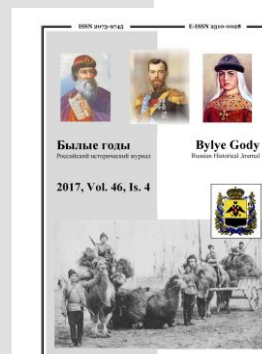


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On the History of the Roma in the Russian Empire (second half of the 18th – first quarter of the 19th century)

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Abstract

Romani Studies in Russia in the second half of the 19th and early 21st century achieved impressive results in scrutinizing various aspects of language, culture, ethnography, anthropology and customary law of the Roma. However, their history in the Russian Empire has attracted only cursory attention of scholars so far. This was resulted from the unawareness of researchers of the documents which have been preserved in archival collections. Despite the relatively small size of the Roma population, it was present in all Russian regions. In this paper, we examined the key measures taken by the government, which were aimed to shape a new (sedentary) lifestyle for the Roma and were implemented in the second half of the 18th – first quarter of the 19th century. Legal acts were used as sources of research material. The region-specific features of the campaigns intended to stop vagrancy among the Roma are analyzed on the basis of narrative sources from the central and regional archives of the Russian Federation, which were uncovered by the author, and are introduced into scientific research for the first time. The integrated use of various research methods enabled for a reconstruction of previously unknown pages in the history of the Roma in Russia.

Keywords: Roma/Gypsies, Roma of Russia, migration of the Roma, integration of the Roma, state policy, Roma issue, Russian Empire.

1. Introduction

The Roma belong to the few ethnic groups which have led a nomadic way of life and were scattered around the world over centuries. In the Russian Empire, the Roma population was originated from multiple sources over the 18-19 century. On the one hand, some of them descended from the Roma who turned up in Western and Northern Europe in the early Middle Ages. The anti-Roma legislation of the 16th – early 18th century was adopted on the territory from Spain to Poland. In some cases (Sweden, England, Prussia), it was about genocidal policies against the Roma, which forced them to move further to the East. First mentions of the Roma in the territory of the Muscovite state date back to the late 17th century. Following the Partitions of Poland in the second half of the 18th century, Russia added to its territory the lands that were home to the Roma. On the other hand, there were descendants of the Byzantine Roma who lived in South-Eastern Europe (the territory of the Ottoman Empire). The accession of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1829 contributed to the emergence of a large group of the Moldovan Roma. Living nomadic lives, the Roma founded local groups in Novorossia, Siberia, the Volga region, North-West Russia and the North Caucasus.

Over the second half of the 18th and first quarter of the 19th century, a state policy regarding the Roma crystallized in the Russian Empire. It was already in the last quarter of the 18th century when it formed its basic features which include the absence of discriminatory legislation (which, for example, was the case regarding Jews), and the government's commitment to stop vagrancy among the Roma population and guide it on the road to sedentary lifestyles (the 1780s – 1790s and the 1810s).

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2. Material and Methods

The paper will review the history of the Roma in the Russian Empire in the second half of the 18th – first quarter of the 19th century. The paper will primarily focus on the efforts made by central and regional authorities to create a «modernized» model of the Roma community which would be seamlessly integrated in the structure of the Russian state.

One of the key issues faced by a researcher of the history of the Roma people is the lack of narrative sources. All this enhances the value of the documents uncovered, which make it possible to restore various aspects of the past of the Roma in Russia and specific Russian regions.

In the course of our research, a range of published and archival written sources became available to us. The former ones comprise the legal acts adopted in the 1730s-1820s, included in the first and second editions of the Complete Code of Laws of the Russian Empire and the Code of Laws of the Russian Empire. They help identify main trends in the attitudes of the ruling monarchs towards the Roma.

Significant importance for studying the history of the Roma can be attached to documents stored in central and regional archives. They allow for a general reconstruction of the history of the Roma in the Russian Empire and are instrumental in determining its regional characteristics.

Additionally, the index of legal acts, compiled by Academician P.I. Keppen (Keppen, 1861), can have a complimentary role in the study of the history of ethnic minorities, including the Russian Roma, until the mid-19th century. The collection consists of the titles of regulatory legal acts, chronologically organized in the Complete Code of Laws of the Russian Empire (Collection I and II), with their summary, date of publication and serial number. Typing errors made in the academic edition create some difficulties identifying the original source (Keppen, 1861: 483).

Regarding published sources, mention should be made of the «Military and Statistical Review of the Russian Empire» (Voyenno-statisticheskoye obozreniye Rossiyskoy imperii), prepared by the General Staff (1837-1854), and «Materials for geography and statistics of Russia, collected by officers of the General Staff» (Materialy dlya geografii i statistiki Rossii, sostavlennyye ofitserami Generalnogo Shtaba) (1859-1868). Some of the books devoted to individual governorates contain information on the Roma population. Part of them provides statistical data (Shmidt, 1863: 463). The data spotlighted by them on the number of the Roma can be trusted as credible because they resulted from an analysis of various sources.

