«A sanguine bunch». Regional identification in Habsburg Bukovina, 1774-1919
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PART II –BUKOVINIANS

1.1 Introduction

If there is one truism about Habsburg Bukovina’s society, it is the one related to ‘inter-ethnic harmony and tolerance’. Every author dealing with the crownland’s history has either confirmed or only carefully challenged this image. As such, the fundamental question whether such clear notions of ethnic and national consciousness existed among the population at large is thus ignored: in order to respect and tolerate the other, the awareness of ‘otherness’ must first be present. There is little doubt that such awareness spread with the increase of ethno-nationalist influences in the second half of the nineteenth century, but it is far from self-evident that differentiation along national lines was common practice before that time. By acknowledging ‘inter-ethnic harmony’, scholars consciously or subconsciously apply nationalist terminology and find themselves in a circular argument: First they divide the Bukovinian population into ethno-national groups and then conclude that these groups lived together in peace and harmony.

Next, Bukovinian ‘inter-ethnic harmony’ is generally explained by the multitude of ethno-national groups and the lack of a clear majority which forced them to work together. This way, the Bukovinian situation is often favourably compared to other parts of Habsburg Austria where the political landscape was dominated by two competing national groups (German vs. Italian in Tyrol, German vs. Czech in Moravia etc.). A major problem in this respect is the narrowing of the focus group, since the ‘groups’ referred to here are in fact only nationalist politicians and activists primarily based in the regional capital(s). The majority of the population said to have been ‘inter-ethnically harmonious’ is thus not taken into account. Second, it remains to be seen if a certain dichotomy was not present in Habsburg Bukovina as well. In order to recognise the two groups in question, a ‘colonial’ reference point may be more useful than traditional ethno-nationalist labeling: Bukovina-born novelist Gregor von Rezzori saw Bukovina as a colony of the Habsburg Empire in his autobiographical novel The Snows of Yesteryear and an increasing number of scholars share ‘the concept of an internal colonialism in the Habsburg Empire’. Indeed, the characteristics of ‘the periphery as an internal colony’ seem in many respects applicable to the way the Austrian Empire incorporated Bukovina:

2 See for instance Rychlo 2006, p. 28.
3 Glajar, Valentina, The German Legacy in East Central Europe as Recorded in Recent German-Language Literature, Camden House, Columbia 2004, p. 16.
...domination by a ‘racially’ and culturally different foreign conquering group, imposed in the name of a dogmatically asserted racial, ethnic, or cultural superiority, on a materially inferior indigenous people. (...) High status occupations tend to be reserved for those of metropolitan culture; while those of indigenous culture cluster at the bottom of the stratification system.⁴

Whereas the Austrian authorities cannot be said to have had any kind of ‘racial’ or ‘ethnic’ agenda in Bukovina, Viennese circles clearly cherished a ‘dogmatically asserted cultural superiority’.

The way mass immigration to Bukovina was encouraged deepened the divide between ‘metropolitan’ and ‘indigenous’ culture. Only when political nationalism started to dominate the regional discourse, Vienna-oriented ‘metropolitans’ were subdivided into ‘Germans’ and ‘Jews’, and the ‘indigenous’ into ‘Romanians’ and ‘Ruthenians’. These four were the largest in Bukovina (next to smaller groups of Lippovans, Magyars, Armenians, Poles and more) and represented in Bukovinian politics on a specific national ticket. The following paragraphs will argue that the ethno-national classification of Bukovinians as ‘Germans’, ‘Jews’, ‘Romanians’, ‘Ruthenians’ and so on is less ‘natural’ and obvious than is generally assumed in scholarly (and less scholarly) publications. No matter how bitter the enmity, Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists found each other in their rejection of those they called ‘the foreigners’: in 1903, Ruthenian nationalist Bukovyna depicted Germans and Poles as the ‘hereditary enemies’ (Erbfeinde) of the ‘natives’ (Autochtonen) and thus sided with their traditional Romanian adversaries in this context.⁵ When Orthodox priest Georgiu Pauliuc asked Metropolitan Repta in 1908 to be transferred from his ‘hardship post’ in the village of Kırlibaba/Mariensee, he emphasised not only how he had battled ‘for religion and [the Romanian] nation’, but also mentioned that he had established a Romanian-Ruthenian class in the local school, since ‘the Romanian language had unjustly not been taught so far while Ruthenian risked to be eliminated altogether by German through the German-Jewish force’.⁶ That same year, in an article titled ‘How the Foreigners Treat Us’, the fact that Czernowitz schoolchildren were supposed to sing in German at the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Emperor’s accession to the throne angered Romanian nationalist Apărarea Neamului ‘because the children of the Romanians and Ruthenians greatly outnumbered those of the Germans and Jews’.⁷ The polarisation ‘native/ non-native’ can also be found in more recent Romanian studies which view the centennial commemoration of the Austrian annexation of

