

**ROMANI STUDIES IN THE AGE OF COVID-19:  
ETHICS, METHODS, ENGAGEMENT AND THE FUTURE  
(Workshop)**

**22 June 2021: 13.00-17.45 CEST**

**CONVENORS**

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- Martin Fotta (Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences)
- Paloma Gay y Blasco (Social Anthropology Department, University of St. Andrews)

You can contact the workshop conveners at [fotta@eu.cas.cz](mailto:fotta@eu.cas.cz) and [pgyb@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:pgyb@st-andrews.ac.uk).

**DISCUSSANTS**

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- Iliana Sarafian (Goldsmiths College, University of London)
- Arpan Roy (Johns Hopkins University)

**AIM**

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The Covid-19 pandemic is having a devastating effect on Romani communities worldwide. The emergency has fed on the fragility of Romani lives, exacerbating already existing patterns of disenfranchisement.

Scholars have engaged with the challenges of this moment, collaborating with relief efforts, engaging the media, writing dispatches and op-eds. These activities have been new to many, blurring the borders between activism and scholarship, between action and reflection. The field and the questions scholars ask have shifted, existing forms of knowledge production have been questioned, and new forms of solidarity have emerged.

Romani and non-Romani scholars, most early career, reflect upon ways the pandemic has affected their scholarship: How has the pandemic impacted their ongoing or planned research projects? How have their theoretical conceptualisations changed? What forms of engagement in ‘the field’ is demanded from them today? How is research in the context of the pandemic shaped by demands to support the struggle of communities against anti-Gypsyism? How can social science shape priorities in the post-pandemic world?

**REGISTRATION**

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This workshop is free and open, but attendees need to pre-register at latest two hours before the workshop in order to receive a ZOOM link.

Link to register: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/romani-studies-in-the-age-of-covid-19-tickets-155620883251>

## SCHEDULE

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### 13.00 – 13.15 OPENING

- *Initial Reflections*, Paloma Gay y Blasco (University of St. Andrews)

### 13.15 – 14.35 SESSION 1: RACIALISATION & SCHOLARLY RESPONSIBILITY

**Under COVID-19, racialised notions about Romanies as threatening non-citizens have permeated public debate and policymaking. How can scholars help contest these notions, and what ethical and moral challenges do they face when attempting to do so?**

- *Truth and Prejudice: The Challenges of Explaining 'Problematic' Behaviours in Times of Crisis*, Ana Chiritoiu (Central European University)
- *Between Stigmatising and Neglect? Ethical Dilemmas from Participation in The Slovak Government's Intervention Approach*, Andrej Belak (Slovak Academy of Sciences)
- *Populist Rhetoric and Access to Justice in The Time Of COVID-19 Outbreak*, Eszter Kovács Szitkay (Ludovika University of Public Service)
- *Breaking the Pandemic Silence with Hybrid Knowledge?* Catalin Berescu (Research Institute for Quality of Life & Frontal Association)

### 14.45 – 16.05 SESSION 2: METHODOLOGY & POSITIONALITY

**The pandemic has demanded that social scientists develop novel research methods, and in the process has created also new ethical dilemmas. What concrete challenges are Romani and non-Romani scholars facing under COVID-19? What do these challenges reveal about the specific complexities regarding positionality and collaboration when carrying out research on Romani issues?**

- *Making Historiography of The Recent Past Being a Roma Historian in Times Of COVID-19*, Rafael Buhigas Jiménez (Complutense University of Madrid)
- *'Among Us There Is No COVID'*, Nathalie Manrique (Independent researcher)
- *'Lessons from A Digital Anthropology of Life in A Nomad Camp During the Pandemic'*, Marco Solimene (University of Iceland)
- *Over and Back Again: Reflections on Inhabiting the Paradoxical Role of Insider Researcher During COVID-19*, David Friel (Institute of Technology Sligo) & Tamsin Cavaliero (Institute of Technology Sligo)

### 16.15 – 17.15 SESSION 3: SHIFTING 'FIELDS'

**The ways the pandemic is affecting Romani communities is shaped by pre-existing inequalities and racial hierarchies. How are Romani lives being transformed by the pandemic? What new research questions have become relevant and meaningful?**

- *Impact Of COVID-19 Pandemic on Secondary School Roma Students in Portugal: Methodological Challenges of Adapting to Unexpected Circumstances*. Olga Magano (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa) & Maria Manuela Mendes (Instituto Universitário de Lisboa)
- *Online Performances, Digital Kinning and Making Sense of Pandemic Among Polish Roma Jehovah Witnesses*, Kamila Fialkowska, Michał P. Garapich, Ignacy Józwiak, Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz, Sonia Styrkacz & Monika Szewczyk (Centre of Migration Research, University of Warsaw)

- *'He Was My Hero'. Coping with Loss and Grief in the Age of COVID-19*, Antonio Montañes Jimenez (St. Leonard's Associate, University of St. Andrews) with Gory Carmona

#### 17.15 – 17.45 CONCLUDING SESSION

- *Final Discussion*, moderated by Martin Fotta (Czech Academy of Sciences)
- *Closing Remarks*, Paloma Gay y Blasco (University of St. Andrews)

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The workshop is organised by the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Social Anthropology Department at the University of St. Andrews, and the Prague Forum for Romani Histories at the Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences, within the research programme '**Resilient Society for the 21st Century**', within the framework of the Czech Academy of Sciences '[Strategy 21](#)'.