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One Route to Respectability: An Historical View of Socio-Cultural and Economic Reproduction Among the Gitanos of Lebrija

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Abstract

Gitanos (Spanish Roma) have undergone major transformations in the last half-century. But in some areas, they were already successfully included in the majority society. Some have practiced “resistance to respectability” (Kaprow, 1982) but we examine a family history of Andalusian Gitanos, neither marginal nor exotic, who did not. Representing the importance of local context and choice in a determined socioeconomic conjuncture, their cultural creativity provides a positive perspective from which to look at Gitano history. Without denying negative and traumatic treatment “from above”, we attempt to move beyond exclusionary perspectives which objectify and essentialize Roma based on marginalization, discrimination and poverty. We celebrate the historical ability of Gitanos in Southern Spain to become a respected integral part of the local community, and thus seek a different perspective from which to look at the history of this community.

Keywords: *Gitanos; History; Respectability; Integration; Andalusia; Lebrija*

Introduction: A Positive Perspective

Most attempts to elucidate Roma culture - formerly called “Gypsy”³ –perpetuate images of either marginalization or romanticized stereotypes. However, the historical choices of many Spanish Roma (Gitanos), long settled and integrated, debunk these stereotypes and challenge the tendency to “establish an equivalence between Gitano identity and non-integration, the implicit corollary being that the ‘integrated’... Gitanos no longer have a Gitano identity, as Gitano identity is by definition

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³ Since the 1990’s *Roma, rom, romá* or *rrom*, (‘man’ in Romani), have replaced Gypsy (Liégeois, 2007: 11). In Spain the educated and politically active minority may call themselves *Roma*, but most use *Gitano*, Caló or Flamencos. We use Gitano to refer to Spanish Roma, and Roma for the broader international population, except for quotes which use “Gypsy”.



‘traditional’” (Thède, 2000: 41). Their Gitano identity is defined by what they carry *inside*, preserving their integrity though surrounded by non-Gitanos (Williams, as cited in Thède, 2000), adapting to local social and cultural parameters. The Gitanos of Lebrija provide an excellent example (Williams, as cited in Thède, 2000); José, Gitano of Lebrija, says: “the Gitano, in order to continue being a Gitano, should be like a normal person”⁴ (Thède, 2000: 7-8). Clearly identified as *Gitanos* by themselves and their neighbors, they are Spanish and Andalusian in customs, values, and daily interactions. Negative concepts often applied to Roma in social sciences, politics, popular imagination and that of many Roma themselves (Asséo, 1994; Piasere, 2011) don’t apply.

How was this community’s cultural creativity articulated in the socio-economic, geographical and historical conditions of Lower Andalusia? The creative ability of one particular family, supported by a traditional extended family structure, provides an example of adaptation as early as the 1800’s. Exploring genealogy and memories from a historical perspective, we suggest how the combination of local conditions, opportunities and choices results in differing experiences of local integration.

Our perspective is historical, based on fieldwork done by author 1 in 2000–2001 in Lebrija, province of Seville. Formal interviews, informal conversations about family memories and participant observation, combined with documental research⁵, elucidate how this family achieved their socio-economic status, the relation of local factors and family style to integration, and how this style is influenced and changed by the process. Our intention is not an exhaustive ethnography of Lebrija’s Gitanos but to celebrate their adaptive ability. Our historical perspective must be drawn from disparate sources because official censuses reflect negative elements – Gitanos in jail, school absenteeism, etc. – while positive assessments are largely “extra-official” (Vargas, as cited in Hernández, 2015). “In the Gitano case ... the memorial source... allow(s) us to weave a historically rich narrative” (Carmona, 2012). We compare, support, or refute what we glean of ideas or attitudes guiding our informants and their forbears in day-to-day behavior, comparing these emic analyses with our observations and those of other authors, researchers, and individuals who have extensive experience with these and other Gitanos over time.

⁴ All translations done by author 1.

⁵ Formal research by author 1 based on years of contact with these Gitanos as dance student, colleague, performer, friend and participant in family events since 1986 was supported in part by a Fulbright Senior Research Grant in 2000-2001. The contact has continued since then, albeit intermittently.



The scale of analysis is the family network; details of daily existence suggest how different characters of sociability influence integration into surrounding social fabric (Brazzabeni et al., 2015: 11). Framed historically through the idea of a Gitano effort towards respectability, now more generalized, our study's relevance lies in how particular local and historical conjuncture, social and cultural processes of integration pioneered current trends. Perceiving *them* as agents of their own history with capacity to change (Lagunas, 2014: 4), we describe a specific case of Gitano cultural creativity in dialogue with history, offering a positive perspective on Roma history.

Integration and respectability

Integration is multidimensional: political, social, economic, cultural (consistency of standards), normative (conformity to these standards), communicative (exchange of meanings), and functional (exchange of services or division of labor) (Costoiu, 2008 and Landecker, 1951: 1). Unequal power relationships provide the point of departure (Garcés-Mascareñas and Penninx, 2016; Fraser, 2008; Magazzini, 2021), with cultural, socio-economic, and legal/political dimensions, whose interaction can be examined from the individual, group, or institutional level. In this respect, the Gitano world is “of interaction and dynamism, of one group with respect to the other and of extreme flexibility” (Lagunas, 2021, Chapter 7). Though from 1492 Spain's Catholic rulers sought homogeneity, integration was uneven and creative, catering to local values of different segments of society. Accepting Catholicism, Gitanos sought ‘functional’ (financial or economic) integration in the interests of survival, participating in the local labor pool - agricultural work - but also filling local economic niches closer to their own traditions - blacksmithing, cattle-trading, sheep-shearing, etc. Communicative integration was enforced by outlawing their language, but also supported by their ability to re-create local artistic traditions in their own style, as in the art of flamenco. Cultural and normative integration was uneven, but efforts were often made to conform to local standards.

These efforts could be compared to the African American “politics of respectability” (Higginbotham, 1993) to “refute racist stereotypes by demonstrating their adherence to the norms and values of white middle-class society” (Dazey, 2021). Apart from “a compensatory ideology in the face of powerlessness” this represents attempts to “participate in the transformation of dominant social and political imaginaries through the correction of negative representations of marginalized groups” (Dazey, 2021) – to be “worthy of respect” – the local standards of which vary greatly from place to place.

