«A sanguine bunch». Regional identification in Habsburg Bukovina, 1774-1919
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PART III: ELEMENTS OF REGIONAL IDENTIFICATION: INSTITUTIONS, COMPETING LOYALTIES, IMAGES AND EVENTS

1 Introduction and Structure

1.1 Introduction

In the previous section alternatives were offered to the commonly applied notions of ‘multi-ethnic Bukovina’ and groupist ethno-centric thinking - the idea that society was strictly divided along ethno-national lines and, on top of this, that each member of these groups identified themselves to an equal extent with this nationality. The spotlight was put on views different from the nationalist kind, which so far have taken up all available space in historiography. As such, it was a ‘negative’ approach with the aim to bring forward what identification processes in Habsburg Bukovina had not produced: a universally accepted and strictly applied division according to nationality, each with their distinct languages and cultures. This was necessary to pave the way for a closer look at the ‘positive’ indicators of Habsburg Bukovinian identification: if nationalism’s claim to exclusivity cannot be upheld, other identifications need to be found and addressed. The focus will be on ‘Bukovinian’ and ‘Bukovinianness’ and on how these notions surfaced between 1848 and 1918. From the 1880s, the local press actively instrumentalised Bukovinian identity as an antidote against the backwardness they believed was caused by political fragmentation and nationalist infighting. Sometimes this identification appeared as historical treasure now replaced by nationalism, sometimes the other way around: as the sensible alternative once the nationalist phase had passed.1

Once Austrian Bukovina had ceased to exist, Greater-Romania with its centralist ambitions saw itself confronted with more regional particularity than it had bargained for. Iancu Flondor, born in Bukovina and for a while responsible for Bukovinian affairs in the government of united Romania, wrote in 1922 to his fellow-nationalist Dimitrie Bogos, a born Bessarabian assigned by Bucharest to deal with Bessarabian matters:

_Romania currently passes through a critical phase, for it is made up of four lands - although all populated by the same people but separated from each other for centuries - which have all developed in such a way that at the moment of their unification these four branches of our people do not represent a united culture as one would wish for in a homogeneous nation-state._

1 See for instance _Die Bukowina und die Bukowiner_, Bukowinaer Nachrichten, 08.05.1892, pp. 1-2; _Ostern 1910_, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 27.03.1910, p. 1.

2 “România, întregită din patru țări, deși toate populate de același neam, despărțiți însă prin secoli unii de alții, cari s’au desvoltat, fiecare în parte, astfel, că în momentul unirii lor aceste patru ramuri ale neamului nostru nu reprezintă o cultură unitară cum ar fi de dorit pentru populația unui stat național omogen, trece actualmente printr’o fază critică.” Flondor, Iancu, _Letter to Dimitrie Bogos_, Bucharest, 28 November 1922/ ANR, Fondul Familial 'Iancu Flondor', dosar 5, fasc. 25.
One only needs to think of the more obvious things Bukovinians had to abandon once the Austro-Hungary Dual Monarchy had collapsed to be able to imagine what Flondor had referred to in his letter: loyalty to the previous Emperor and Empire; the privileged position of the German language and its strongest symbol, the Franz Joseph University; a regional diet as well as regional representation in the capital. These elements, previously dominant in Bukovinian culture (and thus, to use a term coined by Brubaker, ‘masked’), were no longer taken for granted and suddenly seemed to represent cornerstones of a vanished - or vanishing - society and deserve a more detailed analysis. Naturally, it was not only their existence per se that made them into cornerstones of Habsburg Bukovinian society: the academic and political dynamism they provided enabled crucial actors to to take the scene, who in turn had a major influence on developments in the crownland.

Then there is the issue of multiple loyalties and multi-faceted identifications. Ruling out ethno-nationalism as the sole focus of identification in Bukovina cannot imply that it should be dismissed altogether: its presence must be acknowledged and seen in combination with other perceived identification factors.

