«A sanguine bunch». Regional identification in Habsburg Bukovina, 1774-1919

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In many sources, Habsburg Bukovina has obtained an almost mythical status which deserves attention. The denominator ‘Bukovinian myth’ and the related terms ‘Bukovinism’ and ‘homo bucovicensis’ are often applied but seldom defined. Romanian historian Ştefan Purici addressed ‘Habsburg Bukovinian mythology’ by dissecting three interwoven myths: that of Romanian versus Ukrainian exclusivity on the territory, that of the ‘oriental barbarity’ of the natives and that of the ‘civilising mission’ of Austria, which in turn is closely connected to the image of interethnic peace and tolerance. Lastly, Purici distinguished the myth of the creation of a homo bucovicensis and that of a solely benevolent approach of the major ethnic groups (Romanians and Ruthenians) by the Habsburg authorities, all of which need to be scholarly reviewed. Within the scope of this study, debates on Romanian and Ukrainian/Ruthenian exclusivity have been dealt with in Parts I and II. It is doubtful whether ‘the oriental barbarity of the natives’ can be branded a ‘Bukovinian myth’ or whether it must merely be seen as a metaphor for the exotic image of a borderland which gained steam by Franzos’ characterisation of ‘Semi-Asia’ as such.

Relevant here are Purici’s mythology subdivision ‘Vienna’s civilising mission’, ‘exemplary interethnic peace under Habsburg rule’ and the phenomenon of homo bucovicensis. Obviously intimately correlated, these elements combined might phrase the myth of Habsburg Bukovina as follows:

*Under the enlightened influence of Austrian monarchs Maria Theresa and Joseph II, the foundation was laid for a multicultural society in which the refining elements of Habsburg civilisation as well as ethnic and religious harmony eventually enabled the emergence of a loyal Austrian model citizen with a culturally German orientation, the homo bucovicensis.*

Though debated by many, the existence of the myth itself is questioned by few. It is stated that ‘the myth of the civilisation of Czernowitz and Bukovina as a territory which finally realised the union of the nations of the empire so much desired by Joseph II is a central theme of all works addressing the history of this region’ and that the myth of Czernowitz is firmly embedded in the collective memory of Central Europe. Its emergence is dated in the early 1800s: as mentioned in Part II, the phenomenon of interethnic tolerance in Bukovina was described already in 1808 by prominent journalist, author, philosopher and physician Friedrich Lindner. