman society and culture were and are often based upon those a priori criteria and argumentation constructed in ways that may have enormous impact upon our analyses and certainly less upon what might be considered as "inner Asian norms" (Togan, 1992). Observation and investigation may provide startlingly different results if conducted from historical curiosity and re-evaluation of the sources and literature. It is the case that pre-Enlightenment investigation of the Ottoman world can be seen as characteristically empirical and historical in a way that in the 18th century became "...unified, settled, fixed and...self-evident in describing Ottoman reality in an ahistorical and rational framework of analysis." (Çırakman 2002:4) The fluidity and multiplicity of images and notions of Ottomans as admirable, fearful, sympathetic and militarily superior that can be seen to have existed in 16th century and early 17th century (see Anon. 1597, 1622,1685; Baudier 1633; Busbeq 1694; Giovo 1546; Goffe 1631 a & b; Knolles 1603; M.B. 1660 for examples) became refashioned in the 18th. Exotic and execrable, desirable and detestable, the image of the Ottomans in European thought, literature and political discourse became the bedrock of 19th century notions of the "Sick Man of Europe", the "Lustful and Terrible Turk" and the archetype of "Oriental despotism" and its necessary corollary, decline. Such tropes allowed Europe to find a remarkably common set of responses to the Ottomans, replacing the earlier Catholic antagonism and Protestant alliances of the 16th and 17th centuries, with a rationale for economic penetration and eventual dominance (Clay, 2000:5-7). The stream of renegados to the Ottoman lands in the earlier period became a constant movement of travellers, opportunists and carpet-baggers convinced of European economic and military superiority and Ottoman-Turkish imbecility, ineptitude and idleness, all providing a commentary for audiences eager for confirmation of their prejudices (Davidson, 1990:57). Octavio Bon's early work on the Sultân's Seraglio, an example of the empirical and historical approach characterising pre-18th century European curiosity (1996), became Lūrīd and improbable descriptions of the turgid and deliquescent world of the hammam and harēm, almost entirely fictitious in origin and limited in imagination (see Grosrichard, 1998). The concerns with Ottoman origins and society, as a means of explaining (and emulating)

Ottoman military successes (see Anon. 1597, 1622, 1685; M. B. 1660; Baudier, 1633), transformed into condemnation of the corruptness of Ottoman governance over the Empire's subject Christian populations (Bacon, 1861) and concerns over the potential for a radical re-alignment of the 'balance of power' should Russia prove successful in its attempts to recapture Tsargrad (Constantinople) for Orthodoxy (McCarthy, 2001:28), .

As a multi-religious society made up of a huge variety of differing peoples, the Empire needed different solutions to the issues of governance, social organisation and control than those of the developing nation-states in Europe (Braude & Lewis, 1982: 7). Models for a successful polity were primarily Persian and Turco-Mongolian, with the influence of Byzantium (Kunt, 1995: 14-15) traceable in the local bureaucratic usages. Originally a group of Oghuz Türks, found in the 13th century on the hinterland between Byzantium and the Selcuk Sultinate of Rûm, the Ottoman chronicles (like that of Karamini Mehmet Pasha written during the reign of Mehmet II), claimed they had arrived seeking new pastures after being displaced by the Mongols of Chingiz Khan. As successful irregulars in the Selcuk military forces, the Oghuz and Turcoman tribal leaders began to coalesce around a certain Ertoghrul in the regions of Ermeni Beli and Domaniç in summer and Kishlak, in the vale of Sörgüt in winter. This effectively controlled the direct trading route and pasture-lands between Bilecik and Eskeshehir (Lindner, 1983: 20). Greeks, Turks, peasants and townspeople and even the occasional renegade Byzantine lord began to look to the emirs of Caria, Aydin, Saruhan and Karasi to provide protection and stability in a region where the population had been effectively "...forgotten by their distant and powerless capital [Byzantium]..." (Kunt, 1995:7). Ertoghrul remains an extremely shadowy and part-mythical figure in the late 13th century, whom Kara Mehmed has dying after many successful campaigns at the age of 93 (Lindner, 1983: 21). His son and from 1299 holder of the chieftenship, Osman is however a much clearer and more definite character. It is he to whom we owe the name of the dynasty and the empire that it ruled for seven centuries.

The picture of Gypsies in the European Ottoman territories has been recently described in detail (Marushiakova and Popov, 2001; Seeman, 2002; Çelik, 2003) with regard to their social and economic status, particularly with regard to how Ottoman administrators viewed Gypsies and imposed differential taxation levels upon them, arguably as a consequence of the perceptions of them as an ethnicity (Ginio, 2004). That this represents a continuance of late Byzantine taxation policy (and perceptions of the Gypsies) I have suggested above, and the principles by which such decisions were made have been demonstrated by Coşgel (2004) to explain variations driven by

economic considerations, whatever the ideological justification that may have been mobilised as a consequence (2004:18-28). Briefly, the costs of measuring the tax base and collecting the revenues was always considered against the consideration of maintaining local practices and rates of taxation and adapting these to the needs of the state for efficient revenue collection (2004:27). Political assimilation of conquered populations may have been less of a consideration when it came to groups like the Gypsies, but the process of collection was always adapted to suit local conditions – in the case of the Gypsies the annual festival of Hdrilez (5th and 6th May) in Thrace was the opportunity to collect taxes from nomadic Gypsy groups, hence the term by which the Turkish Gypsies still know it as Kakava, relating to the copper cauldrons used by families for cooking food and the basic measurement of units of taxation by the Ottoman enumerators and tax collectors (this explanation was provided by various Romanlar Gypsies during fieldwork in Edirne, May 2005). The notion that ethnicity was noted in legal cases amongst Gypsies in Salonica, in contravention of normal Ottoman practices (Ginio, 2004:118) is misleading, in that the regulation of Ottoman society was always based upon complex ethnic, religious and class distinctions, as Makdisi has argued (2002:768). In counting population, ethnic differences were indeed recorded as Karpat has documented (1985:115-221), including Jews, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Yörüks, Alevis and Tahtaci all noted in the population count of 1831 (Karpat, 1985:111-115). Clearly ‘normal’ Ottoman practice in a variety of administrative contexts did note the ethnicity of individuals, as well as their confessional adherence.

The picture of Ottoman Gypsies may be added to here by a narrative drawing upon a different source than that usually resorted to in discussions of Gypsies in the Ottoman lands, that of the Turkish Gypsy communities themselves, and in particular that of the Istanbul neighbourhood of Sulukule, the area where the Gypsies in Byzantium are first recorded in 1050, as eradicating the wild animals in the royal hunting ground of the Philopation, just outside the land walls to the west of St. Saviour in Chora monastery (see Sevchenko, 2002:74). The Ottoman period is an important point for the cultural heritage of the Sulukule neighbourhood in Istanbul as the community maintain a strong tradition that this area was given to them after the taking of the city in May 1453; the Conqueror Mehmed II was supposed to have awarded this for the efforts of the Gypsy troops (they were most frequently commanded by Crimean Tartars in the Ottoman period, whilst the Gypsy canon-founders and blacksmiths were under the command of Hungarian engineers) in their first attack against the Azi Kapi, or Gate of the Assault (now on the edge of the Sulukule quarter), clearly using them as ‘shock-troops’ to be followed by the attack of the janissaries. 6,000 of them are

supposed to have died in the assault upon Constantinople, and are described as ‘martyrs’ in the narrative. This tradition provides the community with its focal point of a claim to historical occupation since 1453, though by the population counts undertaken during the early Ottoman period in Constantinople/Istanbul, the numbers that resided there were at first quite small (a 1477 count suggests some 41 households). The re-population of the city in the twenty-five years following the conquest brought large numbers of Gypsies from Anatolia (places like Balat) to the area and increased the population rapidly in the neighbourhood. The position of Gypsies in the military organisation of the Ottomans, as metal-workers (especially in the Tophane complex), drovers, grooms and horse-trainers, porters, powder-makers, fletchers (arrow-makers), tent-makers and a host of auxiliary roles was an essential one in the huge machinery that prosecuted the campaigns of conquest engaged in by the Ottoman Sultāns and their armies. The most obvious position was one that European observers commented upon (and sometimes recorded in illustrations), that of musicians leading the armies (a role that remains today in the modern Turkish army for many Gypsies undertaking their military service).

The tradition of music-making and the training of children in the Gypsy community through the guild system produced musicians and dancers of the highest quality that serviced the elites of the palace and pashas’ households throughout the Ottoman period. These dancers and musicians were highly paid and extremely important in the daily life of the Sultān and his court. Gypsy women also worked as story-tellers, seamstresses and washer-women for the palace harem, acting as mediators with the external world for the secluded women of the palace schools. Coffee-house puppeteers and purveyors of folk tales, the Gypsies occupied a specific and organised place in the complex ethnic and social mosaic that was Ottoman society. Music and dancing were so synonymous with Gypsy identity that even groups of Armenian, Greek and Jewish dancing boys and girls were known as “Gypsy” by dint of their occupation, and we find the evidence of these performers in numerous Ottoman miniatures that depict the festivals, processions and feast-days of the Ottoman calendar. The masters and mistresses of their crafts were located in the Sulukule quarter where the system of educating and training was carried out through a complex ‘apprenticeship’ process that saw young children progressing to accomplished and respected musicians and dancers, then with age to the leaders and teachers of the next generation.

Not only were Gypsies in this neighbourhood the dancers (the illustration here shows a Gypsy çengi dancer from the 17th century; Abdülcelil Çelebi Levni, c.1720 *The Book of Festivals*) and musicians but horse-dealing and carting also played a valuable part in the local economy. Porters and basket-

makers too lived in the area, close by the huge markets of the Grand Bazaar and the Egyptian Bazaar, and in the reign of Ibrahim I the guild of basket-makers paid for the reconstruction of the pavilion that now bears their name on the shores of the Golden Horn (1643). In other parts of the Ottoman Empire we have records of Gypsies as water-engineers (in Salonika for example) and as miners in Bosnia and soldiers in the Kosovo, whilst in the city itself, Gypsies were part of the numerous street-traders that plied their wares in the neighbourhoods and on the highways. The cultural heritage remains in the neighbourhood and the community with the music and dance aspects very much alive despite the difficulties of the recent past. The historical heritage of Sulukule is one that must remain as the oldest Romanī settlement, and as the place where Gypsy identity has been moulded and formed in the complex shifts of time and empire...