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⁵ Ruthenen und Rumänen, Czernowitz Tagblatt, 04.03.1903, p. 1.

⁶ “Deaceea respectuos subsemnatul (…) a exoperat şi’n Cărlibaba succese vitale pentru confesiune şi naţiune, înfiinţând anul trecut 1907 o clasă paralelă română-ruteană în școala din loc, unde limba română cu nedreptul n’a existat nică ca obiect până atunce, eară ceea ruteană era în pericol de a fi eliminată definitiv prin forţa germano-evrească de limba germană”. Pauliuc, Georgiu, Cătră Înalt Prea Sântitul Archiepiscopul şi Mitropolitul Dr. Vladimir de Repta în Cernăuţi 10 September 1908/ DJAN Suceava, Fond ‘Mitropolia Bucovinei’, secţia 14/1, dosar 56.

⁷ Cum ne bagă în samă străinii, Apărarea Neamului – organ politic-poporal-creștin, 24.05.1908, p. 41.
Bukovina in 1875 first and foremost as an event meant for the Jews/Germans (evoeogermanii) and thus imply that the ‘real’ Bukovinians had little reason for celebration.\(^8\)

As will be argued, there is more reason to distinguish ‘natives’ and ‘newcomers’ than the resentment felt by some towards those they regarded as cultural imperialists alone. The elements ‘language’ and ‘religion’ play a central role in this respect.

### 1.2 Structure

First, the diverse images as they emerged during the Habsburg years will be examined, taking into account the variety of authors and their backgrounds. The focus will then shift to Bukovinians. Terminology like ‘Romanians’, ‘Ruthenians’, ‘Germans’ etc. will be avoided, since it all too often follows national leaders in regularly using the same vocabulary for nationally conscious and unconscious individuals, and thus minimises the distinction.\(^9\) Or, as Brubaker puts it, ‘the beliefs, desires, hopes, and interests of ordinary people cannot be inferred from the nationalist (or other) utterances of politicians who claim to speak in their name’.\(^10\) In order to keep the distinction visible, ‘Romanian nationalists’ will be used as opposed to ‘Romanian speakers’. Obviously, all observations are reflected here within their respective context. Bukovinians, the ‘specters’, are depicted as they were seen by ‘spectors’ of very different natures and backgrounds and will include characterisations by ‘others’ (hetero-images) as well as auto-images.\(^11\)

In paragraph 2.1, the focus will lie on how the traditional ‘indigenous elements’ of Bukovina, the Romanian speakers and the Ruthenian (Ukrainian) speakers appeared to outsiders, Austrian observers, fellow Bukovinians and each other. Whereas many observers resort to the use of ‘ethnotypes’ (Romanian, Ruthenian), paragraph 2.2 aims to show that other categorisations appeared more frequently than nationalists from either side like to admit. In paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4, ample attention will be devoted to the central institution of the ‘autochthonous’ population which developed into a bone of contention once Ruthenian and Romanian nationalisms clashed: The Orthodox Church.

Four short biographies of prominent Bukovinians then serve to illustrate their ambiguous ‘ethnicity’, although it did not keep some of them from becoming ardent nationalists on either side.

From paragraph 3.1, the focus of attention will be on the ‘newcomers’ with a German cultural orientation. Although Jews - and not in Bukovina alone - were traditionally often ‘singled out’ as a group, they formed in many respects a collective with those whose self-proclaimed leaders would in days of intensified nationalism isolate themselves as ‘ethnic’ or ‘Christian’

\(^11\) Beller and Leerssen 2007, p. 27.
Germans. The common feature of the German language and culture will be analysed more closely, while anti-Semitism on popular and political level - so often claimed to be either non-existent or insignificant in Habsburg Bukovina - will be examined.

1.3 Early travel accounts

Early travel accounts provide interesting views on the newly acquired Austrian territory of Bukovina. In contrast to the more or less politically motivated reports or essayist works as discussed in the literature survey, they offer no lengthy analyses, but rather snapshot impressions of the situation young Bukovina found itself in. In 1808, German physician and journalist Friedrich Lindner in the Vienna-published *Vaterländische Blätter*, despaired that out of respect for humanity alone one must assume that also the Bukovinian has the ability to be good, even when there is no other evidence available. But the example of the truly respectable Lippovans and the fact that the history of Moldavia has preserved the memory of several outstanding rulers vouch, it seems to me, for the foundation of intrinsic goodness in these people as well. (...) It is desirable that unbiased observers also impart traits of noble-mindedness of which the Bukovinian is capable; they will always find a place on these pages. (...) Then again, it cannot be denied that the people are still deeply immersed in barbarism and that ruggedness, robbery and immorality hold sway over them.12

A group of Scottish ministers on their way back from the Holy Land gathered similar impressions of Bukovinan morality some thirty years later, when they ended up in Sereth:13

In the inn where we rested, many were coming and going, and we had a painful view of the immoral state of the people. When they heard that we were English, they said, “Ah, they have the same noses and eyes that we have!” Many were intoxicated; and one old man came up to us, and made a long apology, stating that the funeral of a wealthy resident had taken place that day, which had occasioned the revelry, and hoping that we would not carry away an unfavourable report, as Austrians were generally given to this vice.14

More than the described alcohol-induced festivities it seems relevant to note here that a local resident felt obliged to apologise for the situation, apparently aware of the bad press ‘wild Bukovina’ had received so far in Austria proper.

Simultaneously, travel writers did not save their harsh criticism for the ‘natives’ alone: Johann Georg Kohl, who crossed the border from Russia into Austrian Bukovina in 1844, portrayed the Austrian customs officials as both bureaucratic and corrupt:

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13 In 1839, two ministers of the Free Church of Scotland, Bonar and McCheyne, together with two older ministers, Dr. Alexander Black and Dr. Alexander Keith, were sent to Palestine on a mission of inquiry to the condition of the Jews. Upon their return, their official report for the Board of Mission of the Church of Scotland was published as *Narrative of a Visit to the Holy Land and Mission of Inquiry to the Jews*.
The boundaries of Bukovina are surrounded with a threefold Cordon, and we were obliged to pass through so many offices, custom-houses, and inspection-houses, that I could not number all the stamps, seals, marks, and signatures which were put on our luggage. But the worst of all was, that all our books and papers were sent to the Hofrath at Tshernovitze, who, instead of returning them, sent them to the authorities at Lemberg, who serving us in the same way, sent them finally to the higher authorities at Vienna. On these frontiers we were incessantly obliged to ransom ourselves from further importunity, with Zwanzigern. “Sir, you have still two cigars and a half there”. “Hold your tongue, and here's a Zwanziger for you!” - “What papers are those? They must go with the rest”. “Never mind, here are a couple of Zwanzigern”. - “And these boxes, have they been searched?” “Yes, take these three Zwanzigern”. What can the Russians think of the good old German honesty and truth, of which they are so fond of talking, when they contemplate these frontiers? Yet all the officers at the boundary line are Germans.15

With his final remark the author, a native from Bremen, revealed that his mindset was already influenced by ethnic nationalism. In this sense, it is not surprising that he was also sensitive to displays of other nationalist sentiments. Kohl’s comments indicate that Daco-Romanian nationalism was already spreading in Cisleithania before the revolutionary year of 1848.