The methodological foundation for the study was provided through the integrated approach. We can explore the history of the Roma using several theoretical approaches. For example, the theory of modernization can assist in analyzing the process of «modernizing» the Roma over the first half of the 19th century. The theory of adaptation delivers tools to determine the ability of the Roma people to adapt to new environmental, climatic, social and economic conditions while preserving or losing their own identity.

Our study makes use of a variety of methods. The comparative method was utilized as a tool to find out about general regularities and distinctive features of the community's social and economic evolution. The chronological technique is instrumental in breaking down the subject into a number of specific issues to be dealt with in chronological order. The statistical analysis makes it possible to locate required information and generalize data from statistical sources on the community's economic development. Methods of historical geography help link historical, economic and demographic phenomena with a specific area.

3. Discussion

A specific feature characterizing historiography is the fact that it lacks consistency in the study of the Roma population in Russia. A review of the few bibliographic indexes (German, 1930) shows that pre-revolutionary Roma Studies prioritized ethnographic, linguistic and cultural aspects. As for works on historical subjects, they were like gold dust.

Regarding the Russian pre-revolutionary historiography, a reference should be made to the article by a prominent lawyer, I.N. Danilovich¹, entitled «Historical and ethnographic newsletter on the gypsies» (Istoricheskoye i etnograficheskoye izvestiye o tsyganakh) published by the Severny Arkhiv journal in a series of issues for 1826 (Danilovich, 1826). After delivering an overview of the history of the Roma in Europe, Danilovich dedicated one of the sections in his article to a brief review of the Russian laws on the Roma (from 1784 to 1811). According to Danilovich, «the Russian legislation will forever leave a mark in the history because it never oppressed the Roma by persecution, but from the very beginning it was committed to making them useful citizens of the state» (Danilovich, 1826: 184). Fragmentary historical references to the Roma can be found in the works on the history of Novorossia and Bessarabia, written in the period between the 19th and early 20th century (Skalkovsky, 1850).

A historical and ethnographic essay on the Roma in Ukraine is presented in the monograph by M.M. Plokhinsky «Foreigners in Old Little Russia» (1905). The author can be praised for the wide use of materials from the Kharkov Historical Archive of the Collegium of Little Russia. Comparing the situation of the Roma in Western Europe and Russia, Plokhinsky, along with his predecessors, stressed to the absence of

¹ Danilovich Ignaty (Polish Ignacy Daniłowicz) (1788–1843), a jurist and historian, Professor at the Vilnius (1822-1824), Kharkov (1825-1830) and Moscow (1839-1842) Universities, Professor and Dean of the Law Department at the Imperial University of St. Vladimir in Kiev (1835-1839), one of the first researchers of historical landmarks in legislation and chronicle writing of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

discriminatory regulations in the Russian laws and the government's failure to «merge them with other inhabitants and turn them into farmers» (Plokhinsky, 1905: 202-203).

The Soviet period actually demonstrates the persisting trend of the science to ignore the history of the Roma in the Russian Empire. At the same time, disconnected references to the Roma can be revealed in monographs on the history of specific regions where the Roma lived traditionally (Grosul, Budak, 1967; Kabuzan, 1974, 1976), or individual events, for example, abolition of serfdom in 1861 (Grosul, Budak, 1956).

On the other hand, there are papers by V.I. Sanarov, published in Soviet and foreign journals, which featured the Siberian Roma. Viewing from the source study aspect, the greatest value should be attached to his article «The Siberian Gypsies» (1970), in which the author introduced into the scientific use several documents from the Tobolsk archives and brief accounts of foreign travelers. Using them as a basis, the author identified the date of the first mention of the Siberian Roma – 1721 (Sanarov, 1970: 126).

The end of the 20th and beginning of the 21st century is characterized in Russian historiography by a large number of new studies on the history of individuals living in the Russian Empire (Ukrainians, Jews, Germans, Poles, Finns, Estonians, etc.) both at the national and regional levels (Gorizontov, 1999; Vibe, 2007; Engman 2008; Shaidurov, 2016).

It may seem that a major advancement in historiography was to be achieved by a collective monograph «History of the Gypsies: a New Look» (Bessonov et al., 2000), which devotes one of the chapters to Russia in the 17th and 20th century. However, it practically contains no history, but mainly presents ethnographic sketches and the history of the Roma culture. It is very surprising how it directs negative criticism against published sources of the 19th century, whose authors, as indicated by the study, were extremely biased and only dimly aware of the real situation and could not separate the seeming things from the real ones (Bessonov et al., 2000). However, the overwhelming number of sources, which were employed by the authors, are journalistic materials from the pre-revolutionary press.

For ethnographers who turn to history, the major information resource is published and field materials. At the same time, they ignore narrative archival historical sources. This is more than once confirmed by some of the papers by M.V. Smirnova-Seslavinskaya (Smirnova-Seslavinskaya, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017). Neglecting archival sources prevents the author from fully elaborating on the subject. Thus, a researcher, who turned to the analysis of Russian lawmaking practices in the Roma issue, examines only the texts of decrees taken from the Complete Code of Laws of the Russian Empire (Smirnova-Seslavinskaya, 2017: 1-21). But their study only allows us to reconstruct a vision of the problem and ways to deal with put on paper. Without resorting to the documents stored in central and regional archives, it is impossible to develop an understanding of the procedure for implementing a particular legal regulation.

One of the few publications specifically focusing on the economic history of the Roma was a paper by V.N. Shkunov – «The Roma and trade in the Russian Empire» (Shkunov, 2010). By establishing his analysis on the published sources (travel, social and political essays), the author uses the most general terms to introduce the issue of the migration of the Roma across the Russian Empire and links it with their economic activities of which trade and craft are ranked as the most common areas.

A valuable scientific meaning can be attached to the paper by D.N. Denisov – «Orenburg gypsies in the 60s of the 18th – early 20th century» (Denisov, 2013) – which delivers a historic description of the Roma society, primarily through analysis of legislative sources and local archival documents.

In the early 21st century, the history of the Roma in pre-revolutionary Russia is often viewed in the context of the history of the regions which were inhabited by numerous Roma communities (Kushko, Taki, 2012).

Similarly, the English-language historiography mainly features works with linguistic and ethnographic content. For example, the paper «The Gypsies of Central Russia» (de l'Hoste Ranking, 1911) was published in the Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society, where the author introduced some aspects of the everyday life of the Roma near Smolensk. Very limited information on the Roma is given in the monograph Peoples of Asiatic Russia by W. Jochelson (1928). The Roma are mentioned by the author only with reference to Central Asia (Jochelson, 1928: 114) and the Caucasus (Jochelson, 1928: 151), indicating their approximate number (600 and 2,500).

These works, as well as several other publications, can be regarded as an attempt to stir up the interest of the scientific community in the Roma history in Russia. We should agree with the opinion of V.I. Sanarov, which was expressed back in 1971, that «the study of the Roma is interesting not only in the terms of the discovery of the ethnic history of the people but also from the point of view of the general problem of relations built and influences caused by vagrant foreign groups and local settled population» (Sanarov, 1971: 67). The few studies introduced above made it possible to identify the range of sources that have already been reviewed by scholars and the topics which were highlighted by authors. The existing gaps in historiography create a range of promising research topics, such as the evolution of legislation on the Roma population in the Russian Empire in the 18th and early 20th century; the dynamics of Roma migrations and the position of central and local authorities regarding the process, with confirmations from official statistics; government policies to encourage the Roma to adopt sedentary lifestyles; the place and role of the Roma in the economic life of Russian regions.

4. Results

First references to the Roma in the legal acts of the Russian Empire date back to the reign of Empress Anna Ioannovna (1730–1740) in connection with the collection of money to pay certain regiments. For example, a decree dated June 7, 1733, mentioned the Roma who lived in Little Russia (Hetmanate territory) and Sloboda Ukraine (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 9. No. 6430). It also speaks of both the registered and unregistered (stray) Roma. The challenging task of collecting taxes from the Roma was mentioned by Prince Shakhovskiy in his report to Empress Anna Ioannovna, pointing out that «gypsies are not recorded in the census, and it is impossible to record them as they do not live in households» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 9. No. 6454). In the same year 1733, the personal free status of the Roma in Russia was actually acknowledged. The Senate decree dated September 13 stipulated that they should be included in the head tax in the next census, but «in the places in which they want to live» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 9. No. 6481).

The reign of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna (1741–1761) continued to demonstrate a neutral approach to the Roma population. The only exception happened in 1759, when the Roma were forbidden not only to live in St. Petersburg and its suburbs, but also to stay here temporarily. Violation of the ban was regarded as an administrative offense which entailed the «irrevocable fine» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 15. No. 10981).

Thus, in the mid-18th century, the authorities paid little attention to the Roma because of their small number. But their nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life made the government adopt various regulations. It is the mandatory registration of the Roma in the census list, introduced in 1733, was the first step to shape the Romani policy of the Russian government.

In the reign of Empress Catherine II (1762–1796), the Roma question first was voiced during the work of the Ulozheniye Commission (a commission to systematize the Sobornoye Ulozheniye (Council Code)). For example, the address of Orenburg Governor Prince A. Putyatin dated December 10, 1767, expressed a request to pass appropriate laws according to which «they would live in one and the same place and moving from place to place was not allowed both with their families and alone» (Putyatin, 1871: 431). At the same time, the address also put forward a proposal to restrict their economic activities by denying them access to fairs and auctions. However, these suggestions were not taken into account by the Empress and senior officials in the 1760s – 1770s.

In the mid-1780s, legislative bodies intensified their regulatory actions regarding the situation of minor ethnic groups in Russia (Germans, Jews, Roma, etc.). Against this background, a campaign was launched to combat the Roma's vagrancy in 1783. Its start was marked by the issue of the Senate's decree addressed to the Voronezh Treasury Chamber dated December 31, which stipulated that the Roma should be endowed with land and «did not loiter idly» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 21. No. 15898). By the same act, legislators equalized the Roma in fiscal rights with state peasants, entrusting the decision of all related issues to the director of household management in the provincial Treasury Chamber. Thus, the legal regulations determined the legal status of the majority of the Roma in the Russian Empire by recognizing them as personally free subjects, on whom the corresponding duties were imposed.

The consistency in the implementation of the policy adopted by the Senate to bind the Roma to the land was embodied in a decree «On the expulsion of the Roma from Livonia» dated January 24, 1784 (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 22. No. 15912). The pretext for its issue was constituted by complaints to the Senate from the local governor-general, Count Yu.Yu. Browne, on the influx of the Roma from neighboring provinces. The Senate ordered to treat them according to the law, which meant to deliver the Roma, found in Livonia, under police escort to the provinces where they were registered for taxation and transfer them to the care of local authorities. Whether the execution of this decree by Browne was successful is unknown.

In November 1784, one of the first attempts was made to end the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the Roma in Russia. It was initiated by Moscow Governor-General Count James Bruce (1732–1791). On his order, which was confirmed by a Senate decree, all the Roma, who stayed in Moscow and Moscow governorate, should be slipped of their passports and evicted to the places where they were registered in the last census (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 22. No. 16088). Further control over the residence of the Roma in the places of registration was assigned to town governors and zemstvo police chiefs throughout the country.

However, the measures taken failed to put an end to the Roma migrations around the country. For example, in 1792, in the Tobolsk governorate, local authorities found a gypsy 113-strong camp, led by elder Yevstafiy Martynov, aged 84 (GUTO GAT. F. 1341. Op. 1. D. 145. L. 8-9 ob.). Based on the investigation's findings, it became clear that these families of «Belarus Gypsies» were registered for the Colonel of the Ingermanland Regiment, Aleksey Melgunov (GUTO GAT. F. 1341. Op. 1. D. 145. L. 20). Over many years, they roamed across the Novgorod governorate, engaged in the exchange of horses and other small goods (GUTO GAT. F. 1341. Op. 1. D. 145. L. 27 ob.). It was also found out that as they had no permanent place of residence, they were not included in the census list and therefore paid no taxes and duties. Initially, it was planned to deport the Gypsies to the Kostroma governorate. The reason for this was the initiative of the Kostroma Treasury Chamber to trace down fugitive Roma. However, Martynov managed to prove that they were not runaways. The Tobolsk authorities decided to settle the Roma in the Tarski okrug, which was enacted through the appropriate order to the Turin lower zemstvo court. The entire procedure was carried out in accordance with the provisions of the decree dated November 4, 1784.

As we can see, the prohibitive regulations against the Roma vagrant practices failed to lead to the desired result. The Roma could easily travel from the Novgorod governorate to Siberian, never having any

documents on them. A small cash bribe to the local manager allowed them to move on. Similar cases were not probably uncommon. This suggestion is offered by the content of the decree issued by the Senate on July 16, 1800, which summed up a kind of disappointing results of the years-long campaign to bind the Roma to the land. The text, in particular, points out that «many of the Gypsies... have not come to their governorates, and those who came to the places, assigned to them, have not accepted the land for further cultivation due to the lack of knowledge and habit, and soon they again left for unknown places» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 26. No. 19484), but most of the Roma «are idly loitering everywhere, and according to the checks done, turned out to have been registered nowhere» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 26. No. 19484). The main culprits of the failure in the action undertaken were announced the landlords who sold the Roma temporary tickets which enabled them to move within the borders of the uezd or governorate for a year. In the context of military and police absolutism in the reign of Emperor Paul I, this situation was tolerated. As a result, it was prescribed that the identified idle Roam should be immediately registered for the head tax and allocated land in the governorate in which they would be caught without documents.

Considering the dreadful financial hardships of the most Roma, the many thousands of debts for the payment of the head tax and other levies and future expenses required to settle in a new place of residence, the authorities decided to write off the arrears of cash taxes for them. It should be stressed that such a step was a novelty in the government's activity. For example, since the second half of the 1760s, foreign colonists already received various tax preferences from the authorities, including the exemption from conscription «in perpetuity,» when settling in rural areas.

At the turn of the 19th century, the Roma question attracted the attention of not only Russian officials. Private individuals also expressed their proposals. For example, on February 9, 1801, the Senate Prosecutor General Petr Obolyaninov, a favorite of Emperor Paul I, was approached by Count von der Pahlen, who proposed a radical project to address the Roma question. According to him, the Roma of the male gender, fit for military service, should be «taken to soldiers, assigned to regiments located in remote areas and others should be sent to the south of Siberia to settle there on available empty land, which is in abundance there, where it could be possible by holding them under supervision to set them to work and payment of taxes to the treasury» (RGIA. F. 1347. Op. 4. L. 58. L. 2). The practical implementation of such a project in the conditions of that time was only viable in its first part (the military service of the Roma), while the resettlement of several thousand Roma in Siberia was unrealistic for a number of reasons. First, to fulfill this, it was necessary to allocate travel and meal allowances from the Treasury and provide police escort (deportation) of the Roma. At the place of new residence, the settlers were to be provided with working livestock, implements, seeds, timber to construct housing and farm buildings, and to ensure that they did not scatter throughout the steppe, it was necessary to arrange for the local police to provide continuous control over the settlers. The Treasury had no available money for this, and local authorities had no this large police force. Realization of the first quite realistic part of Pahlen's proposal was impeded by the coup d'état of March 1801 and the elimination of the political elite of Paul I's era.

There were no general information on the number and location of the Roma in the Russian Empire until the early 19th century. In the summer of 1803, civil governors received a Senate decree that ordered «to immediately submit the information to the Senate on how many [gypsies] are registered, with which landowners or in which state-owned settlements they are registered, whether they carry on any economic activities» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 27. No. 20802). In the late summer of 1803 and spring of 1805, this data was sent to the Senate. It is helpful in reconstructing the geography of the Roma resettlement and their numbers in the early the 19th century (See table 1).

Table 1. The Roma in the Russian Empire, 1803–1805 (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 41)

Region	Governorate	Number of the Roma of both sexes
Center	Voronezh	833
	Kaluga	19
	Kostroma	65
	Moscow	218
	Ryazan	69
	Smolensk	248
	Tambov	86
	Tula	100
North-West	Vologda	196
	Courland	173
	Livonia	66
	St. Petersburg	72
	Finland	82

Belarus and Lithuania	Vitebsk	421
	Lithuania-Grodno	215
	Mogilev	257
Right-Bank Ukraine	Volyn	309
	Podolsk	2,482
	Kiev	1,372
Left-Bank Ukraine	Poltava	3,146
Novorossia	Ekaterinoslav	800
	Taurida	788
	Kherson	1,762
Volga Region	Saratov	198
	Simbirsk	17
North Caucasus	Caucasus	173
Siberia	Tobolsk	81
TOTAL		14,248

Unfortunately, the documents have no information on the Pskov, Novgorod, Irkutsk and other governorates in which the Roma also lived. Based on the above data, we can determine that the approximate size of the Roma population in the Russian Empire at the beginning of Alexander I's reign amounted to 14.5 thousand people. Importantly, we speak only of those Roma who were already registered in state-owned settlements or with landlords.

We can identify several centers where the Roma lived in the Russian Empire in the early 19th century. Almost half of all registered Roma lived in the Ukrainian governorates. The highest concentration was recorded in the Poltava (3,146 people) and Podolsk (2,482 people) governorates – they accounted for almost 40% of the entire Roma population. A large Roma community lived in Novorossia (3,350 people). The abundance of the Roma in these regions is explained by the history of their settlement in Eastern Europe and in the Black Sea region. For example, the Left-Bank Ukraine turned out to become home to the Roma who fled from persecutions in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Northern Black Sea region was inhabited by the Roma who moved here in the 15th century from the territory of the former Byzantine Empire. Internal migrations led to the fact that in the reign of Catherine II, Roma communities were founded in most governorates, numbering from 10 to 250 people.

The information collected by civil governors provides a basis to define the social composition of the Russian Roma in the early 19th century. For example, out of 69 Roma in the Ryazan governorate, 13 were registered as merchants, 6 – lower middle class and 50 – peasants (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 41. L. 17 ob.). According to information provided by the Moscow civil governor dated August 10, 1803, in Moscow 208 Roma with family members were registered in merchant guilds, and only 10 were recorded as belonging to the lower middle class (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 41. L. 26-26 ob.). We should say that the registration in the merchant class (as a rule, in the third guild) was a common practice for the Roma. The existing legislation continued to specify a simplified registration procedure for the merchant class, and the guild documents gave their owners greater freedom in moving around the country. The Roma merchants were in the Tambov (Lebedyan), Voronezh (Boguchar), Vitebsk (Gorodets) governorates and other provinces. Most of the Roma population was recorded as state peasants or was attached to landowners. For example, all Roma of the Saratov governorate «pay taxes as state peasants,» the local governor reported (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 41. L. 39), while in the Poltava governorate, 2,559 Roma (more than 80% of the Roma in the governorate or almost 18% of the registered Roma of the Empire) lived in landowner estates (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 41. L. 80-85 ob.). There were also cases of registering the Roma as Cossacks. For example, 354 Roma were recorded in the Cossack rank in the Poltava governorate.

The Roma carried on traditional economic activities for the time. Roma merchants were able to carry out trade operations within the framework of the effective laws. As a rule, these referred to petty trade and trade in livestock, where the most common was horse trade. In rural areas, the Roma were engaged in various non-agricultural crafts. For example, the Roma from state peasants in the Chernigov okrug, Poltava governorate, were mainly engaged in the blacksmithing business which provided them with earnings to

support their families. As for small land plots received from the state, they only used them as hayfields to harvest hay for their horses, and rented plowed fields out to other peasants (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 41. L. 86). The Roma in the Kherson governorate predominantly worked as musicians, shoemakers and blacksmiths (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 41. L. 92-94). In some governorates, personal service to local aristocrats was widespread. According to the documents of the early 19th century, such Roma families were registered in a number of myzas (manors) in the Dorpat, Pernov, Venden uyezds in the governorate of Livonia (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 41. L. 132-133).

Thus, the Russian Empire in the early 19th century did not have a large Roma population with its size amounting to approx. 0.4 %. It was unevenly distributed in the governorates, and the fact resulted from the history of the Roma resettlement in Eastern Europe, but still the Roma lived almost everywhere. Personal freedom and the liberal laws of Catherine II, which were in force at the time, allowed the Roma to be included in the unprivileged (lower middle class, state peasants) and semi-privileged estates (merchants, Cossacks). Regarding the early period of the 19th century, we can speak about the integration of the Roma into the economic life of the Russian Empire, where they occupied traditional professional niches (metal processing, footwear manufacture, trade).

However, the integration of the Roma was intended to put an end to their nomadic lifestyles which were defined as «vagrancy» from a legal point of view. Actually, the above Senate decree imposed a ban on issuing passports from state-owned settlements and landlords, against which they were registered. Control over the decree's enforcement was assigned to local police authorities (zemstvo and city police) (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 27. No. 20802).

The fact that the position of the Roma in Russia became the subject of interest of Emperor Alexander I is evidenced by the fact that the topic of «turning the Roma away from vagrancy» was discussed at the meetings of the Binding (State) Council on May 4, 1808 (RGIA. F. 1147. Op. 1. D. 575). Relevant information was requested for the discussion from I Department of the Senate, which was submitted in the form of a report (RGIA. F. 1147. Op. 1. D. 575. L. 3).

A year later, the edict of His Imperial Majesty Emperor Alexander I dated April 20, 1809 was released, which became a new step in the process to tackle the Roma issue in Russia (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 30. No. 23597). Until 1809, the authorities struggled to turn the Roma into an agricultural population by giving them land. But these actions failed to bring the desired result, and the fact was indicated in Paul I's edict dated July 16, 1800 (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 26. No. 19484). The 1809 decree formulated a new vision of the place of the Roma in Russia, and the vision became the corporate opinion of the Senate and the Ministry of the Interior (RGIA. F. 1146. Op. 1. D. 29. L. 114). On the one hand, it confirmed the government's commitment to convert the Roma into a sedentary population. It was the first time when specific penalties were imposed on landowners and town and rural communities which could provide the Roma with passports: for each Roma man or woman who was away from their family, it was specified to collect one ruble from the persons who issued the tickets and hand the money to local Orders for Public Charity (governorate institutions responsible for public schools, hospitals, shelters, orphanages), and it was at the expense of the same landlords and communities that the Roma were returned to their initial place of residence.

The decree was also first to demonstrate a liberal approach. For example, those of the Roma, who were not yet registered in the census and had no passports, were given the opportunity «to be assigned at the appointed time to where they wish» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 30. No. 23597), which became a manifestation of liberalism as compared to the police measures that were in place since the mid-1780s.

Understanding the futility of engaging the Roma in agricultural production, the government made an attempt to resettle all personally free Roma from state-owned settlements (state villages) to towns and include them in the ranks of the lower middle class population (craftsmen and workers). In towns, they had to carry on «legitimate business», which meant trade, crafts and other economic activities. All measures were to be implemented in the next year.

Another liberal «declaration» was represented in paragraph 5 of this decree, which directly spoke of Roma serfs for the first time. Here, the authorities proposed landowners «to return freedom to all the Roma registered against them, whom they wished,» or «alternatively assign them... to towns (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 30. No. 23597). This approach to the issue was explained by the fact that landlords, according to the authorities, not only benefited from the Roma, but were also burdened with state taxes that they had to pay to the state. It is unlikely to have been the case. Landlords had an unstable, but still a source of income in the Roma. For example, the Roma paid for passports needed to go off in search of work and paid their landlords a quitrent.

It should be noted that the final version of the decree was somewhat different from the draft submitted by the Senate and the Ministry of Interior to the Binding (State) Council for consideration. It, in particular, reflected the above proposal of von der Pahlen. For example, the Senate offered to take into custody and deport the Roma if «they will live in vagrancy...» for a certain period of time: those who were healthy and fit for service should be conscripted with entrance trials, those who were physically unfit for military service should be sent to mining plants; women, widows and girls should be sent to Siberia for resettlement, and the cripples, elderly and children should be provided with shelter at institutions of the Chambers of Public Charity» (RGIA. F. 1146. Op. 1. D. 29. L. 115). It prescribed to send those Roma to Siberia for settlement, who would be deemed «unfit for» cities and towns (RGIA. F. 1146. Op. 1. D. 29. L. 115 ob.). However, these

measures were not included in the final version. But the punishment for violating the decree was to proceed «according to general state laws» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 30. No. 23597).

Hence, in 1809, the government endeavored to put a new approach to the Roma issue in place, by focusing on their resettlement in cities and engaging the Roma in more familiar economic activities: crafts and trade. However, as the history of the early 19th century shows, this step could lead to an even greater impoverishment of Roma families. A sufficient reminder is a campaign to relocate Jews from towns to cities in the Pale of Settlement, and in the end it brought about the oversupply of offers in the economic spheres traditional for Jews in Belarus and Lithuanian cities, which led to further ruin of Jews (Shaidurov, 2014: 241).

Before the Patriotic War of 1812, the government again returned to the Roma issue. For example, on September 28, 1811, His Imperial Majesty's edict was issued to once again register the Roma in towns and villages (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 31. No. 24795). The preamble acknowledges the fact that previous regulatory acts were implemented without due efficiency, which was confirmed by reports from governors. The key difference of this document is a more thorough development of the mechanism for its implementation. Earlier documents primarily made the Roma themselves responsible for putting the newly introduced regulations in practice. In rare cases, they determined zemstvo and city police as controlling authorities. Now legislators placed the direct responsibility for enforcing the edict on the Minister of Police in the Empire and on governors in governorates entrusted to them (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 31. No. 24795).

In 1811, the government again reviewed its position regarding the areas where the Roma should be settled. According to the decree, the Roma, who were not attached to any community, should be sent to live in towns and cities. Interestingly, their inclusion in city communities was carried out by the decision of the governor and took place without the consent of the city community (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 31. No. 24795). At the same time, they were recognized as having the right to live in state-owned settlements. But this only applied to those Gypsies «who, according to the last census, were attached to state-owned settlements and had a farming business» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 31. No. 24795).

The challenging assignment to implement the next campaign to end vagrancy was given by Alexander I to the Minister of Police to be carried out in the shortest possible term – in the European part of the Empire by January 1, 1812 and in Siberia by July 1, 1812 (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 31. No. 24795). However, the completion of the campaign activities took several years. The way that the fulfillment of the 1811 decree progressed can be illustrated by the example of the Simbirsk governorate.

The fourth census (1781-1782) «showed the Roma on the same list together with the newly baptized inhabitants of the Yeremkina village from the Mordvinian descent,» who lived in the Stavropol uezd, Simbirsk governorate (RGIA. F. 1286. Op. 2. 1812. D. 241. L. 1). Their presence was confirmed by subsequent censuses, which was noted by the report of the Simbirsk Civil Governor, A.A. Dolgorukov, dated July 23, 1812, addressed to Minister of Police A.D. Balashov. For example, according to the 6th census (1811), 23 Roma were registered in the Yeremkina village (RGIA. F. 1286. Op. 2. 1812. D. 241. L. 2).

In his report, Dolgorukov provided an impartial description of the local Roma. For example, between the 4th and 5th censuses, nine gypsies were sentenced to penal labor in exile «for their various crimes and robbery». The rest set up houses, but «both males and females led a very vile life following their inherent habit» (RGIA. F. 1286. Op. 2. 1812. D. 241. L. 2 ob.), by engaging themselves in fortune telling, deceptions and horse trade. This collective portrait was drawn up on the basis of applications filed by local peasants, who, according to the document, asked to evict the Roma from the area.

One of the provisions in the 1811 decree stipulated the terms and conditions for the Roma's living in state-owned settlements, which among other things included the consent of the rural community. Dolgorukov decided to put the item in practice, aiming to achieve several goals: «to ensure peace of mind for the newly baptized and to relocate the Roma so that they can not have a close relationship with each other» (RGIA. F. 1286. Op. 2. 1812. D. 241. L. 3 ob.). To this end, he took a decision to settle the Roma in the cities of the Simbirsk governorate and reported the decision to St. Petersburg. The outbreak of war with Napoleon delayed the approval of Governor Dolgorukov's decision on the resettlement of Roma in the cities of the Simbirsk governorate. It was not until April 1814 that the Committee of Ministers considered this issue during the presentation by Minister of Police S.K. Vyazmitinov and approved it (RGIA. F. 1286. Op. 2. 1812. D. 241. L. 10). As a result, 12 Roma families were attached to 11 local cities (RGIA. F. 1286. Op. 2. 1812. D. 241. L. 5-7).