Gypsies in Spain: Los Gitanos

Authors who have “grappled with the theoretically more challenging cases of monolingual or apparently more assimilated Gypsy populations” (Stewart, 2013: 424) focus primarily on marginality, poverty, and unsuccessful integration⁶ (Kaprow, 1982; San Román, 1976, 1997; Gay y Blasco, 1999). Despite recent developments of improved insertion into modern society through associationism and political and cultural struggle (Lagunas, 2010), this limited focus perpetuates negative categories. Yet in Andalusia, with almost half the Spanish Gitano population, two-thirds self-identify as Gitano, but are considered “invisible (or invisible-ized) Gitanos... who do not manifest externally their cultural identity and are fully integrated” (Junta de Andalucía, 2017). Once an accepted and respected part of the community, the successfully integrated are mostly ignored, except perhaps in Gamella’s in-depth examination of historical, economic, social and cultural differences among Andalusian Gitanos (1996), mentioned below.

In addition, general anthropological studies in Spain concentrate on “the independent Spanish peasant concentrated in the north, in Castile, or in the sierras” rather than the large “agro-towns” of lower Andalusia, and the “huge agrarian proletariat of southern Spain... which reaches 60 percent or higher” (Gilmore, 1980: 10) and ignore the Gitanos. Yet since the 1600’s many Gitanos in Lower Andalusia have been among this population.

These are families which navigated legal prohibitions and social rejection to establish themselves locally as law-abiding, hardworking, and worthy of local respect⁷, some in Seville and Cádiz since at least late 1800’s, before recent progress noted by other scholars. Studies of such Andalusian Gitanos focus on flamenco (Pasqualino, 1998; Thède, 2000) which, though important, supports the attitude that Gitanos - Roma - are only interesting when either marginal and problematic, or dancing and singing: “art matters, but not Roma lives” (Vargas Rubio, 2020).

Despite repeated laws from 1499 to 1783 imposing uniformity and outlawing Roma cultural expression, by 1695 enough Gitanos were settled, hard-working (San Román, 1997: 19) and church baptised, to “establish a difference between those ... already settled and those who are not... legal recognition ... of two different realities with respect to the Gitano minority: ...those who caused problems for the peasants with

⁶ Particularly in northern Spain: Madrid, Zaragoza, and Barcelona, (Kaprow, 1982; San Román, 1976, 1997; Gay y Blasco, 1999)

⁷ Investigation of the “local terms” of respectability in the history of Lower Andalusia would be an interesting contribution to this discussion but is beyond the scope of this paper.



their robbery and assaults, and ... those who had learned to coexist with the rest of their neighbors, lived by their work and therefore enjoyed general respect and consideration” (Sanchez Ortega, 2009: 90).

Gitanos of Lower Andalusia

Spain’s geographical, historical, and cultural divisions complicate generalizations about social, economic, and political development, including among Gitanos. Gamella’s unique studies are primarily in eastern “upper” Andalusia where, though there are similar and parallel stories, in general there is a “...system of Gitano-*payo* relations in lower Andalusia that is structurally distinct from the prevalent eastern Andalusian system” (Thède, 2000: 41-32). Until 1833 contemporary Andalusia was divided into Andalusia (Huelva, Seville, Cádiz and Córdoba) where 65% large estates under jurisdiction of nobility or the Catholic Church hired 87.4% agricultural day laborers⁸, and Granada, with 72% agricultural workers in 42.5% large estates (Oto-Peralías and Romero-Ávila, 2017). The “rich soil and high-water table” of Andalusia’s Guadalquivir River basin (Gilmore, 1980: 34; Lacomba, 1999) surrounded Seville and Cádiz, economic centers of the riches of the New World⁹.

By mid-1600, 67% of Gitanos lived in Lower Andalusia, concentrated in the Guadalquivir valley: Cádiz 16.5%, Seville 15% (Leblón, 1994, 2005: 42). Plagues, the Morisco expulsion (1609 -1613), and exodus to the New World shrank the population; in 1526 Seville was "sparsely populated and almost in the hands of women" (Pozo Ruiz, n.d.). It did not appear “convenient ... to order to leave the Reign the Gitanos, because of the depopulation in which these reigns find themselves since the expulsion of the Moriscos... cannot afford any evacuation ... of these people who ... if reformed will be reduced to the customs and way of life of the rest...” (Sánchez Ortega, 2009: 78).

The early 18th century Cádiz port attracted transients, while large estates offered Gitanos employment – seasonal agricultural work, cattle and horse trade, blacksmithing, sheep-shearing etc. In the 1783-85 census¹⁰ the largest Gitano populations were: in Seville province, Seville and nearby towns, including Utrera and

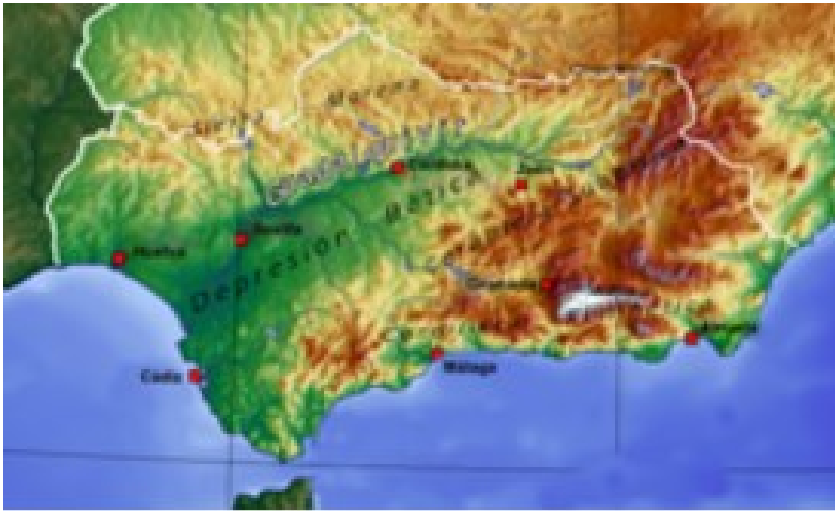
⁸The highest in Spain.

⁹Differences in relative prevalence of Gitano surnames also suggest different families settled in these two areas (Gamella et al., 2012, 2014; Lermo et al., n.d.). A detailed comparison between Gitanos in Eastern Andalusia and those of the Guadalquivir River Basin merits a separate article.

¹⁰Between the last Pragmática of 1783 and 1785, censuses of the Gitano population were drafted in response to the *law* giving Gitanos legally full citizenship (Leblon, 1991: 115).

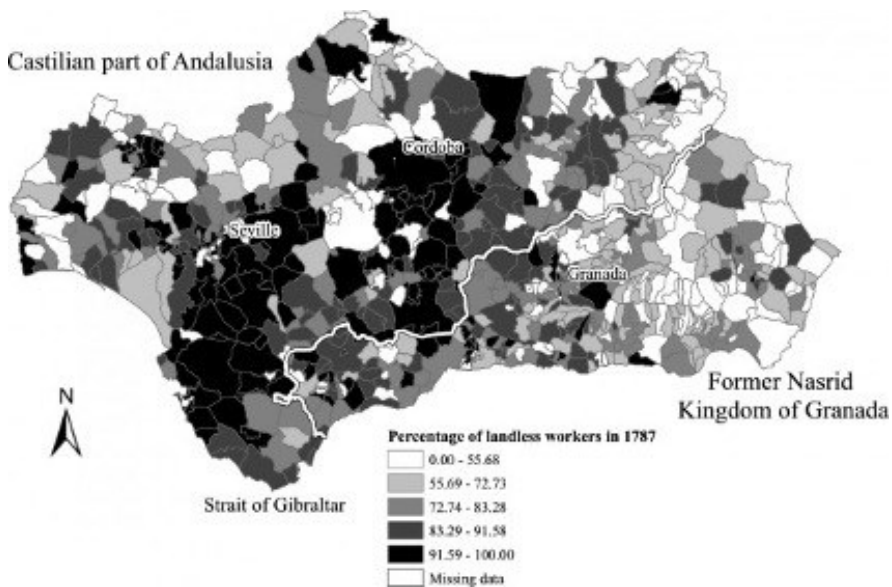
Lebrija; in Cádiz, Jerez de la Frontera, El Puerto de Santa Maria, Puerto Real, Rota, Chiclana, and Sanlúcar de Barrameda. This area also had more mixed marriages than elsewhere in Spain (Leblón, 2017: 45).

Figure 1. Territorial configuration of Andalusia



https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historia_de_la_configuraci%C3%B3n_territorial_de_Andaluc%C3%ADa#Diferenciaci%C3%B3n_e_identificaci%C3%B3n_entre_el_Reino_de_Granada_y_Andaluc%C3%ADa

Figure 2. Distribution of working population in Andalusia. Oto-Peralías and Diego Romero-Ávila, 2017



1700's legal emphasis was less on persecuting nomadism, more on useful employment (Sánchez-Ortega, 1977: 432). Throughout Andalusia, "It is striking that in this decade of 1780 there are very few listed gitanos who have no known trade or occupation, useful and necessary 'to the public cause'" (Gamella et. al., 2000: 353-354). Field labor alone, insufficient for survival, was supplemented by blacksmithing, sheep-shearing, day labor etc., often implying semi-nomadism, though in 1717 and 1783 censuses this appears as a stereotype rather than a reality (Sanchez Ortega, 1977: 28).

The 1749 "Great Roundup"¹¹ was intended to imprison all Gitanos, though they were gradually released if they could prove usefulness in local economies (Sánchez Ortega, 1977: 159-160). Their liberation "was very unequal according to their place of origin...only 22.1% of those from Granada were freed, ... from Seville they were some 78.5%" depending on influential acquaintances, sympathetic justices or ability to pay the bureaucracy (Martínez Martínez, 2014: 59)¹². In the 1785 census, Cádiz and Seville between them had 32% of Andalusian Gitanos who were *empadronados* (legally domiciled) – Cádiz 17%, Seville 15% – while Granada (11%), Málaga (9%) and Almeria (6%) had 26% between them¹³ (Leblón, 2012: 25).

Historical records show Gitanos performed activities which, while officially illegal, were locally useful to and largely accepted: transport with pack animals, sheep shearing, livestock trading and blacksmithing – essential services in agro-towns. They were also bakers, innkeepers, and butchers, very much part of the local, sedentary, economy.

From the first *Pragmática*¹⁴ (1499), the Gitanos were required to "live by known trades...or take housing from masters whom they serve". Many Gitanos resisted this process of proletarianization (Kaprow, 1982), seeking alternatives to employment as wage earners who sell their labour. Yet in the Guadalquivir Valley, agricultural labour in large estates employed both Gitanos and non-Gitanos.

"Large Andalusian towns became a point of proletarian concentration, working in farmhouses, plantations or pasturelands: in 1598 in Jerez, more than 60 % of the active population was salaried and in 1615, 4.000 were accounted for working in the vineyards: in 1620, on a sample of 20 towns of the reign of Seville, 54 % of the active

¹¹ Called the *Gran Redada* (Great Round-up) or *Prision General* (General Imprisonment) of the Gitanos. Lefranc (2001: 33) suggests that their noticeable presence in Jerez is due to the proximity of the prisons of this round-up but church files show their presence there before 1749.

¹² Those freed in Cádiz also amounted to almost 50%. (Martínez, 2014)

¹³ Cordoba and Jaen only had 4% each

¹⁴ Law passed to control the Gitanos

population were *jornaleros* [day-workers]” (Bernal, 1987: 69). In the early 1800’s, 70% of Andalusians working in agriculture were *jornaleros* (Solana Ruiz, 2000: 1), mostly miserably poor, forced to follow seasonal agricultural work. Many were Gitanos: this was one route to integration and respectability in the lower Andalusian towns¹⁵.

There were other routes, as well. Particularly in Cádiz province and in the case of the family described below¹⁶, butchering provided an important economic base, while adjusting behaviour and customs – notions of cleanliness, dress, education, speech, etc., (cultural or normative integration in Landecker’s terms) – positively affecting interactions with the host community.

The Gitanos of Lebrija

Lebrija’s roughly 27,000 people includes 4,000 gitanos– almost 15 percent (Hernández, 2015). “Inclusion or fusion is a fact...there is no xenophobia on either side... nor are there conflicts between families.” (Vargas Rubio, as cited in Hernández, 2015) “Our ancestors made themselves respected... on the basis of hard work we have earned our place... Andalusia, and above all the lower Guadalquivir, has been our promised land since the eighteenth century, which has meant an advantage over the Gitanos of other regions and countries” (Vargas, as cited in Hernández, 2015)

The walled city of Lebrija, between Cádiz and Seville, expanded when the Muslim threat disappeared in late 1400. Gitanos sought work or made pilgrimage to the Virgen of Consolación of Utrera¹⁷ where in 1560 some were granted *vecindad* (formal legal residence) (Mayo and Hernández, 2010). In 1580 some were buried in the sanctuary, a right indicative of certain acceptance (Castaño, 2007: 41). In 1538 a law expelled “Gitanos without stable work” from Jerez de la Frontera (Mayo and Hernández, 2010) implying some did have stable work. Lebrija church records show Gitano baptisms¹⁸ as early as 1601 (Iglesia Nuestra Señora de la Oliva. Book 7).

Many Gitanos achieved *vecindad* in Andalusia. “The vision of the Gitanos at the popular level, at least of the people who had closer relations with them, appears to have been very different from that held by justice” (Martínez, 1997: 75). “The *Gitano-*

¹⁵ Estela Zatanía’s book *Flamenco de Gañanía*, concentrating on flamenco, also provides firsthand descriptions of Gitano work in the fields in around Jerez de la Frontera in the mid-twentieth century, with many details of their work experience and social relations. This is another area which merits further research.

¹⁶ Lebrija, though officially in Seville province, has very close sociological and historical ties to Jerez de la Frontera and other towns of Cádiz province.

¹⁷ The family of which we speak is divided primarily between Utrera and Lebrija, as well as Jerez de la Frontera.

¹⁸ Baptismal files state, variously, *Gitano*, *Jitano*, *Gitano de nación* and, eventually, *Castellanos nuevos* (new Castilians), a term coined to imply that the Gitanos as a separate people, nation, ethnicity or other group did not exist, that it was only their (illegal) behavior, which could be changed, that distinguished them.



Castellano symbiosis, in spite of mutual lack of confidence, continued to be maintained due the great benefit which the *Gitano* activities represented for the town.” (Martínez, 1995: 76). This symbiotic relationship survived *Pragmáticas* and *Redadas* better in some areas than in others (Gómez Alfaro, 1993). In Lebrija, Jerez and Utrera, the same intermarried families were there in 1730 and after the 1749 *Redada*.

Like most Andalusian agro-towns, Lebrija’s 1700-1900 population were mostly *jornaleros* in cotton, sugar beet and chickpea fields owned by absentee landlords, an existence of “misery, unemployment, revolutionary explosions, overcrowding, illiteracy and hate towards the political powers and dominant classes.... Many working families subsisted in periods of unemployment thanks to the small shops which gave credit for foodstuffs” (Pulido Matos, 1991: 77).

Although most suffered equally with other labourers, some Gitanos ran such shops; their choices combined what is seen as Gitano preference for self-employment with a sense of “fitting in” to the local community.

The 1784-85 Lebrija census shows 60 adults and 55 children, generations born in Lebrija whose descendants still live there today. 19 adult males and six male children worked the fields, five also sheared sheep. There are seven blacksmiths, one water carrier, one labourer, and six ‘meat cutters’ (*cortador de carne* or *jifero*¹⁹).

On this census the Gitanos stated occupations heretofore legally allowed them, though we know from other sources (Leblón, 1991, 1994) that they also practiced forbidden trades. At least half the adult men, several children, and many women worked the fields until the mid-20th century, suffering the same abject poverty and feudalistic attitudes of the landowners as their non-Gitano neighbours. But there are several blacksmiths, and five ‘meat-cutters’ some of whom, according to local and family lore, also traded livestock.

The Peña family

The surname Peña among Gitanos is associated primarily with Lebrija and Utrera, then Jerez de la Frontera and Seville. Patronymics identify families and inherited nicknames tend towards patrilineality²⁰. The Peña, Carrasco, Vargas and Valencia families, extensively intermarried over generations, constitute the majority of Lebrija’s Gitanos. Their family network forms their primary social world. In different levels of

¹⁹ *Jifa*: knife used for cutting beef.

²⁰ In Spain two surnames are used, usually first the father’s then the mother’s. In some records surname order is reversed, and matrilineal descendance is also recognized.

collective identity, they are Gitano, Spanish and Andalusian. Peña, surname of several generations of local officials, is also one of the earliest surnames to appear in Gitano baptismal records, in 1731²¹ (Iglesia Nuestra Señora de la Oliva. Book 27).

The 1784-5 census shows five de la Peña families, five Carrasco, and two Vargas,²² all forbears of the current population. The Peña's, intermarried with Vargas, Carrasco, Soto, Ximénez, Flores, Fernández, Amaya and others, compose three interrelated and intermarried branches: Funi, Pinini and Pelao. They call these lineages, but “terms like *raza* (race), lineage, family or clan are used with diverse meanings... as a metaphor for a grouping of family members” (Lagunas, 2016: 22). Substantial bilateral intermarriage makes it impossible to entirely separate each family segment from the others, but there are currently more Pinini's in Utrera, more Funi's and Pelao's in Lebrija²³.

Various, sometimes contradictory sources, trace the Peñas from early 1700: Lebrija's 1783 census (Leblón, 2017); baptismal files of the Iglesia Nuestra Señora de la Oliva (1601-1867) researched by author 1; a family tree developed by Gitano writer Manuel Peña Narváez (Utrera, 1931–2012); and the 19th century Civil Register (Ganformina Álvarez, 2014)²⁴. They are ancestors of modern-day families in Lebrija, Utrera, Jerez de la Frontera and nearby towns, especially associated with Lebrija. Tracing their historical presence suggests aspects of life stories representative of many local families.

Marriage within the kin group and community of Gitanos is based on ideologies of virginity, family honor, preservation of culture, usually with people one knows (Lagunas, 2005, 2010; Gamella, 2000). To the concept of “shared ‘blood’ “...one must add in the group of local residence...” (Lagunas, 2005.). First-cousin marriage is common in some areas (Gamella, 2008). Between Lebrija, Utrera, Jerez and neighboring towns the term *primo*, cousin, includes both “near kin,” and “diffuse kin” (loose or distant cousins), roughly as described by Jolas et al., 1970 and Zonabend, 1980 in rural Europe (Piasere, 1998: 104). These overlap with the “group of local residence”. In the family described below, a maternal great-grandmother and a wife's paternal great-grandfather were siblings; one descendant married her father's second cousin's son, and one of her sons married his uncle's daughter (first cousin, also more distant cousin); another married a descendant on her mother's side and her daughter, in turn, married her aunt's grandson (second cousin, also more distant cousin). Some

²¹ Earlier listings do not show surnames.

²² Valencia appears later.

²³ There are also Funi's, Pinini's and Pelao's in Jerez de la Frontera, but these “lineage” names, though recognized, appear to be less important in this larger town.