7.2 Gypsies in the late Ottoman Empire; the impact of nationalism, westernisation and modernisation upon the *Çingene*, 1789-1878

“Furthermore, let not any viziers... voivodes... sipahis... or other... groups interfere in the affairs of the Gypsies... as well as inflicting any injustice or oppression upon them by demanding more than this Imperial decree specifies.”

Ottoman Firman, 1684

“[The Gypsy rabble should]... without further formality be beaten with rods and branded on the back and for evermore be banished from the territories of the entire [Upper Rhine]... Circle...” Frankfurt am Main, 1711

Before briefly examining the position of the Romanlar or Gypsies in the late Ottoman Empire, it is important to note that Ottoman social categorisation was primarily based upon religion rather than notions of ethnicity as such (Braude & Lewis 1982: vii), although the complex interplay of what Makdisi has called the “...a hierarchical system of subordination...” (2002:768) included categories reflecting notions of class and identity. In the context of a discussion about Gypsies, the categorisation upon some notions of an “ethnicity” would seem to be identifiably part of the location of those peoples of the Empire who increasingly became ‘peripheral’, ‘backward’ and Oriental (Makdisi, 2002:772). As the nineteenth century progressed, these notions became both more nuanced and clearly fixed with the development of Ottoman Orientalism, through engagement with Western European imperialism and absorption of the essentially scientific racist paradigm (Gillard, 1984:20). This was expressed through the tendency of the Ottoman elite to see Istanbul as the dynamic, progressive and reforming centre of a modern Ottoman Turkish polity, whilst the provinces remained the epitome of backwardness, unreformed, spatially, culturally and temporally distant (Makdisi, 2002:770-1). In this, the elements of confessional and ethnic identity were primary boundary markers for the ruling élite, locating Ottoman quiddity and culture, as the Ottoman Porte attempted to define the component parts of the Empire’s diverse and polyglot population. The servants of the sultān at the end of the nineteenth century saw themselves in a radically different light to that of the aqāyān at the end of the eighteenth; modernisers, reformers, urbane and literate they perceived themselves to be the harbingers of a new Ottomanism (Osmanlılık), one that was coeval with Europe in its history, but determinedly Islamic and modern in its outlook and the apogee of development in the empire. The centre of this world-view was Istanbul, with the hinterlands playing a similar role to that of the colonies for the imperialist powers; these were the lands of the “savage” and irredeemable, the haunt of the nomad and uncivilised “tribes”. The development of what Usaama Makdisi has described as “Ottoman Orientalism” follows a similar trajectory to that of Western Orientalism, the necessity of engaging with an imaginary “other” in order to project an image of “self”. The concept of “nesting

Orientalisms”, suggesting that every society orientalises its “other” in the process of developing a national, or dominant ethnic identity, is most appropriate here (Bakic-Hayden, 1995:918); it is their response to imperialism and the invasive, unequal relationship of the imperial powers in Ottoman Turkey in economic, social and political spheres.

In identifying Gypsies in the late Ottoman period, the terminology of the Ottoman tax collectors and government officials makes it difficult to always be certain about categorisation. For example, Copt or Kipti was a religious term often used as synonymous with Gypsies, based upon the state’s acceptance of this population as “Egyptian” in some way (Bond 1917:3), a position which reflects other Ottoman notions of all adherents of the Orthodox faith as Rūmi, or Greek. Other Ottoman terminology included Çingene, (this term is considered derogatory amongst modern Turkish Gypsy communities) a term derived from either the notion of Gypsies coming from further east than the Turks (i.e. Çin or China; see Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:36) and a sense of peripateticism in the word gene, meaning “again” in Turkish, or more simply from the Persian çingan meaning dancer, entertainer. The designation of Arabacı from the use of horse-drawn wagons (Turkish at arabasi) supplies us with an idea of transport, of being involved in both movement and moving as an occupation and a “life-style”. Some terms were specific to particular groups within geographical locations; Poşa or Boşa for example is still a term in current use in Eastern Anatolia (though contested), whilst Mirtip or Mitrip is found historically in Hakkari, Mardin, Siirt and southern Van (Arabic for ‘musician’). The Armenian Patriarch identified a group described as Kinchors (an Armenian word for Gypsies; see Trotter 1881, quoted in Karpat, 1985:125) in the vilayets of Erzerum, Bitlis and Van (excluding Siirt). This term is not reflected elsewhere in Ottoman terminology but appears again at the Berlin Conference of 1878 after the Ottoman defeat by Imperial Russia, albeit in an “unofficially” submitted note to the Plenipotentiaries from the Patriarchate (Karpat, 1985:125, n.3). The term relates to the late 18th century exhortations of the Armenian clergy to marry Armenian Gypsies (Posha, a term that is also, like Çingene, considered pejorative; modern communities use the term Lom to describe themselves), thereby bringing them into the orbit of the Armenian people proper, as additional members of the “nation” in the discussions about numbers of Armenians. The Ottoman census officials of 1831 noted that amongst the groups in the Anadolu eyalet were Tahtacı, Abdallar and Alevi (Karpat, 1985:112). The contested nature of such designations in modern ethnology notwithstanding (Benninghaus, 2002), the Abdallar (stemming from the Turkish word abdal meaning wandering, begging dervish and connected to the term aptal for a simple, foolish person) were considered to be Gypsies. Modern

ethnology suggests them to be an admixture of Afghan-Turkic nomads inhabiting Anatolia or a group similar to the Yenische of Germany, Resande of Scandinavia or Romanichals of England (Alford Andrews & Benninghaus, 2002). The claims of these groups to be recognised as Romanī peoples in their own right reflect the assertion by modern Abdallar that they represent a distinct Alevi Gypsy “tribe”. The connection between the Tahtacı and the Abdallar may be clearly seen in their shared Alevism rather than any perceived shared ethnicity; however the problems of hæteroidentification mean that sometimes a variety of differing tribal, religious and ethnic groups were considered to be Gypsies by both the Ottoman state and the wider population (Karpat, 1985:114). The Tahtacı, Laz, Yörüks and some Kurds have been and continue to be on occasion, categorised in a variety of differing ways according to changing social and political circumstances. It must also be recognised that the majority of Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire after 1831 were Muslim, and so fell into this category in much of the official documentation, rather than being enumerated separately.

Economic and military occupations were also indicative, and in some instances we find Gypsies categorised as *derbenci* or *voynuks*, irregular border guards (Malcolm 1996:114). The earliest military description is of the Gypsy *sancak*, a military-administrative unit (and not a geographical definition), in the 16th century *eyalet* of Rumeli and described in the Law for the Supervision of the *Sancak* Gypsies promulgated in 1541 under *Kanune Süleyman*. This unit was deployed by the Ottomans along the borderlands between Bosnia and Kosovo. The discussion about the continued existence of the Gypsy *sancak* is problematic, as it is difficult to establish in Ottoman records after this period (see Mutafchieva & Dimitrov, 1968). The population count of the 1520’s, taken in the European province of the empire, the *eyalet* of Rumeli, provides us with information on numbers of Gypsies, locations of Gypsy communities and their religious ‘beliefs’ or identities (Malcolm 1998: 206) in the earliest imperial times.

We find also them amongst communities of miners in the Novo Brdo and Trepça regions of Kosovo as muleteers, and amongst the armourers and falconers around Prizren (Malcolm 1998:102-3). The reports of papal emissaries, legates, foreign travellers, ambassadors, Catholic and Orthodox clerics and the occasional military dispatches from invading Habsburg commanders can also give indications of the position and extent of the Gypsy populations (Malcolm 1996:116), estimated to be 8,000 in 1808 and 11,500 in the 1860’s. Condemnation from Muslim state and religious leaders (Hasluck 1948:1-12; Soulis 1961:155), or members of the *ulema* (Ginio, 2004:117-144) also tell us something about the ways in which Gypsies were perceived from an official perspective and give some indication of changing notions. Their “traditional” skills as metal-workers and blacksmiths

means that Ottoman Gypsies can also be found working for the Sultān (miri) in various of the state enterprises other than mining. The presence of Gypsy blacksmiths in the Arsenal in Kasımpasa may date to the establishment of the naval manufactory, but certainly the increasing use of “itinerant” blacksmiths and overall reduction in the numbers of those who could claim a “fixed” position (miri ahengeran) in the eighteenth century meant a rise in the numbers of Kıptıyans in the employ of the state, albeit temporarily (Faroqhi, 2001:159). Hired when the advent of a campaign was imminent, the rest of the time these smiths earned a precarious living in neighbourhoods like Kasımpasa, Kaghithane, Tophane and Balat by a variety of means. The notion that Ottoman Gypsies can be found in very particular occupational ‘niches’ however, reflects the inappropriate application of experiences documented elsewhere upon the Ottoman society. Many of the blacksmiths working in the Arsenal were not Kıptı or Çingene but shared a social and economic position just as precarious. A petition from these men and their wives in 1720, demonstrates that poverty amongst this group was such an issue that they appealed to the Sultān directly, this being the best means of resolving a dispute with another group (Faroqhi, 2001:157). The blacksmith’s wives engaged in the cleaning and selling of lamb’s trotters in competition with the male guild of paçacı tıfesi to supplement their meagre incomes and feed their children from the proceeds, as it states in the document submitted to the Padishah (Faroqhi, 2001:155). Whether the Kıptıyan women also engaged in this practice is not recorded, although the Ottoman practice of listing Gypsies separately would suggest that they were not.

One can find Kıptıyan women recorded as performers at weddings; as singers and players they were present in Ottoman Cairo in nineteenth-century Egypt and in other major cities too. Istanbul’s dancing guilds had become so synonymous with Gypsies that all dancers, whether Romanī or not, were described as Çingene. Competition between groups of Jewish, Armenian and Greek çengi dancers sometimes sparked open conflict between them, to the despair of the authorities. The Ottoman population records for the 19th century provide much better data for Gypsies, despite the prejudices (both then and now) of those demographers determined to suggest them inadequate (Karpat, 1985:108-224).

In this section I shall present two ‘snapshots’ to illustrate some changing trends in the general situation of the Gypsies under Ottomans rule during the 19th century. I will show that their treatment in the empire, whilst comparatively better for Gypsies throughout most of its existence, significantly worsened by the end of the century with increasing European influence, and this had important consequences.

During the period from the end of the 18th century to the end of the 19th century the Ottoman Empire was undergoing continuing processes of internal reform and economic dislocation, concomitant with increasing Westernisation and modernisation (Davison 1990:xi-xv; 73-95). This can be seen as both Ottoman initiative and a response to European pressure and increasing penetration of Ottoman markets by France, Britain and other Western states (Quataert 1993:6-7). This included the efforts by Europeans to secure effective control of the Ottoman economy through banking, especially after the financial collapse of 1878. Territorially the empire was becoming more compact as a result of military defeats at the hands of the Imperial Russian armies (Davison 1990:21), whilst its own officials removed provinces and regions from effective control of the Dergâh-i âlî or Sublime Porte, sometimes permanently (for example, Muhammed Ali and Egypt). The subject populations making up the empire's complex ethnic mosaic also began to feel the impact of the new ideologies of nationalism, self-identification and ethnic self-ascription, often through European intervention as in the case of Russia and the Orthodox populations (Davison 1990:29-43) or via the growing mercantile classes which were predominantly, though by no means exclusively, non-Muslim (see Stoianovich 1960). This manifested itself in movements breaking away to found national states from 1804. Increasing contact with Europe from the accession of Sultāns Selim III (1789-1807) and Mahmūd II (1808-1839), and the demands of the tanzimat modernisation programme (Tanzimat-i Hayriye or 'beneficial re-ordering'), after the promulgation of the Gülhane Hatt-i Sherif (or Imperial Rescript of the Rose Garden) in 1839, meant larger numbers of foreign engineers, military officers and diplomats came to be resident in the empire than previously had been the case. Ottoman diplomatic and technical overtures to European powers meant that borders, both geographical and ideological, between the dar-ül Islam or the house of Islam, and the dar-ül harb or the house of war, became more permeable than ever before (Lewis 1982:51-57).

There are a number of key groups in the Ottoman social structure at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the 19th century. The traditional military forces of the empire, the yeni çeri or janissaries (Çelebi 1951) had become a largely ineffective militia with integral links to the guilds and artisan class. The janissaries maintained power through alliance with the conservative elements of the 'ulemâ, to oppose reform and the centralising tendencies of the government at the opening of the century (Shaw 1971:367-383); although the 'ulemâ could also be a force for Westernisation and modernisation at certain times, especially through the Mevlevi orders (Heyd 1961:63-65). The Christian churches, with their sponsorship by European powers especially Russia, had achieved a

degree of prominence previously unknown (Davison 1976:465). The traditional divide between the mass of the population, the reâyâ or both Muslim and Christian peasant-producers, and the military-bureaucratic élite or umerâ, had broken down to a significant degree in the 17th century, undermining the ideological and fiscal basis of the state (Kunt 1983:67). Most essentially in the context of a discussion about Gypsies, the growth of an important group of intermediaries called the a'yân or 'notables' had taken place in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries (Barkey 1994:1-8; McGowan 1994:637-758).

The a'yân combined two distinct elements - the urban, tax-farming administrative notables, essentially members of the old umerâ class and the warlords controlling vast numbers of irregular troops which they often, though not always supplied to the imperial government in times of war (Inalcik 1977:27-52; Karpat 1972:243). These had fused into one class, combining the functions of both warlord, tax-farmer and government official by the closing decades of the century and, in emulation of the Sultân's household became microcosms of the court at Istanbul, occasionally to the extent of conducting foreign negotiations independently of the Porte, as in the case of Ālî Pasahâ Tepedelenli of Yanya (Ioannina) (see Bowen, 1986:398b; Davenport, 1837:87-90). Their economic power lay in their ability to ameliorate the tax demands of the treasury or even shelter whole communities from the state fisc in return for extracting significant surpluses (McGowan 1994:659). Able to enforce their will both locally and regionally and constantly involved in attempts to extend both influence and power, the a'yân were almost always resistant to attempts at reform or centralisation by government which meant a reduction in their own authority and on at least one occasion in 1808, were able to dictate terms to the Ottoman state itself (Shaw 1971:404-405). The development of power relations between this group and the state is characterised by de-centralisation of sultânic authority, sometimes to an almost fatal degree under Sultân Selim III and a re-feudalisation of provincial power and social relations (McGowan 1994:658). However, the state less often met this resistance with outright force, using bargaining, offers of pardons and even government appointments (Barkey 1994:2-9) in attempting to deal with the a'yân. This group in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, had a particular impact upon the Gypsies of Ottoman Europe. The Gypsy communities in Balkan towns and cities occupied particular mahalla or neighbourhoods, in common with religious groups such as Orthodox, Catholics and Jews and guilds of tanners, weavers and carpet-makers and others (see *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society Old Series*, 1:125, 3:29; *New Series*, 1:198, 7:158, 8:158; *Third Series*, 38:154). In some sandjaks or provinces like Macedonia, parts of Bulgaria and Kosovo, there are records of entire Gypsy villages (Paspates

1870:11; Bond 1917:5). In militarily strategic garrison towns such as Belgrade, Gypsy communities were situated around the fortress, although in many towns they had been pushed to the edges of settlements. In matters of state revenues, it is not clear whether the Gypsy sandjak created in the mid-16th century for purposes of taxation, was still in operation at this time (Malcolm 1998:206). In general Gypsies both Muslim and Christian, tended to be taxed at a higher rate than the reāyā (literally “flock” - an indication of the Ottomans’ own nomadic origins) or peasantry, seemingly on the basis of religious adherence or lack of it (see below), but possibly for sound economic reasons (Soulis 1959:154-156). The state’s suspicion of nomads in general (see Lindner 1983:7-14; Inalcik, 1996:37-41) and the difficulties of extracting taxes from originally mobile or semi-mobile populations may also have contributed to an annual collection ensured to raise maximum revenues often in kind or nüzul bedeli (Faroqhi 1994:533-535). Tax rates for the resm-i çift or land tax (paid by Christians as haraç, or ispence in parts of Serbia and Kosovo), in the earlier Ottoman period were 22 akçes for Muslims and 25 akçes for Christians, with an occasional additional 6 akçes, payable as the head-tax or cizye on the latter. There seems to have been an increase in these rates at the end of the 17th century and beginning of the 18th probably due to the increasing cash shortages experienced by the Ottoman treasury (Soulis 1959:155). However, by 1750 CE the cadastral registers (defters) had become generally inaccurate, forcing a change to a district ‘re-allocation’ or tevzi system by the close of the 18th century (although the change was organic and uneven in development; see Inalcik, 1996:55-72). This allowed the imposition of any new fiscal demands to be ameliorated within the district based on realistic assessments of productive capability by the local aqāyān, thereby strengthening their control (McGowan 1994:714). Ottoman fiscal policy continued to tax the countryside in favour of the town and revenue sources remained largely consistent and conservative (Quataert 1994:870). Horses and other livestock, for example went untaxed in some Rumelian provinces, a factor benefiting Gypsies and Vlachs, whilst potential new sources were not exploited. As smiths, metal-workers, gun-makers and repairers, armourers, powder-makers and miners, Gypsies had a high economic value placed upon them and these occupations were granted certain tax-exemptions by Ottoman officials often amounting to relief from the avarız or extraordinary taxes paid in cash, annually collected by the mid-17th century (Faroqhi 1994:35).

Those Gypsies involved in military occupations, like other derbenci and yürüks, also enjoyed privileges, as in the case of the Gypsies who defended Kosovo against the Habsburg armies in 1737 or Bosnia in 1788 (Malcolm 1998:207). These Gypsies may have been largely sedentarised as

recruitment from nomadic groups would have been difficult; although seasonal campaigning was the norm for nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples who have generally combined both a military function and mobile lifestyle very successfully (the Avars, Huns, Mongols and of course Ottomans are examples). The Ottoman organisation of Gypsies and Yürüks into hereditary ocaks (groups of irregular troops about thirty in number), is recorded by both Evliya Çelebi and Sir Paul Rycaut in the 17th century (Halliday 1922:170-171). It is in this context that numbers of Gypsies were attached to the aqāyān (at least some of whom may have been Gypsy in origin themselves, as Ali Tepedeleni was rumoured to be). □Ālī Pas□h□a Tepedelenli of Ioannina, □Ot□h□mān Paswanog□h□lu of Vidin (1758-1807) and Işmail Ağa of Rusçuk all had significant Gypsy communities attached to their retinues (Halliday 1922:168; Bowen 1986:398b). Metin-Kunt's argument that the devşirme was neither restricted to Christian's nor to the Porte, but was part of the relationship of patronage that made up Ottoman social organisation, may also have a bearing here as the ethnic-regional origins of Ottoman officials was often reflected in these official's personal retinues (Metin-Kunt 1982:60-63). □Ālī Pas□h□a's campaigns against the Bu□atlı dynasty of Şkodra record the presence of Gypsies, Yürüks and Vlachs amongst his forces (Bowen 1986:398b). In the re-feudalised order of the late 18th century Balkans, Gypsies played an important role in craft production, horse-trading, mining and metallurgical economies and militarily for both state and aqāyān.

As well as these groups, some Gypsies were in the position of being slaves, though not in the same sense as those of the Romanian principalities (Georghe 1983:13-22, Fraser 1992:131-145, Acton 1993:77-89). A small number of Gypsy miners and metal-workers are present as 'slaves' in the tax defters, though it is not clear what the circumstances of their enslavement were (Malcolm 1998:207). It is possible that these were the remnants of enslaved communities captured by the invading Ottoman forces in the 16th century, such as the mining community at Novo Brdo, but it is also the case that sections of this community were encouraged to continue mining through tax exemption privileges, though likely that they had no freedom to emigrate (Malcolm 1998:102). There is no record, at present, of the kind of serfdom comparable with Moldavia and Wallachia for Gypsies in the Ottoman Empire as a whole, but as European commentators noted in the mid-19th century about the community of Gypsies that inhabited Ali Tepedeleni's ruined konak or mansion at Ioanina, their condition could be equally one of extreme poverty and destitution (Hughes 1830, I:455).

Nomadic and semi-nomadic Gypsies in Rumeli or Ottoman Europe were occupied as horse-traders,

itinerant metal-workers and tanners, basket-makers, spoon-makers, comb-makers, dancers and musicians (Petulengro 1915:6-28). Some appear as “necromancers” in Catholic prelates’ reports, practising the arts of fortune-tellers, healers, cunning-men and women, and folk-doctors (Malcolm 1998:130). In common with the general rural picture, shared beliefs and practices encompassed a genuine syncretism between Islam and Christianity for the mass of the population, whilst the continuing pagan practices of pre-Christian and pre-Islamic beliefs were incorporated into the folk-religion predominant in the Balkans region (Malcolm 1998:129-134). Gypsies were part of this syncretism of beliefs and the idea of them representing ‘heretical’ Muslims or not being ‘good’ Christians was a common conception amongst the urban, educated priests and mollahs, and true of the rural population in general. Another shared attribute is the ‘Islamisation’ of some Gypsy men, whilst women remained Christian. Whether this led to the phenomenon of ‘crypto-Christianity’ amongst Gypsy communities, as it did amongst other rural communities is not known. However, as well as the Christian clergy, the Muslim ’ulemā of Salonika had cause to condemn the Gypsies of the surrounding area for their lack of faith and indifference to religious observance (Halliday 1922:177). Widespread celebration of both Christian and Muslim feast-days involved Gypsies as dancers and musicians (during the Feast of St. George and the Assumption of the Virgin), with important consequences for their position as bearers of ‘popular’ culture in post-Ottoman Serbia (discussed below). The question of religion amongst Balkan Gypsy communities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries must be viewed in the context of the general picture of syncretism amongst the rural population at large (Malcolm 1998:129-134).

Two important factors emerge from this brief overview; namely the relationship between the a□yān and Gypsies, and the sedentary character of many of their communities. The numbers of nomadic and semi-nomadic Gypsies in the Balkans at this time would appear to be smaller than later in the century. Gypsies look to be more closely integrated into Ottoman Balkan society and economy at this point than after the middle years of the nineteenth century, and less mobile. This picture stands in contrast to accounts of travellers and “Gypsiologists” of the 1880’s onwards, where emphasis is placed on the view of Gypsies as travellers and nomads. The reasons for this may lie in the personal bias of those investigating Gypsies in later years who, under the influence of an idealised romanticism, sought to find a ‘traditional’ society of wandering people, largely unsullied by industrialism and ‘modern’ society. In the context of the ‘Orientalism’ prevalent in European states during this period (Said 1978; Çirakman, 2002:1-32), this image of the Gypsies falls neatly into these perceptions. Therefore, the seeking of non-nomadic Gypsy communities, established for long

periods of time fails to fulfil the aspirations and stereotypes of those seeking the 'traditional' and 'genuine' Gypsy. It is also the case that Gypsy communities of long standing in some areas became acculturated, in common with other groups, losing language and customs in favour of the dominant culture, and so less easy to identify (Malcolm 1998:208).

The empire at the close of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries was one in which the endemic banditry, conflict between state and aq̄yān and the diminished central authority of the Sultān and his government, left existence in the provinces difficult not to say precarious (Barkey, 1994:2). Travellers' tales of highway robbers and bandits attest to the frequency with which travel was endangered by such depredations (Hughes 1830:2-352). Constant conflict between competing aq̄yān and their retinues also contributed to what could be argued was a state of degenerative anarchy at this time (Shaw 1971:211-246). With war throughout the century, the process became accelerated as warlords sought to increase their influence at the expense of their neighbours, assured of the inability of central government to intervene (McGowan 1994:663). These conditions made nomadism hazardous and difficult except within very localized areas, usually under the effective control of a provincial warlord, or Ottoman paşa (areas under the control of local aq̄yān were surprisingly peaceful; Ali Tepedeleni mercilessly crushed banditry in his area and actively encouraged trade); Shaw 1971:228-230). The value of Gypsy smiths and metal-workers to the aq̄yān was one which made it important for them to try to discourage movement and loss of these valuable skills. These groups of Gypsies may have been more tightly controlled by those aq̄yān for whom they performed these services, as seems to be the case with the Gypsy community at Ioannina (Hughes 1830, I:455).

A general suspicion of nomads was part of the character of the Ottoman state, as suggested above. Able to cross borders, difficult to control during and after campaigns and to tax, often unsuitable as enforced settlers on abandoned lands (under Murad IV for example; Roux 1987:229), nomads could be perceived as smugglers, gun-runners, illegal traders with the empire's enemies and sources of social discontent, heretical belief and crime. Gypsies, Vlachs, Türkmens and Tartars all attracted the attention of Sultāns, paşas and viziers who formulated and promulgated legislation designed to curtail or limit the movements of whole sections of the population (including at times, women), in a variety of ways (Fraser 1992:176). Finally, the economic dislocation of the Ottoman market by European powers had not reached the proportions it would during the later century, causing widespread social dislocation and economic migrancy. The loss of imperial territory, whilst of grave concern for the state, had not had the major impact it would when western-sponsored Balkan

successor states came into being, causing large-scale population movement and demographic disorder (Quataert 1994:777-795; Karpat 1985:156). These factors would seem to indicate reasons why the incidence of Gypsy nomadism was less frequent than later in the century.

The mid to late 19th century saw a drastic alteration in this picture. Power relations between the a'yân and the Porte had been largely reversed in favour of the state by means of a major and largely successful centralisation policy by Mahmūd II (1808-1839). The destruction and subjugation of alternative sources of authority and those resistant to reform was the leitmotif of Mahmūd's reign, and in all but the case of his Egyptian vassal, Mohammed Ali, the Kurdish âmiris or princes and parts of the Arab lands, he largely achieved these goals (Lewis 1961:76-106). From 1813 onwards, Mahmūd and his competent viziers struck a series of devastating blows to those ayân who had so successfully resisted his predecessor, Selim III. By the time Mahmūd destroyed the janissaries in 1826 at Et Meydan in Istanbul, he had eradicated major a'yân such as Ali Tepedeleni and Ishmail Patzvanoglu, or encouraged them to identify their best interests as laying with the state, as with the Karaosmanoglu beys of Anatolia (Zürcher 1994:32-51). The period of reform in the empire known as the "tanzimat" dates from the end of Mahmūd's reign. The promulgation of European-influenced legislation in the 1839 Gülhane Hatt-i Sherif granted equality before the law for all Ottoman subjects (although it was not clearly formulated on this point) and was further strengthened by the 1856 Hatt-i Humayun (Zürcher 1994:52-74). This was also the point at which the reformers found it prudent to prohibit slavery in the empire (although it was never formally abolished), under intense British pressure (Erdem 1996:67-124), whilst Gypsy serfdom was abolished in the Rumanian principalities in the same period (Georghe 1983:12). This era of reform and transformation continued until 1878 and the end of the First Constitutional government (1876-1878). This is a period (1826-1870) of massive economic penetration by European powers, in particular by British and French capital, when the Ottoman economy becomes "semi-colonial", a producer of raw materials and buyer of manufactured goods. The dislocation and re-structuring of Ottoman society gave rise to the increasing division between a largely Muslim military and bureaucratic élite and an economically powerful Christian bourgeoisie (Quataert 1994:889-894).

The growing impact of nationalism and nationalist ideologies is of central importance to the empire and its subject peoples. The Serbian revolts of 1804 and 1813 led to autonomy for the Serbs in 1815 and independence in 1878. The Greek independence movement and war with the Ottomans from 1821-1827 resulted in the establishment of a small Greek state that was able to expand its territory through war in 1864 and again in 1881. The unification of Wallachia and Moldavia in 1859 formed

the basis for the independent Rumanian state of 1878, whilst this date also saw Bulgaria achieve the status of a principality and Bosnia jointly administered by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, and the settlement that followed (the Treaty of Berlin), lay the foundation for a fundamental re-drawing of the Balkan map, re-aligning European power vis-à-vis the Empire. The formation of the successor states resulted in huge territorial loss and an ethnic homogenisation, as Muslims were expelled from the new national states and Christian populations moved into Serbia, Bulgaria and Rumania (Jelavich 1983:2; 254-62).

The question of agricultural dispossession, once thought to be an important element of 'big-estate' or *çiftlik* formation, is central to the question of Gypsy mobility. Dispossession in the latter half of the 19th century most frequently involved nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples with customary rights to the land they used. Competition between sedentary communities and these groups was exacerbated by the state appropriation of these irregularly cultivated areas and pasturage, seen as waste or *mevat* land in economic conditions of profitable development, driven by foreign demand for Ottoman agricultural products (Quataert 1994:873-874). Once the process of 'reclaiming' this land had begun in the more marginal but recently pacified regions of the empire, it soon spread to the central lands. The net result was increasing dispossession of land by groups of peasant and bourgeois entrepreneurs at the expense of Kurds, Türkmens, Tartars and Gypsies.