Our evening companions interested us far more than our dinner society. They were two well-educated young Moldavians in the Austrian service, and were enthusiastic patriots. They told us many stories and legends of the golden age of their country, of the Moldavian, or, as they said, ‘Daco-Roman’ mythology, and of Stephen the Great, and other heroes of Moldavia. We had never before seen Moldavian patriots; and like many other ignorant people, we did not even know there was such an article as Moldavian patriotism. To our surprise we now encountered it everywhere, and met many people even in Lemberg, glowing with tender enthusiasm for the great days of the Dacian Empire, under Decebalus the Great. Dacia is now surrounded with mighty and powerful neighbours, which do not permit its nationality to obtain a free voice. The country has been torn up and partitioned quite as much as Poland, but it obtains less general sympathy, because its situation is not generally known, and yet the Moldavians, Walachians, Bessarabians, and Bukovinians are men - nay more, they are countrymen, fellow-citizens, and patriots.16

Although the depicted omnipresence of Romanian nationalism seems unlikely for the time, the author emphasised that it existence was not known to him so far: he more or less stumbled over the phenomenon. Moreover, the case described here deals with two ‘well-educated’ men ‘in the Austrian service’. The Imperial military and civil services provided men from all over the Monarchy with the occasion par excellence to meet and to get acquainted with new ideas. Kohl’s evening companions might have been from Transylvania, the cradle of Romanian political national awareness, or influenced by Transylvanians. In Kohl’s earlier depictions of travels in the region, he had dealt extensively with the exotic nature of the Hutsul mountain tribes, however without mentioning Ruthenians as such. As clearly as Romanian nationalism

16 Ibid, pp. 429-430.
confronted him a few years later, the mere existence of a large Slavic population seemed to have escaped him a few years before.\footnote{\cite{Kohl1844}} His 1844 observations substantiate this hiatus. Kohl stated that ‘[the] extraordinary increase in the population may be partly owing to the influx of German emigrants, who have settled in the cities as merchants and mechanics, and of the Rusniaks, who are preferred to the native Moldavians as labourers’.\footnote{\cite{Kohl1844}, p. 426.} By deeming the Rusniaks/Ruthenians ‘immigrants’ and the Moldavians/Romanians ‘natives’, Kohl seemed once more to rely on the information he received from his Daco-Romanian nationalist sources. This presumption is supported further on by his claim that ‘Bukovina […] belonged mostly to the latter [Moldavians], for not only is the principal population Moldavian, which it has probably been from the remotest ages, the names of all the mountains and rivers in the country, being, with few exception, Moldavian, but both the physical circumstances and the social condition of the country, are the same as in the rest of Moldavia’.\footnote{\cite{Kohl1844}, p. 425.}

Back in 1808, Lindner had not gone into the existence of national distinction, but spoke generically of ‘Bukovinians’ when discussing the indigenous population and deemed it more useful for his travel account to differentiate according to religion, ‘since the names of the inhabitants of the different regions of Bukovina refer to the religious cults they belong to rather than to national diversity’.\footnote{“Die Bewohner der verschiedenen Gegenden der Bukowina haben verschiedene Nahmen, welche aber mehr die Religionssecten, zu welchen sie gehören, als einen Nationalunterschied bezeichnen, daher ihre Beschreibung in den folgenden Abschnitt gehört”. Lindner 1808, p. 280.} An excerpt of a travelogue sent by the Governor’s Office in Czernowitz to the Viennese Minister of Internal Affairs in 1855 acknowledged national distinctions, but only seemed to take the Poles seriously in this respect:

> The Polish [nation], which produced in name the Ruthenian one in 1848, is the most advanced in Bukovina and sprawls into the bordering Russian governorate towards Odessa. (...) The other nationalities, to whom the Romanians and Ruthenians belong, find themselves in a certain apathy caused by the absence of an educated class, and their ambitions are harmless.\footnote{\textit{Auszug aus einem Reiseberichte}, Zl. 2158 Pr. I, 9 June 1855/ ANR, Fond ‘Guvernământul Bucovinei’, MI, mapa 71/1.}

This apparent national apathy seems to have been less prevalent in religious matters. In 1808, Lindner enthused over conversion opportunities as a way of enhancing the state:

> European missionaries go to China and California, why should we not want to move within our shared home country to where the light of reason burns gloomily and where we could conquer new provinces for the state within the country through the education of rude peoples?\footnote{Lindner 1808, pp. 283}

Almost fifty years onwards, the Governor’s Office in Czernowitz decidedly discouraged any attempt the Viennese authorities might have considered to change the religious configuration

\footnote{\cite{Kohl1844}}
\footnote{\cite{Kohl1844}, p. 425.}
\footnote{“Die Bewohner der verschiedenen Gegenden der Bukowina haben verschiedene Nahmen, welche aber mehr die Religionssecten, zu welchen sie gehören, als einen Nationalunterschied bezeichnen, daher ihre Beschreibung in den folgenden Abschnitt gehört”. Lindner 1808, p. 280.}
\footnote{\textit{Auszug aus einem Reiseberichte}, Zl. 2158 Pr. I, 9 June 1855/ ANR, Fond ‘Guvernământul Bucovinei’, MI, mapa 71/1.}
\footnote{Lindner 1808, pp. 283}
of Bukovina and concluded that ‘evangelism is hitherto not conceivable, and in the event that such would gain ground, it would be certain that the peasantry would oppose landlords and clergy. So it was that when the priest brought forth something incomprehensible from the pulpit, the country people denounced the incident’. 23

Even before Bukovina had obtained its status as an autonomous crownland in 1848, travelers, as travelers naturally do, drew comparisons with the neighbouring territories they had visited. Bonar and McCheyne qualified Bukovinian cottages ‘more comfortable than those of Moldavia’, and the aspect of the country ‘more civilised’. 24 Joseph Rohrer, a former police inspector who worked as a statistics professor in Lemberg and Olmütz/Olomouc, wrote in 1804 how Bukovina appeared to him as an island of civilisation compared to Moldavia, Transylvania and Galicia. He also considered the radical population increase and its ethnic mix as beneficial for Bukovina’s development. 25 Kohl on the other hand found that the ‘villages had undergone little change, and both the peasants and their dwellings resembled exactly those of other Moldavian villages’, 26 but he noticed a difference in the country estates and larger towns, bearing ‘some resemblance to the smaller towns of Germany’ while the Moldavian towns on Russian soil ‘still preserved their Turko-Moldavian character, and had lost none of their Oriental features’. 27 Clearly, to Kohl Bukovina could easily stand comparison not only to Moldavia/Bessarabia, but to Galicia as well:

Coming from the valleys of Bessarabia, and the shapeless, disorderly towns of Podolia, the sight of this handsome and pleasant town seemed to us a glimpse into another world, and so it certainly was. The crossing of the frontier line between the Russian and Austrian territories seemed at once to have brought us some hundred of versts nearer to Germany, Vienna, Berlin, nay, even to Paris, Spain and Italy. 28

Kohl expressed his appreciation for provincial capital Czernowitz in similar terms and whereas Bonar and McCheyne had sufficed to see Czernowitz as ‘a pleasant town, with streets wide, well aired, and clean’, 29 Kohl commented that ‘the whole west of Europe seemed before their eyes’, 30 that the ‘Moldavian huts and cabins had disappeared from around it, and the whole was built of stone’ and how ‘good roads and avenues of poplars and linden trees led