²⁴ Earlier records from the Civil Register have proved thus far too delicate to handle or illegible.



grandchildren married maternal first cousins; others paternal. Individuals not apparently related sometimes turn out to be so: in the 1970's, one Lebrija couple did not realize they were related until the priest required church dispensation to marry them. Our data suggests endogamy is predominant though not binding, without clear preference for a particular pattern: there are marriages of first, second and more distant cousins on both sides, mostly Gitanos.²⁵

Though surnames are inconsistent, one can trace some family lines²⁶. Peña Narváez's family tree extends to his great-great-great-great-great grandparents Juan de la Peña and María de la Vega²⁷, both born in Lebrija. Considering a generation fifteen to twenty years, we approximate they were born around 1730, prior to the 1749 *Redada*. Our sources show four Juan de la Peña in Lebrija: Juan José (1727) married to Juana de Vargas of Jerez; his son Juan José (1759);²⁸ Juan Joseph (1731), and his father, Juan, Gitano "according to declaration of the mother", María, *jítana*. Pedro de la Peña, (fieldworker, 40 years old on the census, probably son of a Juan de la Peña listed above and María Rosa), married Juana Monge.

Eventually, this family ran small businesses – butcher shops – extended credit to impoverished neighbours, Gitano and *payo*, and were able to support other branches of their extended family. "My grandfather was a butcher, my great-grandfather was a butcher, my great-great-grandfather was a butcher...we've been integrated for a long time" (I. Peña Vargas, personal communication, 2000).

Juan José de la Peña (1759 above) is listed as *cortador en las carnicerías* (cutter in the slaughterhouse). Juan de la Peña Flores (1804), grandson of Pedro de la Peña and Juana Monge, and son of Josef Peña Monge (age seven on the census, a fieldworker with his brothers) and Juana Flores Carrasco, all born in Lebrija, is listed as a *meat-cutter* in the baptismal file of his son Sebastián Peña Ximénez (1852). Sebastián, possibly first of the 'Funi' lineage, had for many years the only butcher shop in Lebrija. Sebastián's brother, Benito Peña Ximénez (Lebrija, 1838) was also a butcher who moved to neighbouring Utrera. Benito's granddaughter says: "My father was born in Lebrija... since all of them were all butchers, my grandfather went to Utrera" (F. Peña Vargas, as cited in Martín Martín, 1987). The 'all of them' are male relatives, implying

²⁵ Anecdotal evidence suggests that over time the proportion of marriage with close kin has been decreasing while intermarriage has increased.

²⁶ Spaniards use first the father's surname, remaining consistent, then the mother's, changing with each generation. Occasional order reversal confuses matters. Grandparents (i.e., both surnames) are first included in baptisms in the 1750's.

²⁷ The church file is illegible. Peña Narváez reads María Vega, we believe it is María Rosa, who appears in later files married to Juan de la Peña.

²⁸ These birth dates are according to Leblon 2017, but do not appear in the church files.

a move to the larger town of Utrera for professional and economic reasons, leaving butchering in Lebrija to the Funi's, a typical strategy of territorial and economic distribution to avoid conflict between family branches, with other Gitano families or with local populations (Pérez de Guzmán, 1981; San Román, 1976; Sutherland, 1986; and Sway, 1988). According to informants' comments and the documents available²⁹, Lebrija's Gitanos have always lived dispersed among the general populace; there has never been a Gitano neighbourhood.

Fernando Peña Soto (Lebrija, 1863 or '64–1930), "Pinini", son of Benito Peña Ximénez, grew up, married and spent his adult life in Utrera, but was born and died in Lebrija like most of his forebears. Substantial biographical information in flamenco studies makes him a useful point of departure to discuss the family³⁰.

Pinini's ancestors declared their occupation as field labour; family memories and local lore tell us they were also butchers and *tratantes de bestias* (livestock traders). Specifically prohibited and not listed in the census, *el trato* ('dealing') was a lucrative trade, considered, like blacksmithing, an elite occupation among the Gitanos. "Livestock traders tended to have contact with the most outstanding inhabitants or families of each locale" (Carmona, 2004: 40). The transition from dealing cattle to slaughtering and selling the meat appears to have been an important step from economic success to social acceptance – from mere "insertion" to integration³¹.

Leblón observes "butchering is almost a specialty of the Gitanos in the province of Cádiz" (2017: 47), as did Augustu Jiménez in 1853:

In Cádiz ... they differentiate themselves from the other provinces, ... a certain class of them dress very decently and can be confused with the aristocracy. They have some of their own houses and butcher-shops ('establecimientos de carne') since they are the ones who work in the slaughterhouse and then sell [the meat]. There are many who are fair-skinned, and they rub elbows with the most decent families. They are butchers, slaughterers and others are traders of livestock, bullfighters.... The women sell the tripe of the beef in the taverns and others fry blood sausage which they make themselves. Finally, in this city and in some villages of its province they are the most civilized and have the best fortune (Jiménez, 1853: 8).

²⁹ The data is limited, but the few baptismal files which show address are scattered through the town, not centred in one area.

³⁰ The first of this "lineage", and creator of the flamenco song style '*Cantiñas de Pinini*,' many of his descendants became important flamenco artists.

³¹ It is notable that in the 1784–85 censuses, there are 23 Gitano butchers in the provinces of Seville and Cádiz versus 10 in Granada (Leblón, 2017). The terms used are *carnicero*, *tablajero*, *jifero* or *cortador de carne*. There is one in Badajoz and one in Córdoba. It is suggested that for "*cortadores de carne*" in Granada, it was a seasonal trade (Leblón, 2017: 48).



The Peña family history fits this description, showing growth of wealth and status, even owning property, aided by mutual support of a traditional extended family. Linked by blood and marriage over generations, most of the men worked in the slaughterhouse, had butcher stalls in the market or ran butcher shops; the women cooked and sold organ meats. Collectively they established and maintained a certain economic level, leading to a higher educational level, relations of respect with non-Gitanos and a self-identified sense of status: one piece of a process of incorporation into a local community that appears to have happened before and more extensively in parts of the Guadalquivir basin, such as the triangle of Jerez-Utrera-Lebrija, or the city of Seville, than elsewhere in Spain.