The rejection of non-national identities and pressure to conform to national ideologies or become assimilated into the new national communities was of great import to the Balkan Gypsy population. The important role of nationalist myth-making involved (and still involves) a degree of re-discovery or 're-invention' of traditions and culture identified as pertaining to 'the people' (Hobsbawm 1983:76-83). In this context, Gypsies were associated with Balkan popular culture as entertainers, dancers and musicians. In Serbia in the 1850's for example, Gypsies were seen to be a part of this process (Malcolm 1998:208). At the same time, other less positive elements of the national identity were also being 'forged' - Gypsies as thieves, vagabonds, betrayers of the Serbs associated with Vuk Brankovich at Kosovo in 1389 (Pennington & Levi 1984:14-17) and 'alien', 'other', non-Serb/Bulgarian/Greek. A similar process also took place in relation to Ottoman Jews (Dumont 1982:209-242). Nationalist literature assigned (and continues to assign) these other groups specific roles; Gypsies became the hangmen of those 'liberators' and 'patriots' who have struggled against the 'Ottoman yoke' and suffered a martyr's death; or they were spies and traitors working for the "Turks" (Andric 1994). Western European linguistic analysis of Romanī languages, especially in Germany and Britain fueled the identification of Gypsies as part of the 'other' and 'Oriental' (Okely

1983:8-13), in contradistinction with those 'true' Europeans who have either defended the continent against the 'Asiatic hordes' (as in the Croatian ideological trope of *antemurale Christianitatis*), or those who sacrificed blood and nationhood to save Europe from alien domination (most clearly expressed in the Serbian mythology constructed around the 2nd Battle of Kosovo in 1389; Malcolm 1994:20; 1998:58-80). This dual and contradictory identity - as holders of elements of folk-culture and as alien - has had repercussions lasting to the present.

This period also saw increasing intolerance towards non-Muslim subjects of the empire and the construction of *Osmanlılık*, the notion of a Muslim *Osmanlı* identity, in competition with pan-Turanian or Turkicist nationalisms. The apogee of the former was reached under Abdülhamid II, who asserted claims to the Caliphate as an antidote to nationalism and modern secularism prevalent in the empire (Zürcher 1994:83). This development had an impact upon Gypsies, Jews and Armenians, increasing antagonism towards non-Muslim Ottomans, with appalling consequences for the Armenian community in the early 20th century. Whilst suffering a less intensive oppression, both Gypsies and Jews, especially as peddlers and itinerant workers, experienced much popular violence against them as perceived carriers of epidemics, child-stealers, thieves and vagabonds (Dumont 1983:223).

In the later 19th century, a marked deterioration in the position of Ottoman Gypsies can be seen. The destruction of the *a'yân* and their formidable retinues forced those Gypsies attached to them to re-establish nomadic and semi-nomadic patterns. The increasing economic dislocation resulting from European penetration of the Ottoman markets had a proportionately greater effect upon those communities, like the Gypsies, who had a particular economic position within the predominantly agrarian Ottoman economy. They became marginalised, further contributing to larger numbers of them becoming migratory in order to exploit what small 'niches' remained in a rapidly changing economic and industrial structure of Ottoman Europe; though there is some question about the predominance of economic factors in Anatolia (Roux 1987:229). Agrarian dispossession inevitably exacerbated these trends. Nationalism and the formation of the new nation-states, with their ideology of ethnic homogeneity and expulsion of 'alien' populations, had a strong impact upon Gypsies forced to adopt contradictory stereotypes and identities or be assimilated. Nomadism, in this case, was a means of resistance and survival. Increasing intolerance from Ottoman society towards Gypsies and other groups added to the pressures already extant upon Gypsy communities in the Balkans and Anatolia.

The question of migration in this period is an important one; Europe experienced a second major

influx of Gypsies in something that appears, initially at least to resemble the earlier migrations of the late 14th and early 15th centuries and to be related to the release of large numbers of Gypsies from slavery in the Rumanian lands. Recent scholarship has argued against this factor as the driving force behind Gypsy migrations of the late 19th century and suggests that the cause may lie somewhere else. In fact, large-scale migration due primarily to economic factors was a characteristic of late Ottoman society in general (Karpát 1985:15). The empire's population, particularly its non-Muslims, left the territories of the Porte in such large numbers that at times it resembled an exodus (Karpát 1983:387). Gypsies, Jews, Armenians, Georgians, Syrian Christians and Anatolian Greeks, made their way to those parts of the world with more economic opportunities and an improved security of life than could be found in late Ottoman society. In this context, Gypsy emigration was clearly part of the wider social and economic conditions experienced by the Ottoman Empire and Mediterranean world at this time (Quataert 1994:791).

As the empire became more culturally and ethnically homogenous and territorially compact, Gypsies became increasingly nomadic as a means of exploiting the limited opportunities that existed at the economic edges of Ottoman society. This more marginalised position was also reflected in Balkan societies in general, together with increasingly antagonistic and contradictory stereotyping and widespread discrimination. Notions of the Gypsies as clearly 'alien' in the way that the Jews also experienced were commonplace. Identified with being carriers of disease was part of the increasingly 'biological' language of scientific racism, most often developed and deployed in support of the new nationalisms. As these images became part of the 'national consciousness' of ethnic identities in the emerging national states of the region, the economic and social position of Gypsies worsened. These ideological constructs lay behind the murder of many thousands of Gypsies by the Ustasha régime of Croatia and Serb extremists in Bosnia (where Gypsies were frequently identified as Muslims or Turks) during the 1941-45 period. Ultimately, it is these trends in the late Ottoman Empire and its successor states that are now playing out their legacy in Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia, Kosovo and south eastern Europe today.

8.1 Time, narratives of journey and the writing of Gypsy history

Nasreddin Hoca came to a crossroads where two carts had collided. The drivers were arguing furiously over whose fault the accident had been, and appealed to the hoca [teacher] to resolve the issue. He dismounted from his donkey and sat listening first to one man, who told him of the event, and then the other. He thought for a while and then said that both were right, when his donkey (a clever beast) looked up and remarked, “But hocam, both of these men cannot be right.” The wise old man smiled and said, “And you are right too...” (Sheikh Ahmet Karacadağ, Diyabakir April 2007)

THE QUESTIONS IN THIS BOOK THAT I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO ADDRESS REFLECT, in some ways the story about Nasreddin Hoca, whose tales and folk-wisdom are still widely appreciated in Turkey. The primary question has been one of authenticity or rather the notions surrounding the production of narratives about history, ethnicity and identity that implicitly or explicitly claim certain kinds of authenticity and authority. These can be based in notions of scientific objectivity, through various devices such as the use of the ‘third voice’ and the distancing of the author from the text through the use of the impersonal. The appeal to science as an objective and impartial representation of the facts is one that has implications not only in the writing of Romanī history, but also in a wider context of access to resources, in that these should be awarded on the basis of such notions as ‘science’ being carried out by ‘scientists’. In contradistinction are those whose scholarship is ‘tainted’ through engagement with activism and a political agenda, the so-called “web-page polemics” referred to earlier in this book. The authenticity claimed by these writers is one based in the notion of the genuine ‘ethnic’ voice, the indisputable perspective of experience from ‘the inside’. These positions are seen as oppositional to each other, a choice of either/or where both ‘parties’ will draw upon fragments of the past (usually linguistic, or documentary) and construct a narrative that then is argued over as if it represents an actual, tangible reality. The propositions here are that both or all of these competing versions are constructed and reconstructed through successive reinterpretations, that the past itself is irrecoverable precisely because it is the past and that all attempts to portray it in the present are constructions, narratives that take these fragments and literally weave together a seemingly coherent version of events, using particular tropes and emplotments, that then allow us to justify the conclusions we draw as historians and scholars. This is not, of course restricted to the writing of Gypsy history or histories, all history or histories are constructed narratives and reflect the concerns, ideas and notions of the present to a far greater degree than we would perhaps wish to recognise. Even the pursuit of the past, the areas of enquiry that we choose are related to these

concerns and the historiography of history writing is one that illustrates the shifts and changes that have taken place in these concerns over time (see Pitterberg 2003; Robinson, 2003; Ersanlı, 2002; Lucassen, 1993). This seems to leave us in the situation of having dismantled the entire edifice of historical scholarship and leave us without any structure, or even negate the proposition of scholarship itself (Domanska, 1998:173-81). However, it is in the very recognition of the arbitrariness of the endeavour that the solution lies, as to admit that the exercise is flawed is not to say that it is pointless. The justification for enquiry is no longer to be found in the grand narratives of imperialism, colonialism and modernism, or the deconstructive assault on these of post-modernism, but in the much older principles that suggest the pursuit of knowledge is about understanding and informing ourselves and others, making sense of the world that we live in. The critique about the kind of knowledge that is pursued, the ways enquiries are undertaken and the uses of that knowledge and how it is presented allow us to see more clearly but do not, I would argue undermine the purpose itself.

What of the understanding of Romanī Studies? The current questions surrounding ethnicity, identity and history are reflective of the wider notions that exist, the seeking for definitions of group and belonging that have been at the heart of the human experience since the Athenians first sought to define 'the barbarians', and articulate notions of who and what they were (Hall, 1989; Ascherson, 1996). The particular circumstances might be seen in the context of resources to support research where questions of ethnicity and identity are bound to modern notions of citizenship and social inclusion, and more specifically to the appropriation of the past by meta-narratives of Western modernity and eastern 'backwardness', in pursuit of a unitary history that ultimately shapes the future (Sardar, 1992:496). The period when resources were being provided to support more activist programmes have largely come to an end and those who have been part of the mobilisation of ethnicity amongst the Gypsy peoples have now to make a shift that brings them, in some ways into competition with the research and academic communities. Herein lies the basis for the arguments that wash back and forth between the two sectors – the claims to authenticity and authority being mobilised in search of more 'legitimate' grounds to secure resources. The actual dynamics are of course, much more complex as the relationship between scholarship, research and activism in Romanī Studies (as in many other areas) is interdependent and the needs of activism frequently acts as a spur to scholarship, as Matras has illustrated (2004:68-9). Scholarship and research provides the basis for much of the impetus behind activism by continuing to refine and define the components of Gypsy identities, ethnicities and histories. It is a symbiotic relationship where the

apparent conflicts are themselves necessary stimulus to further research and activism and this book is a product in many ways of these conflicts.