23 Auszug aus einem Reiseberichte, Zl. 2158 Pr. I, 9 June 1855/ ANR, Fond ‘Guvernământul Bucovinei’, MI, mapa 71/1.
24 Bonar/McCheyne 1839, p. 428.
26 Kohl 1844, p. 428.
27 Ibid. In both publications, the identifier Moldavian seems to refer to the ethnicity/language of the population concerned, while Moldavia is reserved for Bessarabia, the Russian part of historical Moldavia.
28 Ibid. p. 429.
29 Bonar/McCheyne 1839, p. 481.
30 As observed by Corbea-Hoișie, Kohl thus creates a formula that from then on will adhere to the image of Czernowitz and Bukovina more or less consistently until well into the 1920s. (Corbea-Hoișie, Andrei, Czernowitzer Geschichten - Über eine städtische Kultur in Mittelosteuropa, Böhlau, Wien/ Köln/ Weimar 2003, p. 18.
to the pretty and cheerful houses which formed the suburbs’. He considered these achievements clearly Austrian. In his earlier work he had echoed the opinion of one of his sources that ‘Czernowitz had only acquired this importance since the Austrian occupation, because before nothing of interest was to be found there apart from some beautiful Jewish women’. Not only did he admire the well-kept, Austrian image of Czernowitz, he also saw the town as a crossroads of culture and trade:

We found the town busy, cheerful and lively. Little as the rest of Europe knows of Tshernowitz, yet the little place enjoys a great reputation, far and wide around, for excellent wares, good cakes, and merry festivals, and whenever the Russian public officers of Chotim, Kamenyecz, and other neighbouring villages, wish to enjoy themselves for a little while, they get leave of absence, and come to Tshernovitz for a few days, to drink the good wines of Hungary, and buy pretty trinkets for their wives. Nowhere are Russian and German life brought into such close neighbourhood, and such striking contrast with one another, as here. (...) The inns were full of life and bustle. There was a long table-d’hôtel, at which Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Armenians, Jews, and Walachians, mingled together.

Leon Gerbel wrote in the Viennese periodical Der Humorist that intellectual life in the city aimed to keep pace with cosmopolitan modernisation:

A social reading and conversation club under the name Casino has been established and encloses the élite of the Czernowitz public. Hence a new era of social conditions commences and with the mutual exchange of ideas, the most beautiful fruit is to be expected for the future. That is why our city, which increases each year in size and expansion, will measure up to other provincial capitals with regard to the inner content of its art-loving residents.

While emphasising the multi-ethnic contrasts of Czernowitz, Kohl had also pointed at the apparent harmony which prevailed in the region between different groups. Lindner, with his preference to divide Bukovinian society in religious rather than ethnic subgroups, had already marveled at this phenomenon in the early years of the nineteenth century:

Bukovina presents the rare spectacle that of the biggest superstition alongside an almost boundless tolerance. (...) Rare cases aside, Catholics, Protestants, Armenians, Greeks, Lippovans, Abrahamites, Hutsuls, Jews and Mohammedans live here without hatred and persecution peacefully next to each other. Especially Catholics and Armenians, whose clergy even alternately lend religious robes to each other, get along well.

In the earlier mentioned 1855 travelogue, an observation was made which would continue to live on to this day as one of the lasting conclusions, if not truisms, regarding Bukovina’s much praised climate of multi-ethnic tolerance, stating that ‘the city of Czernowitz as well as Bukovina [as a whole] contain a conglomeration of nationalities, none of which is strong

31 Kohl 1844, pp. 428-429.
32 Kohl 1841, p. 13.
33 Kohl 1844, pp. 429-430.
35 Lindner 1808, p. 280.
enough to dominate the other’. Even more, the report stated that ‘maintaining public order is made easier since the different nationalities keep an eye on each other’.36