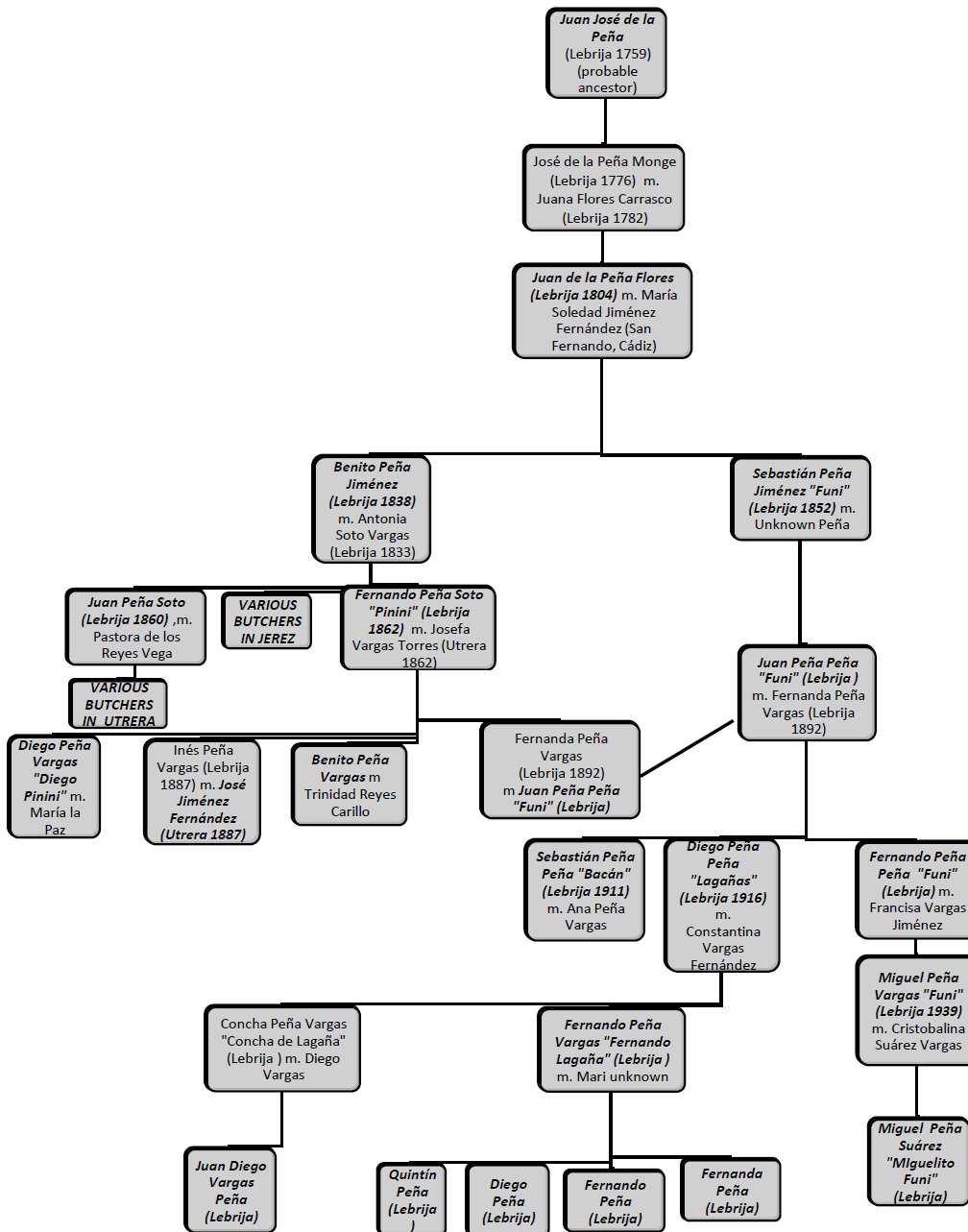
Of Pinini's fourteen siblings, at least one became a butcher in Utrera, others in Jerez (J. Peña Peña, M. Peña Peña, personal communication, 2001, 2021). Pinini worked in the slaughterhouse and butchered for wealthy families in Utrera. His local position, relation with these families and own sense of status is suggested in the following, possibly apocryphal but oft repeated, family tale:

Pinini arrived at the home of, "a man ...with servants and everything" to do the slaughtering. He asked for 'Pepito' (diminutive of José, familiar address to an equal, younger or less important person). The maid, offended, replied "you should call him Honourable Mr. José." Pinini replied: "Well, tell Honourable Mr. José that Honourable Mr. Pinini came to slaughter Honourable Mr. Pig" (Fernanda de Utrera, 1972, as cited in *Ellos los Protagonistas Dicen*).

Pinini's oldest son Diego, born mid-1880's, butchered for the Salesianos³² in Utrera, selling organ meats in the market. Pinini's second son Benito worked in the Lebrija slaughterhouse. His second cousin Juan Peña Peña, son of Sebastián 'Funi' who once had Lebrija's only butcher shop, married Pinini's youngest daughter Fernanda and brought her back to Lebrija to continue the family trade, as did all four of Juan Peña's sons and subsequent generations to the present day.

³² The Salesianos are a Catholic religious organization dedicated to devoted to the Christian education of youth. The school in Utrera was one of the first in Spain, opened in 1881, and continues to be important in the life of the town.

Figure 3. A dynasty of butchers. Butchers are in bold italics. The youngest generations are active as butchers at the time of publication. (Prepared by author 1)



Earning Respect

These often-simultaneous trades³³ – livestock-dealing, butchering for upper classes, small commercial establishments – were important steps toward gaining local respect, requiring social skills, personal abilities, and willingness to adapt to local norms: significant cultural capital in the process of integration.

Pedro Peña Fernández (Lebrija, 1939) whose grandfather Pedro Peña Sánchez ‘el Pelao’ also descends from Pinini’s ancestors Pedro Peña and Juana Monge, and whose aunt Ana Peña Vargas married Pinini’s grandson Bastián Bacán, says:

You will notice that we constitute, within the Gitanos of Europe and the world, a differentiated collective that due to, among other things, our sedentarism in this land for close to six centuries, we have brought about, together with our non-Gitano neighbours, the consolidation of a happy coexistence ... in order to do so, we have tempered and in other cases updated, ancient elements and contents of our own culture ... externally, in the area of social relations and conduct, apparently there are no great differences with our co-citizens (Peña Fernández, 2013: 16).

The following examples show relative importance given to education, cleanliness, elegance, and style, or the famous *qué dirán* (‘what will the neighbors say?’) or *vergüenza* (‘shame’) so important in the – non-Gitano – culture of Spanish towns (Pitt-Rivers, 1966)³⁴.