So, if all history is a constructed narrative built around fragments of the past that are consciously or unconsciously chosen in relation to the concerns of the present (whichever present that is), and then emplotted using tropes that conform to wider understandings of the circumstances in which the text is being produced, this book is clearly part of these processes, as I have tried to demonstrate. It is an attempt to expand upon the notion of complex Hindū origins and reconcile the apparent differences between the seemingly oppositional positions of the kshatriya warrior-theory and the notion of a pariah or outcast origin, by claiming that both are compatible with the version of the usable past I present. I have also tried to look more closely at the questions surrounding these notions of origins, by adopting a more usual historical approach in examining the context for the ethnogenesis of the Gypsy peoples. This has meant that I have presented a range of sometimes speculative considerations, based upon the documentary sources (chosen to support such speculations of course, in my overall emplotment), to argue for a more plausible (making clear the ambiguity of this term in its original meanings of both 'believable' and 'applauded') account of Gypsy history in its early stages, that might account for the various stages of movement and migration and provide possible reasons for these taking place. I have also tried to present a series of considerations that reflect my underlying 'agenda', namely that the Gypsies of the Turkish and Arab lands are historically some of the oldest communities of Gypsies in the world, yet scholarship has largely neglected them until recently. The focus has consistently been on those Roma, Dom and Lom in the quondam south-east European successor states to the Ottoman Empire: Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Serbia, Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia and Greece. This "fault line" has been almost impermeable, and the Near and Middle East are even less researched or discussed in the scholarship. The Gypsies of these regions merit almost no attention in anything other than specialist journals (Kuri: the Journal of the Dom Research Center), isolated articles and monographs (Streck, 2004:179-94; Hanna, 1983, 1982), or the press and media of the individual countries in which they live. The material in the latter is frequently uninformed and often deeply prejudicial. Despite the relatively large numbers of Gypsies, as a percentage of population in the former Arab lands of the Ottoman Empire, their location, languages, culture and religious practices would appear to have been of almost no interest to post-war Romanī Studies scholarship. Outside of that produced by evangelical organisations (although not all evangelise amongst the Gypsies), and some local government statistics (Kagithane Belediye in Istanbul produces useful information about the

Gypsies in the municipality), Romanī Studies scholarship has delivered relatively few reliable sources of information for these groups until recently (the ERRC/hCa/EDROM research project, “Promoting Roma Rights in Turkey” has provided the most up-to-date survey; see Marsh, 2008a). The situation in the Caucasus and central Asia is almost equally bleak; general information about the Lom and other Gypsy groups from any of the territories of these turbulent regions is reduced to scant notes (Thubron, 1994:92) and photographic volumes (Kuznetsova, 1998). The “Other” Gypsies may feature in the work of linguists, anthropologists and ethnologists (for example, Akiner, 2004), but not many Romanī Studies scholars. The obvious question is why has this been the case?

The traditional perspective of Romanī history has been poised about two points. The early 20th century work of John Sampson identified a single “exodus” of the Romany peoples, which, he argued subsequently subdivided somewhere in the region that is now eastern Persia (Sampson, 1923:156-69). The linguistic evidence for this was the basis of Sampson’s argument, in which he attempted to demonstrate a clear relationship between Romanī, Domarī and Lomavren. However, this was challenged soon after, by Sir Ralph Turner (1926:145-89), a prominent linguist and “Gypsiologist”, he was also director of the School for Oriental & African Studies during the 1930’s. The relationship between Romanī, Domarī and Lomavren was not as close as Sampson had suggested he argued, severely undermining this “single origin” (monogenesis) book. Turner’s speculations about the differences between Romanī and Domarī were more carefully argued than merely to question the relationship between the two; he constructed a complex account explaining the emergence of Romanī as an Indo-Aryan tongue that had originally migrated from central India into north-western Multan and Rajasthan before 250BC, on the basis of certain lexicological and phonological features preserved in Romanī but altered in related dialects in the ‘homelands’ of the central regions (Fraser, 1992:21). Turner still opted for a relatively early departure of the proto-Romanī speakers prior to the 9th century AD, much as Sampson had done. The major difference lies in the question of origins; Sampson maintained his insistence that Romanī was a product of the developments in north-western India in a reply to Turner’s critique (Sampson, 1927:57-68). Turner’s own response continued the theme of a central origin for proto-Romanī (Turner, 1927:129-138). Other scholars interpreted the evidence differently positing wildly disparate dates of departure (Kaufman, 1984; Higgin, 1984), but with little historical evidence to support their theses.

As Hancock has latterly argued, the loss of the third, neuter gender in Romanī must have taken place after 1000 CE whilst the ancestors of the Romany peoples were still within the orbit of New Indo-Aryan speakers. Domarī had maintained this aspect and so its speakers must have departed

earlier (Hancock, 2003:2-7; Tikkanen, 2003:pc). Lomavren, Hancock goes on to argue, must have been part of the Romanī migration, but separated quite soon after leaving the environs of Indic speakers (2003:6). So, the current linguistic position would appear to posit at least two major migrations leaving Indian territories, the first Domarī “exodus” sometime between the early 6th (Hancock, 2003:2) and the close of the 9th century (Sampson, 1926:28-29), and the Romanī departure after 1000 CE (Hancock, 2003:4). The second of these fragmented after passing through Persian territory (or territory predominantly influenced by the use of Persian, which may not be the same thing), in the Armenian-speaking lands (Hancock, 2003:6). The historical evidence for the latter hinges around the activities of Amīr (later Sultān) Mahmūd of Ghaznā’s campaigns into north-western and the central northern region of India c.997-1030 CE. Little has been suggested about the earlier factors involved in the forced migration of Dom, though the occasional reference has been made to the Hephthalite Huns as a factor (Hancock, 2000:10-11; Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:5).

Despite this debate from the 1930’s onwards, the dominant view is still one that argues that the Gypsies left India during the 5th century. The crucial evidence for this is the legend told in the Persian poet Firdawsi’s *Shahnāmā*. Completed around c.1010 CE, this vast and complex epic begins with creation and moves through the history of the pre-Islamic and Islamic dynasties of Persia. It is built upon the structure of murder and revenge, and depicts the struggle between the nomadic Turanians (Turks) of central Asia and the sedentary Persians, in the context of the legendary exploits of Islamic heroes such as Rostam. The legend of the Lūrī and Bahram Gur was drawn originally by Firdawsi from Hamza al-Isfāhānī’s extraordinary *Chronology*, written in 961 CE, and containing elements that have been conflated with the later version, especially with regard to Bahram’s Indian princess. The legend of Bahram Gur and the Lūrī is discussed earlier in detail, but its “discovery” as a source for Romanī history is credited to Colonel John S. Harriott in 1830 and published in the *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*. His suggestion that the Lūrī of this story could be identified as the ancestors of the English Romanichals has been quoted ever since, though not always attributed correctly. I have argued in detail about the misidentification of the Lūrī as thieves, dancers and musicians, and by extension the ancestors of the Romanies. Suffice to repeat here my argument that these were probably mercenary archers of Rajput and Jat origins, allies of the Sassanid kings from Sind against the common enemy, the Hephthalite Huns. As such, they are likely to have spoken an Old Indo Aryan tongue with three genders and, after their defeat and dispersal as a decapitated military society (i.e. an early mediæval former army with no warriors) remained in Persia as a pariah group.

This problematised my original question still further; if the primary evidence of an early, single migration has been bound to the mistaken notion of the Lūrī as the ancestors of the Romanies, surely this would have encouraged more, not less scholarly attention to be focussed upon the region and the Gypsy peoples therein? As a natural extension of such enquiries, their social and economic position in the empires that came to dominate the region would follow. I have tried to deal with these points through particular questions of the Gypsies in the Byzantine polity related to their identity as purveyors of magic and sorcery and in relation to taxation status. In the context of this point, it is striking that whilst some attention from Romanī Studies scholars has been devoted to researching the Gypsies of the Christian empire (albeit drawing upon the same basic texts), fewer have examined the history of the Gypsies under its Ottoman successor. This is not to say that no research has been undertaken and it has sometimes been the prerogative of Islamic studies scholars external to the discipline that have, from various theoretical perspectives conducted research in modern Turkey (see Altinöz 2006; 2005 for example). It is Romanī Studies scholarship that has been largely absent from this field until very recently.

Is this then a question of identity at its core, in that Romanī Studies is primarily concerned with Christian Gypsies, however nominal this aspect of identity is? The interconnection of Romanī politics and evangelical Gypsy churches might indicate that there may be some truth to such an assertion. Prominent Pentecostal ministers in Sweden like Pastor Lars Dmitri are given high-level political representation by that government's Integration Ministry on the basis that they speak for all Romanies in the country, for example. Is it a question of linguistics, in that underpinning much of Romanī scholarship in general has been the work of the linguists like Hancock, Courtiade and Mattras? The question of Eurocentrism has been raised in my discussion of Romanī historiography; as in many other disciplines over the past twenty years perhaps it is time that it was considered more generally in Romanī Studies. Is Romanī Studies primarily concerned with what might be described as European (i.e. largely non-Muslim) Gypsies? In some senses, a case may be made that the Gypsies represent another post-colonial people, "discovered", "measured" and documented by European scholars in the ways that tribes from Papua New Guinea or the highlands of Albania have been, and that concepts like time and notions of civilisation underpin this work to a very great degree. It is not so surprising perhaps that the foundation of Gypsyism and much Romanī Studies lies in a city whose academics pioneered the study of another European tribal society, the clans of the Highlands of Scotland. Like the Friesians, Basques, Saami and Vlachs, the Gypsies may be studied by researchers in contradistinction to the national identities surrounding them. Romanī

history is almost always oppositional to that of the “dominant” society, integration is frequently discussed as “assimilation” and customs and practices as “counter-cultural”. This is not to suggest that these are not fundamental aspects of the relationship between Gypsies and non-Gypsies societies, but to question the predominant notion of these as the only basis upon which academic knowledge can be produced. The trope of “a 1,000 years of persecution” has become the dominant discourse of both Roma politics, and to some extent Romanī Studies with an emphasis upon the “victim hood” of the Gypsy peoples, in common with other ‘diaspora’ peoples (Matras, 2004:69). In this sense, groups that do not necessarily fulfil these notions may well be perceived to be outside the purview of Romanī Studies. In this case, are we dealing with the spurious question of “authenticity”? Is this a consequence of the Gypsyologist concern with discovering “genuine” Gypsies? The question might be to what extent Gypsies in the Muslim lands are regarded in these terms.