The performance of the campaign to implement the decrees of 1809 and 1811 can be shown on the example of the Roma population in the Crimea. For example, in Feodosia, the enforcement process was started already in 1810 with the allocation of land in the suburbs for the Roma to settle down. Some of them, as it was later pointed out by the local mayor, F.I. Engel, «began to form settled ways, but after that they did with these and went to different villages» (RGIA. F. 1286. Op. 2. 1819. D. 198. L. 2). The return to the campaign to resettle the Roma in towns and cities was initiated by the Ministry of Police on February 4, 1819. According to Engel's report, there were 246 Roma craftsmen of the Magomedan confession registered in the lower middle class in the city at that time, of whom the vast majority «went with their families to various villages in the Feodosia uyezd without written permissions, gaining a living more from alms than from works» (RGIA. F. 1286. Op. 2. 1819. D. 198. L. 1-1 ob.). The mayor considered that the Roma were of no use to the city, and therefore suggested that the Ministry of Police expel them from Feodosia's lower middle class and install them at places where they would be found. However, this measure was a violation of the laws, and

this was indicated in the response that Engel received from St. Petersburg. The Ministry of Police required that he should act in strict accordance with the applicable regulations. In addition, the state authorities ordered «to subject the local police to lawful punishment for its improper monitoring of this case, as well as those who gave shelter to the gypsies or harbor them» (RGIA. F. 1286. Op. 2. 1819. D. 198. L. 5 ob.).

Thus, the implementation of the edicts and decrees on the resettlement of Roma in towns and cities stretched over time, and this was caused by the war events of 1812-1814. The actual enforcement of the provisions detailed in them, as we see, largely depended on the local authorities.

The documents created in the first third of the 19th century often refer to Roma merchants assigned to the 3rd guild. In this regard, we should have a closer look at the supplementary resolution «On the organization of guilds and the trade of other estates» dated November 14, 1824, which as per its § 203 stipulated that all its provisions were also applicable without limitation to the Roma from merchants and the lower middle class, who carried on trade in Russia (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 39. No. 30115). Some of its provisions allow for an understanding of the Roma's desire to live as multi-generational families. This lifestyle contained not only an element of tradition but it also had some economic feasibility. The point is that according to § 43, «a merchant family trading one hereditary capital shall not be required to take more than one certificate for trade or business if it only consists of the following persons: 1) the father with sons and unmarried daughters, or grandchildren, sons' children, unless they are separated» (PSZ RI-I. Vol. 39. No. 30115). Only in this case it was possible to buy a general certificate of the 3rd guild for 220 rubles. (§ 37). They also could enjoy civil rights this way, which were granted through membership in the merchant class (§ 48).

5. Conclusion

Thus, since the 18th century, the Russian Empire's government bodies faced the need to adopt an approach to the Roma population which grew in the second half of the 18th century – first quarter of the 19th century following the accession of new territories (Crimea, Bessarabia, former territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). By the early 19th century, almost 15 thousand Roma who lived in all regions were registered in Russia. Unlike other European countries, Russia rejected the path of enacting discriminatory laws against the Roma. One of the objectives, pursued by the government since the 1780s, was their integration through resettlement based on sedentary lifestyles. To achieve this, there were repeated efforts made in the 1780s and 1810s to encourage the Roma to engage in farming, handicrafts and trade, by settling them in cities and state-owned settlements and providing tax preferences. There were also severe punishments imposed for vagrancy the harshest of which might as well send you to exile to Siberia. The law stipulated penalties for officials and individuals who would contribute to this perpetration. However, these actions were not successful, and the Roma, even those who were attached to cities or rural communities, continued to live their nomadic existence across the entire Russian Empire.

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К вопросу об истории цыган в Российской империи (вторая половина XVIII – первая четверть XIX в.)

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Аннотация. Российское цыгановедение на протяжении второй половины XIX – начала XXI в. достигло больших успехов в изучении различных аспектов языка, культуры, этнографии, антропологии, обычного права цыган. Однако их история в Российской империи на сегодняшний день изучена слабо и фрагментарно. К этому привело незнание исследователями документов, которые сохранились в архивных фондах. Несмотря на относительную немногочисленность цыганское население присутствовало во всех регионах России. В данной статье мы рассмотрели основные мероприятия органов власти, которые были нацелены на формирование нового (оседлого) образа жизни цыган и реализовывались во второй половине XVIII – первой четверти XIX в. В качестве источников были использованы законодательные акты. Региональная специфика реализации кампаний по пресечению бродяжничества среди цыган представлена на основе нарративных источников из центральных и региональных архивов Российской Федерации, которые были выявлены автором, и впервые вводятся в научный оборот. Использование различных исследовательских методов позволило нам реконструировать ранее неизвестные страницы истории цыган России.

Ключевые слова: цыгане России, миграции цыган, интеграция цыган, государственная политика, цыганский вопрос, Российская империя.

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