Fernando Peña Soto, ‘Pinini,’ was known for social charm. His oldest son, Diego Peña Vargas, had style and presence: “that was a Gitano, flamenco, but a gentleman. He would arrive in Seville and be noticed, with a white blouse, a white scarf around his neck, with that cape and that fedora hat. The young ladies would come out on the balconies to see him” (F. Peña Vargas, as interviewed in *Rito y Geografía del Cante Flamenco*, 1972). Information from photographs, though limited, is suggestive. One shows a handsome Diego wearing a conservative suit and jewelled tie pin – a typical bourgeois businessman. “That Gitano with such presence, always dressed to kill, with a scarf around his neck, very serious, but every bit a gentleman...” (Pinini, n.d.)

Another shows Pinini’s oldest daughter Antonia (Utrera, 1882) as a proper Andalusian woman, in contrast to the flowers, aprons, and embroidered shawls of stereotypically exotic Gitanas of the time (Pinini, n.d.): “an extremely clean woman... the most

³³ Sebastián Peña Peña, known as Bastián Bacán, traded livestock, butchered and sold the meat in the market, where his wife cooked and sold tripe.

³⁴ Roma traditions of both shame and cleanliness and do not always coincide with non-Gitano concepts. See Weyrauch, 2001.

scrupulous, the best gift for her was a bar of soap” (A. Vargas, personal communication, 2000).

When Antonia’s sister Mercedes sang a *saeta*, a lamenting song typical of Holy Week, on Antonia’s balcony, Antonia said: “dress well, pull your hair back severely so ... those who are going to see you don’t say that you are not my family” (M. Torres Peña, personal communication, 2000). Mercedes’ daughter said: “When your children go to school, you look at their heads... so that... since they are Gitanos, no one should think that they have head lice” (M. Torres Peña, personal communication, 2000).

Pinini’s descendants also were noted for education. Diego taught himself to read; Fernanda “had a gift of speech...without knowing how to read or write, well-educated gentlemen would come and say, how is it possible, how can this woman speak so well ... she didn’t say *mumá* and *popá* [local pronunciation] ... she said *papá* and *mamá*.” (J. Peña Reyes, personal communication, 2000). Pinini’s granddaughters’ ability to read and write stood out among flamenco artists in 1960’s Madrid (M. Torres Peña, personal communication, 2000).

Fernanda’s educated speech or Antonia’s concern with her sister’s appearance, a generation before Antonia’s niece (and daughter-in-law) Mercedes checks for head lice, could be seen as ‘politics of respectability’: accepting majority standards to avoid Gitano stereotypes, rather than resisting respectability³⁵. It is a controversial stance, yet the choice to ‘temper and... update’ which Peña Fernández describes is similar to choices made by African Americans “to face reality with clear eyes in order to fashion responses with any hope of success” (Kennedy, 2015). The Gitanos fashioned responses within the parameters of Andalusian culture, finding their own style of respectability.

Pinini’s was not the only family of wealthy Gitano livestock traders. His oldest daughter Antonia married the “Marquis” (so-called for his wealth and palatial home) of neighbouring Morón de la Frontera and raised fourteen children with a nursemaid to preserve her figure and maids for housework. Pinini’s third daughter Inés married a wealthy butcher in Utrera.

These marriages were advantageous for the whole family. Inés’ niece recalled: “my uncle José was so good he would put out a huge pot – they had ... so much food.” (M. Torres Peña, personal communication, 2000). Juan Peña Funi, married to Fernanda, “used to being the only butcher, gave away a lot of meat... My grandfather

³⁵ See Thède (2000) chapters 4 and 5 for similar examples.



couldn't see suffering, it was always, 'give this one this or give the other one that'" (I. Peña Peña, personal communication, 2000). "Very well placed and very respected" (Herrera Rodas, 1987), he frequented the *Casino* in Lebríja where the landlords gathered, even lending them money, thus winning respect, influence and power.

Wealthier family members also helped poorer ones with employment. One of Pinini's younger daughters and her children "had to do the washing in the house of my aunt, as a maid... when she was young... and her daughters too" (F. Peña Torres, personal communication, 2000). Antonia's husband hired family members in his house and to work the livestock he owned.

'El Pelao' also accumulated wealth through livestock trading. His daughter, married to Pinini's grandson Bastián, was brought up like a *señorita*, 'a little miss' (A. Peña Vargas, personal communication, 2000). At least one brother was a butcher in Jerez. In early 1900 his sons, rather than making the transition to butchering, traded commodities such as grains, wool, and olive oil. His son Bernardo had excellent political connections and prized education. More recently, Bernardo's son Pedro Peña Fernández (cited above) became a civil servant, author and Gitano activist as well as a flamenco guitarist and singer, awarded the *Premio Demófilo* (Fundación Antonio Machado) for his life and work; Bernardo's daughter became an award-winning producer of flamenco shows and radio programs. Their children are professionals with extensive formal education.

Flamenco

Peña Fernández's book quoted above is titled *Los Gitanos Flamencos*³⁶. The flamenco arts, key in the romantic Gitano stereotype, developed in the interface between Andalusian and Gitano traditions. Peña Fernández, other family members and many writers emphasise it as a major element of *Gitano identity*. "More than a natural mode of expression, it is the basis of their vision of the world" (Pasqualino, 1998: 11); it is "...how we express our forms of being and feeling" (Periáñez, 2019): a statement, in performance, of an ethnocultural identity that is largely kept inside.

"Our most differentiating and determining cultural trait...the conception and exteriorization of our own musics... an inheritance ... transmitted by our elders...impregnated with our life experiences... constitutes our surest bastion and

³⁶ The use of 'flamenco' for 'Gitano' is prior to the art form it has denoted since the 1860's (see Borrow, 1840; Lovera, 1980; Leblon, 2017 and "los privilegios"), probably referring to those who, as Peña describes, largely accepted rules laid out by the 1783 law, giving up external signs of identity in the interest of coexistence with their neighbours.

refuge...our strongest and most trusted symbol of identity” (Peña Fernández, 2013: 16).

As a marketable cultural artefact in flamenco’s mid-19th century “Golden Age”, flamenco was an economic resource; many Gitanos became professional artists. But as a “set of vernacular knowledge and skills, intangible patrimony of minority groups, from and with which meaning is constructed” (Periañez, 2016), in families such as the Peña’s, keeping the art private – inside – as opposed to ‘marketing’ it carried a subtle statement of social class within – and without – the Gitano community³⁷.