The essentialist perspective that such a concern reflects has been haunting the discipline since its earliest days. The racial science of 19th century was predicated upon such notions and as Willems has demonstrated, ultimately led to the policies of the Nazi state towards the Roma and Sinti (1993). The concept of racial “hygiene” described by Burleigh & Wipperman in their analysis of the Third Reich (Burleigh & Wipperman, 1991), relied heavily upon the categorisation of individuals according to criteria purportedly “measuring” degrees of “authenticity”. Despite the discrediting of such notions in the aftermath of defeat, the discourse of modern anti-Gypsyism encompasses this concern at its heart by predicating the possibility of a “true” Romanī identity, bounded by assumptions about homogeneity of populations and biological inheritance as a motor for transmission of “culture”. Its interpretation in the field of Romanī Studies academic enquiry has remained strangely unaffected by the impact of ethnicity and nationalisms. Barth’s seminal discussion in 1967 (Barth, 1969) has remained the bedrock of much anthropological and ethnological analysis; the debt of Okely (1983) and the Amsterdam school clearly is to the crucial concept of “cultural boundary-markers” as a basis for group identity. Their consequent analysis has been deemed to be overly dependent upon the socially constructed elements of identity and its concomitant concerns with marginalisation, contestation and the construction of the “Other”. The notion of the “Other” as an alternative expression of western cultural imperialism has been strongly argued by critics of postmodernism (Sardar, 1998), and Acton has challenged its use in Romanī Studies as a “catch-all” definition (1998). The earlier expression of this as “outsider” and “marginalised social group” have also been frequently deployed, almost interchangeably in the

discourse of Romanī scholarship. In a sense, the scholarship of more recent Romanī Studies has itself “constructed” the Gypsies it seeks to identify and describe. The earlier archaeology of ‘race’ engaged in by Gypsylorists has its latter day expression in the oppositional argument surrounding “origins” and ethnogenesis. The suggestion is, at its most extreme that it is possible to pinpoint the historical moment when the Romany peoples came into being by identifying their exact date of “exodus” from India (Courthiade, 2004:105-7). The trajectory of these people then follows the familiar paths mapped out in the works of Sampson, Turner and many others and relies upon the notion of the hermetically sealed ethnē, travelling through geographical space and historical time but largely unaffected, or perhaps unadulterated by this process (Smith, 1986). The contact with other similar and not so similar groups of agents to arrive as a contained and sealed unit in modern times is intrinsic to this view. With the collapse of empires whether Byzantine, Ottoman or Soviet the metaphorical “lid” on these units is lifted to reveal a pristine and homogeneous ethnicity and culture. The identification of earlier units as direct relatives of these units is part of the “rediscovery” of an ethnic history that, combined with poetics and linguistics forms the structure out of which a “genuine” culture springs.

The crucial issue is the epistemological foundation for both these aspects of what has become Romanī history. Our knowledge of the past of the Gypsy peoples has been produced to support the pre-existent deductions drawn from linguistics, anthropology and ethnography. It has been forced to conform to the paradigms of “nationalist historiography” both as a consequence of primarily locating investigation and enquiry in the ideological framework of the inevitability of the evolution of the nation-state and by proximity to states most actively engaged in the process of “nation-building” through re-writing history. The Balkans have been frequently identified as intrinsic to the Gypsy people, even having been designated as “the second home of the Gypsies” (Marushiakova and Popov, 2001:3). This implies that there was clearly a primal “homeland” from which Romanies are ‘exiled’ and that there is a similarly elemental relationship between the two, as there is between Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks and their “homelands”. The notions referred to earlier about hermetically-sealed ethnic units are absolutely crucial to the identities of differing groups in the Balkans, interpreted through the prism of 19th century Romantic nationalism. The indivisible relationship of “blood and soil” is another of these tropes that crucially underpins national identities and the conflicts that spring from their competing assertions. In the question of national histories, the extent of otherwise of the “Ottoman inheritance” is at the heart of much debate amongst Balkan scholars. This is itself a false premise; the term derives from Turkish for “wooded mountain” and

the political structures, the territorial boundaries, the culture and population itself are almost entirely the result of five hundred years of Ottoman governance (Todorova, 1997:5-21). If the Balkans are the imperial heritage of the Ottomans, then the Gypsies spread over almost the entire peninsula are perhaps a quintessentially Ottoman people. To pursue their history along the grooves worn by the ideological nationalism of ethnic nation-states would appear to be disastrous. Not only is establishing a critical Romanī historiography thwarted by the ineluctable need for “forging” myth as history, without acknowledging the relationships between the two, but insistence upon an ‘original homeland’ and external ethnogenesis merely reinforces the identification of Gypsies as “other” and “alien” and such a definition is deeply problematic in the context of Turkish Gypsies. The consistent need to promote this perspective is one that is politically driven and aimed at achieving a European minority ethnic status, and the vardo of Romanī history has been harnessed to the grai of this agenda without much consideration as to the consequences beyond the European context. This situation is no longer tenable academically, as inevitably the need to fix firmly Gypsy identity in a romanticised history and an ossified notion of ‘tradition’ or ‘culture’ will exclude, through the imposition of selective memory those who do not fit our model of the ‘shared past’ or ‘common origins’, i.e. the majority of Muslim Gypsies. This kind of collective identity, ‘rooted’ in the creativity of particular historic interpretations must always refer to the notions of ‘origin’, to points of departure for the group. It is only through the conscious construction of such that the ability to define the group, the identity as a cultural entity, is possible. The production of history is a deliberate act of power and creation, in this instance to support a simulacra, a false notion of similarity and difference as applied to ourselves and others.

In the current revision of early Romany history (Hancock, 2006; 202), the establishment of Anatolia as the crucible of the Romany peoples suggests that our “origins” lie in the middle period of the Byzantine Empire (1040-1204 AD). The premise upon which much of this revision has taken place is the recognition that the movement of the Oghuz Türks, and more specifically the Saldjüks, may provide the best explanation for the entry of the Gypsy peoples into Anatolia (Hancock, 2002:5). The koiné that became Romanī more fully emerged in the lands of Asia Minor, during the period when another language developed, that of Anatolian Turkish. The poet Yunūs Emre produced a corpus of work that reflected the chaotic and difficult times, with his frequent references to death and destruction (Kafadar, 1995:5) in this newly “forged” dialect. The extraordinary situation that grew out of the fragile and unstable Saldjük polities amounted to an increasing flood of Türkmen in the 11th and 12th centuries that belonged primarily to the Oghuz dialect group, and had once

contained the Saldjüks themselves. However, the trajectory that took them from tribal leaders to Sultāns did not restrain the other Türkmen, and these tribes pressed firmly, often aggressively against the increasingly permeable Byzantine borders in Western Anatolia. The friction of the eastern borders led to the debacle that was Manzikert, when the Byzantines were defeated and the Emperor captured, in 1071. The inrush of deeper and more penetrating raids, larger-scale migration and frequent conflicts between Türkmen tribes resulted in the pattern of fissiparous activity that was to remain until the Ottomans were finally to conquer the whole region in the later 15th century CE. The frequently mistaken identification of the Gypsies with the earlier group of Judeo-Christian heretics known as Atsinganoi (Fraser, 1992:45) in the Byzantine Empire has led to much confusion in dating the appearance of the Gypsies as a distinct identity. This has additionally resulted in a number of false assumptions about the condition of Gypsies in the Byzantine Empire that have never been tested against the available evidence. It has been taken almost for granted that Gypsies in Byzantium were always socially and economically marginalised, invariably nomadic and heterodox Christian in religious belief. More recent studies (White, 2000) have not significantly challenged these assumptions or added to our knowledge about the Gypsies in Byzantium, yet as Hancock has pointedly remarked this period is rarely, if ever addressed by Romanī Studies scholarship (Hancock, 2002:4). Other sources for information regarding Byzantine scholarship remain almost entirely unused, despite the accepted significance of Soulis' paper on the subject (1961:141-165). Scholarship on the subject of Byzantine taxation as a source for social history is largely absent from the works of any scholars working in the discipline (Katz, 1938:27-32; Andréades, 1948:80-85; Setton, 1953:225-259; Brand, 1968:35-60; Neville, 2000:47-62) outside of very brief references (Marushiakova & Popov, 2001:16-18).

Ottoman scholarship has, by contrast been examining the social and economic position of the Gypsies (or Çingene and Kiptī, in Ottoman Turkish) as an adjunct to analysing the complexity of Ottoman pluralism for some time. Scholars like Altınöz (2003), Faroqhi (2001:155-164), Simsirgil (2001:263-276), McCarthy (1995; 1983), Inalcık (1993) and Karpat (1985; 2001), refer implicitly or explicitly in their work to a variety of Gypsy groups in the Empire's territories, as Çingene, Abdallar, Posha, Kiptians, Kipti, Ghurbeti, Balamoron and others. Again, the major sources for information about the Gypsy populations of the Ottoman Empire have come from taxation and demographic data, the very stuff of economic and social history. Romanī Studies has, by and large avoided reference to the Ottomans except in the most general terms until recently. Pott's short article in the 1844 journal, *Zeitschrift der deutschen Morganländischen Gessellschaft* (3:321-335)

and Paspates' "Memoir on the language of the Gypsies..." (1861), and subsequent elaboration in the years following represent some of the earliest works in this specific field (Paspates, 1862-3). His monumental monograph of 1870 remains a foundational work on the subject and his contribution to the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* (1888:3-5) in subsequent years still provides us with much useful, if under-utilised material regarding Ottoman Gypsies. Bond's letters of 1899 and 1901 regarding Ottoman Gypsies in Monastir (Black, 1917) are also brief, but important sources for information about occupations (the head of the fountain-makers in 1899 and the superintendent of the water-works in 1901 in Salonika were both Gypsies employed by Ottoman governors). Most significantly perhaps, given the current discussions regarding the possibly non-Indic origins of the terms Rom and Lom (Hancock, 2002:7-12; Tikkanen, 2003:pc), Bond first posits the connection between Rôm and Rûm, or Roman (i.e. Byzantine) as the origin of the ethnonym (Black, 1917:32). Halliday's studies of Turkish Gypsies in Anatolia more properly falls into the area of the ethnography of the Republic (1922:163-189), although his research was conducted at the very close of the Ottoman period. Modern ethnographic studies, like Kemal Sılay's discussion of nomadic identity (2002), Alford-Andrews' work (1989) or Svanberg's comparison of Greek and Turkish Gypsies and Gypsy-like groups (1992:40-49) continue to provide essential material about minorities and identities, which bears upon Romanî Studies, but has thus far been largely unacknowledged. Finally, the work of Benninghaus offers important correctives to an over-reliance upon Ottoman demographic categories and offers a further critical benchmark to assess our raw data (Benninghaus, 2001). The most recent published discussions of Ottoman Gypsies are to be found in Marushiakova and Popov's contribution *Balkan history* (2001), and the attempt to analyse the position of the Gypsies in the Ottoman commonwealth by comparison with other imperial systems, by Barany (2001:50-63; 2002). The limited scope of the first (the Balkan lands of the Empire) detracts from its usefulness, despite the fact that it is the only real attempt since Fraser's brief section (1992:173-178), to discuss the Gypsies of the Ottoman lands, whilst the latter are irretrievably flawed by a reliance upon an ahistorical notion of "backwardness" vis-à-vis European "progression" derived from Lewis (1982), and a failure to understand the so-called millet system (2002:84). The impact of Ottoman scholarship about Ottoman plurality, or the "myth of the millet system" (Braude, 1982:69-88) and the contentious debate about the realities of dhimmi status (Ye'or, 1996; 1998) and the false notions of pluralism (Ye'or, 1995) seems to have passed Barany by; an all-too-frequent occurrence in Romanî Studies as suggested previously.

Groups of Sindhi warriors had been present in the Persian lands since the early 5th century, often as

auxiliaries to the Sassanid armies of Persia or as remnants of a defeated and “decapitated” military society, after those unsuccessful campaigns against the Hepthalite Huns by Bahram Gur (Litvinsky, 1996:141). Descendants of Rajput and Jhat Hindūs had also been fighting with Mahmūd of Ghaznā (997-1030 CE) after his significant campaigns into the Panjab, parts of Sindh and much of the Ganges valley. Subsequently the Saldjūks had pursued these groups in the aftermath of their defeat of Mahmūd’s heir, Mas’ud on the steppes of Dandanaqan, 23rd May, 1040 CE. These Hindūs were, as all armies in the early mediaeval period, effectively societies on the move (Hale, 1983), with the fighting force making-up approximately one third of the total number. The rest would have been the armorers, grooms, smiths and metal-workers, carpenters, military engineers, servants and servitors, tent-makers, cooks, bakers, washer-women, slaves, camp followers and children. The question of how these groups came to be located in eastern Anatolia relates directly to this aspect of early mediæval warfare in the region. It is likely that from the middle of the 11th century, they were migrating into the Armenian borderlands of eastern Asia Minor, ahead of the pressure from the Saldjūks and their Türkmen allies. This pressure shattered the Armenian Bagratid Kingdom and ‘pushed’ the ancestors of the Gypsies in a variety of directions: southwards led by Armenian nobles, north and eastwards into the Caucasus and westwards into Byzantium proper. In these liminal borderlands, the composition of the emerging population changed with the influx of refugees and those fleeing the chaos and turmoil of the times.

However, the pressure that Turkoman tribes people increasingly placed upon the Saldjūks themselves, in the wake of the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert (1071CE), led to a chaotic and unstable situation throughout the whole region from Khorasān to central Anatolia, pushing these groups further west. The Turkomans had followed the earlier migrations of the Oghuz or Ghuzz Turks from Central Asia that had assaulted Ghaznāwid power with the onslaught of the Qarakhanids, c.999 (Luther & Bosworth, 2001:3). Although the latter had settled in the Transoxiana region, the Turkomans had pushed further into the Iranian plateau and eventually all of Anatolia, undermining the integrity of the Saldjūkid state, which they had helped to create. In the wake of Manzikert, and the equally disastrous defeat for the Byzantines at Myriokephalion (1176) this process is the beginning of the ethnic and linguistic transformation of Anatolia and much of the Middle East (Luther & Bosworth, 2003:4). In this context, the identification of the Saldjūks as the “motor” of migration for the proto-Romany populations is only partially correct; the major factor in westward movement for many peoples at this time in this area was these other elements of the Oghuz or Ghuzz Turks, Turkomans or Türkmen. In the ethnic melange that Asia Minor became in

this period, the melding of the descendants of groups from Hindū origins and an admixture of ethnic Turks, Persians, Greeks, Armenians, Laz and perhaps many other displaced and dispossessed peoples formed the basis for the Gypsy peoples. Sharing a koīné or lingua franca as a means of communication amongst the group developed into an identifiable “tongue”, in a similar process to that of “Urdu”, a Turkic word from which English derives “horde” in the remaining eastern portions of the Ghaznāvid Empire. This language developed out of the necessity to communicate military information in a comprehensible form to groups of varying origin. The development of Arabic as a language in the 7th to 9th centuries is a comparable phenomenon and, I have argued the experience of this is at the heart of the process of the emergence of the Dom in the Arab lands. The language of formal communication in the Saldjūkid state was Persian, as it had been in the Ghaznāvid state previously, and it is also likely that the number of Persian loan words can be explained as a result of this need to facilitate communication between these originally Hindū military slaves and their community, and the elite in the Ghaznāvid period, without resorting to notions of an extended period of time spent by the ancestors of the Gypsies in the Iranian lands. Likewise, the acquisition of Armenian loan words during the short period of time the ancestors of the Gypsies, or proto-Gypsies were in these lands was a very swift process, under the circumstances of conflict and war, as I have suggested earlier. The encounter with Byzantium resulted in linguistic shifts and changes too, as the encounter between the highly sophisticated and technologically advanced society of the Greeks produced new words for a variety of technical areas but also altered the notion of those within and those without the group, introducing the notion of differentiation from outsiders from the non-Romanī world.

References to Egyptians in 11th and 12th century sources suggest that we may look for further details about the origins in the Byzantine lands in edicts of the Emperors, extorting their people to avoid contact with this dubious and suspect group of ‘non-Christians’ (in terms of their membership of the oecumene of the Orthodox Church). The differential taxation system so frequently identified with the later Ottoman state's treatment of the Gypsies begins with the kaphalition levied upon the non-Christian subjects of the Empire (Muslims, Jews, heterodox Christians, Mazdians, Zoroastrians and others). The extraordinary immobility of the East Roman social and economic system, as it evolved from the Diocletian and Constantinian reforms effectively ‘tied’ producers to production in a legally inherited form. The system for the agricultural sector followed this, with sons of farmers bound to the land in the public interest. The artisans and craftspeople of the urban conurbations fared little better; the guild system providing a means of monitoring and controlling this structure for the

Byzantine government, but the Egyptians of the Byzantine Empire were not incorporated into this structure, as the Ottomans later did. Despite their differing tax-status, the ability of the central treasury to extract revenue in the later Byzantine state was unable to efficiently tax and control these Egyptians, resorting to special measures upon occasions for extracting revenues and prohibiting others from consorting with them. The 'Egyptians' then, established the basis of an identity that would continue to develop throughout the region under the Byzantines and then the Ottomans with extraordinary longevity, maintaining in some degree aspects that are present even in contemporary Turkey and the Middle East.

In this context, the ability of the early 'Gypsies' to adopt a commercially nomadic lifestyle can be seen to be essential as a survival strategy and a result of dislocation and movement. The possibilities available in the urban markets of Byzantium for the supply of particular goods and services were there, and I suggest that we find commercially nomadic bands of 'Egyptian' origin travelling through the Empire and developing a clearer and more cohesive identity as Gypsies, and a coalescing language amongst themselves, although becoming increasingly distant from Hindū origins and more 'ethnically mixed' through contact with other groups in the process of migration. The mentality of 12th century Byzantine peasants and city-dwellers must have been deeply affected by the insecurity of their daily lives. Subject to predation and raiding by bands of Saldjūks and Türkmen, and the increasing collapse of any central authority left the Anatolian population vulnerable to subjection by any rising warlord or bandit chieftain. The concern with death and disorder, perceptible in the Armenian chronicles, and visible in the images of Mehmed Siyah Kalem (Ekrem, 2004) and the poetry of Yûnus Emre (1238-1320 CE), encapsulate the milieu in which early Romanī populations plied their trades, in common with the dervishes offering solace, sellers of relics and artefacts associated with both Muslim and Christian saints and prophets, and Orthodox monks and Sufis peddling spiritual security in the chaos and disorder of mediaeval Anatolia. Wanderers and refugees from the calamities of warfare and persecution, ruination through excessive taxation, the ravages of disease and the predation of nomads abounded on the roads and pathways of the region during this period, many of whom may have made the choice to join stronger groups offering protection, economic opportunity and companionship and adopt or be adopted into the Gypsies. Here then, is the "origin of the Gypsies", that historical moment when the group emerges distinctly from the variety that typified its make-up previously, "forged" between the hammer of the Saldjūks and the anvil of the Byzantines, annealed and melded in the cauldron of mediaeval Anatolia and the Balkan lands.

This narrative that I have presented in the book is one that may plausibly present some insights into the possible early history of the Gypsies, and their conditions in the Byzantine and Ottoman lands. I have attempted to do so in the context of questioning notions of history and ethnicity in Romani Studies, as these are presented elsewhere as authoritative and genuine. Here there are no such claims only a recognition of how and why these are made, and a suggestion on my part that this is part of the same processes. As the character of Caravaggio says to Hana in Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient*, "Trust me, I'm telling you a story..." (1992:127).

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