Coming to the heart of the matter, after having looked into the relative but dominant presence of nationalism, the competing identifications among which the ‘Bukovinian’ one emerges as well, and after having zoomed in on institutions which - different from for example the Bukovinian Orthodox Church - were established during the years of existence of the autonomous crownland and which have played a decisive role in the development of crownland identification, the elements of the ‘Bukovinian regional discourse’ must be examined. Imagology might provide the necessary tools here, although the case of Bukovina poses some challenges to the ‘classical’ imagologist approach. To name the more obvious: imagology works primarily on literary representations and in this respect the source material on and from Austrian Bukovina is minimal. In order to extrapolate imagined characterisations and attributes with reference to Bukovina, researchers will find it more rewarding to consult the abundantly available press sources from the Habsburg era, particularly those from Bukovina proper. Voluminous as these sources may be compared to the modest size of Austrian Bukovina, one does encounter another limitation: that of the longue-durée: Strictly speaking, autonomous Bukovina existed only from 1848 until 1918 - one may even argue only from 1861 until 1914 - and as such offers a meager source of information where the formulation, perpetuation and dissemination of stereotypes is concerned. However, the systematic and frequent occurrence of the characteristics concerned justify an approach so far mostly connected to the study of national stereotypes.

Furthermore, it merits bringing into focus which dynamics were at work once Bukovinians were actively encouraged to present an image of their region and its inhabitants. At a time when parades, exhibitions, memorials and mass events had become important instruments of Selbstdarstellung, organising committees - naturally within the limits of what higher

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3 Brubaker et al. 2006, p. 19.
authorities deemed acceptable or suitable - had sets of existing ideas, stereotypes and expectations at their disposal, ready to be combined with elements promoting the image they wanted to convey.

1.2 Structure

In paragraph 2.1, an analysis of specifically Habsburg Bukovinian institutions logically starts at the very symbol of Bukovinian autonomy: its regional diet and, more indirectly, at Bukovina’s political representation in the Austrian parliament. Bukovinian political culture produced two phenomena which are consistently presented as the almost logical results of ‘inter-ethnic peaceful cooperation’: the multi-nationalist Freethinking Alliance and the Bukovinian Compromise. After the very matter of the notion of results of ‘inter-ethnic peaceful cooperation’ was questioned in Part II, it now becomes relevant to discuss what the actual intentions and significance of these initiatives were and why, in relation to them, Bukovina politicians never really managed to join forces in Vienna. A description of the institution therefore largely overlaps with a historical overview of political milestones.

Paragraph 2.2 will then look into the most powerful symbol the Austrian authorities established in Bukovina, the German-language Franz-Josef University of Czernowitz. As is the case with a number of strongholds related to the ‘Bukovinian myth’, the university has often been depicted as a centre of civilisation, tolerance and cordiality. This paragraph will highlight the interplay between pride and shame, between the university’s mission as a beacon of German culture and its inadequacy to be respected as a fully developed academic institution, between its role as an educator of peasants and a creator of an intellectual proletariat, between its image of multi-ethnic oasis and that of an importer and producer of nationalist fanaticism.

In the following paragraphs 3.1 to 3.5, Bukovinian loyalties will be further explored. Whereas Part II has dealt with nationalist and religious adherences, this section will examine how Bukovinians regarded their relations to the Austrian state, and, more prominently, the ruling Habsburg dynasty. The towering figure of Emperor Franz Joseph, whose reign overlapped almost exactly with the existence of autonomous Habsburg Bukovina, takes centre stage here. Cases of treason and the question of compatibility between loyalty to Empire and Emperor on the one hand and the different brands of nationalism on the other will be addressed here as well. Consequently, the relation between national(ist) and regional attachment will be scrutinised before the attention will be diverted to ‘Bukoviniannes’ exclusively: the concept of ‘a Bukovinian people’ and the priority some gave to the (political) regional agenda.

From paragraph 4 to 5.6, perceived characteristics of what was considered ‘typically Bukovinian’ will be investigated. First, the various elements of the ‘Bukovinian myth’, ‘Bukovinism’ and homo bucovinensis will be addressed. Then, in spite of the fact that many stereotypical elements mostly appeared in all sorts of combinations, an effort will be made to separate and list them and to take a closer look at when and by whom they were put to use. There were feelings of pride, but many of the attributes referred to insecurity and inferiority,
more generally towards ‘the West’ and more specifically towards Vienna and neighbouring Galicia. As a result of political developments these were increasingly combined with a defensive and protective attitude.

Those imagined perceptions of ‘Bukoviniannes’ were seldom as clearly accentuated as during highly profiled events which called for a Bukovinian representation. In paragraph 6.1 to 6.5, a number of anniversaries, exhibitions and other festivities will be discussed with a focus on the ‘Bukovinian’ elements which have so far been analysed: the myths, the competing identities, the stereotypes and attributes and the way the organisers of the respective occasions tried to either avoid or include those factors in the over-all image of Bukovina they attempted to create.