With improved social status and integration came acceptance of *payo* notions of *vergüenza* (shame), social class and judgements of performance as a profession (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). Talented members of the Peña family kept their artistry – a fundamental element of family gatherings – at home. Not until the tourist ‘boom’ of the 1960’s when flamenco became more generally respectable did family members become professionals, often against the wishes of older generations.

“There are Gitanos - and there are Gitanos” (I. Peña Vargas, 2008)

Kaprow (1982) describes “disreputableness”, “disarticulation from society” and Gitano resistance to respectability and assimilation. Gay y Blasco in Madrid says, “the Gitanos do share with other Gypsies four extremely significant traits: firstly, they prefer to engage in economic activities over which they themselves exert control; secondly, they are peripheral to the non-Gypsy social, economic and moral hierarchies; thirdly, they invest much effort on keeping themselves distinct from the non-Gypsies and they evaluate this difference in moral terms; and fourthly, they lack what can be called ‘permanent’ media through which to encode their identity” (1999: 173). Data in Lebrija suggests that, though Gay y Blasco’s first and fourth point hold true, the Peña family – and other similar families – have not been ‘peripheral to the non-Gypsy social, economic and moral hierarchies,’ nor have they ‘invested effort in keeping themselves distinct from the non-Gypsies.’ Rather, their story demonstrates gradual stability and successful integration in trades, businesses, and agricultural labour. They appear to have gradually inserted themselves into the local working and middle classes, even intermarrying, seen as reputable community members by both Gitanos and local working classes. ‘Economic activities over which they themselves exert control’ allowed the family economy to reinforce the group while integrating, a process in which cultural reproduction intersects with insertion into the local

³⁷ A detailed discussion of the connection between historical integrative processes and the emergence of Flamenco is beyond the scope of this paper but is a topic worthy of further research.



economy. Gay y Blasco and Kaprow are not wrong, but what is true of the Gitanos they studied (Zaragoza and Madrid) does not necessary hold for others³⁸.

Gitanos in Zaragoza “avoid patron-clientage except for desultory relations with the police” (Kaprow, 1978a: 168), yet anecdotes described above or relationships of agricultural workers with landowners (see Zatania, 2007) show precisely this kind of relationship. The Gitanos of Lebrija may combine trades to survive, but do not tend to work in the underground economy, selling scrap metal or in flea markets. The butchers did not have “a moveable place of business” or “raise livestock for butchers”, but became the butchers themselves, in slaughterhouse or market.

Gitanos develop a range of responses to circumstances, complicating attempts to define Roma ethnicity (Stewart, 1982: 418–425). Details of intermarried families from Seville and Cádiz differ from, for example, *those* from Extremadura in Seville housing projects (Pachón, 2013), antique dealers in the Madrid flea market, slum dwellers on the outskirts of Madrid (Gay y Blasco, 1999), in Zaragoza (Kaprow, 1982) or in Barcelona (San Román, 1997). The differences have roots in origins, historical and geographical trajectory, trades and interactions with the local host community. Choices made in response to local circumstances in turn influence opportunities and results in the process of integration.

Conclusion

This family history illustrates some aspects of this process; throughout Spain (Lagunas, 2010) there are stories with different specifics but similar trajectories. This does not negate difficulties Gitanos still face, but the prevalence of a discourse of exclusion has masked internal details of their history, reinforcing limited and negative stereotypes.

Minorities face choices, however limited, in accepting or rejecting majority norms. The dominated may assume representations of the dominant (Ortner, 2006; Vargas Rubio, 2019); Roma may behave like *payos*, or not. Whether they resist by attempting to ignore nation-building systems – homogenization, sedentarization, administrative

³⁸ For example, Kaprow (1982) cites refusal of 18th century authorities to allow Gitanos in the military and says no Gitanos served in the Spanish Civil War. Yet there was voluntary Gitano participation in subduing the Moriscos and in Flanders in the 1600's (Lovera, 1980; Martínez, 2016). At least two Gitanos are listed as soldiers in the 1784-85 census (Leblón, 2017) while anecdotal evidence from Lebrija and neighboring towns provides ample evidence of Gitanos' participation in the Civil War. See, for example, *El pueblo gitano español en las Revoluciones y Guerras Civiles (siglos XIX y XX)* (Manuel Martínez Martínez, Circulo Rojo, 2021) or *Historia del pueblo gitano. Siglos XIX-XX. 1ª parte*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pWxiUeWsE_8, 25:60

registers, etc. (Piasere, 1999: 52) – or adapt, they are affected by these systems in their cultural reproduction. To idealize and romanticize cultural purity hides this fact.

In the “gypsification” of their world, Gitanos reconvert materials, ideas, and objects with meaning in the *payo* world (Piasere, 2011; Gomes, 1998) into cultural heritage which then belongs only partially to those from whom they borrowed, as in mourning traditions (Williams, 2003) or the flamenco arts. In their self-managed selection of cultural loans (Piasere, 1991: 30–31) there are degrees of appropriation of majority culture (Williams, 1984: 435). For the Gitanos of Lebrija, due to policies of forced assimilation, the local cultural and socio-economic landscape and individual choices, this reformulation included a large degree of acceptance and adaptation to the majority so that “externally, in the area of social relations and conduct, apparently there are no great differences with our co-citizens” (Peña Fernández, 2013: 16). Their codes of symbolic separation from the *payo* world have not entirely disappeared, but are subtle, varied, differently enacted depending on circumstances and carried inside. They identify as Gitano but may not display their identity for the outside world³⁹.

The terrible history⁴⁰ the documents reveal has clear repercussions: “there were two ways: ‘throw yourself in the river to drown, or confront ... the reality and say, ‘well, here we have to adapt ... in order to survive’... without stopping being Gitanos” (José, 41 years, Gitano from Lebrija, as cited in Thède, 2000: 90). In the Andalusian social physiognomy, Gitano creativity and capacity to adjust allowed many to make choices with positive repercussions. Though other Gitanos may consider Andalusians ‘less Gitano,’ most themselves seem to feel: “our behaviour was quite reasonable and right” (Thède, 2000: 90). It is one of many Gitano or Roma histories that need recognition - not because of their problems, but because of the ways in which they have dealt with them; not the ways that they are not Gitano but rather the ways they are. This article is intended as one step in that direction.

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³⁹ Except, perhaps, in their interpretation of the flamenco arts.

⁴⁰ See Martínez Martínez, Sanchez Ortega, San Román among others.



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