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(EX) SLAVE IDENTITIES SHAPED BY JOURNEYS ABROAD: AFRICAN-AMERICAN FREDERICK DOUGLASS IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND ROMANIAN RROMA SLAVE DINCĂ IN GHEORGHE SION'S EMANCIPAREA ȚIGANILOR

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Abstract: *The paper proposes a comparison between two important 19th century figures of the abolitionist movements, one in America and the other in Romania, whose personalities and identities were shaped by a journey to England and to France, respectively. Frederick Douglass, arguably the most famous slave of his time, who ran away and successfully escaped slavery, wrote three autobiographies, and became both an accomplished orator and an anti-slavery activist in the U.S. This paper will deal with his first two autobiographies, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave. Written by Himself¹ (1845) and My Bondage and My Freedom¹ (1855). The first was written before his visit to England, while the second was composed after his visit. His final work, Life and Times of Frederick Douglass: the Complete Autobiography (1892) lies beyond the scope of this essay. Dincă, a Rroma² slave said to have contributed to the abolitionist movement in Romania, is the subject not of his own autobiography but of one written by Gheorghe Sion, a Moldavian writer. The first part of my paper will analyze how the two slaves perceived themselves before their trips to England and France respectively, two European abolitionist countries. The second part deals with what happened to each of them in Europe, and after that, in their home countries.*

¹ This title will further appear as *My Bondage*

² I use the word "Rroma" in the title and in my comments, because it is the way this community calls itself today. I use the word "Gypsy" for the characters and fragments in the story, because this is how they were called by Romanians at the time of writing.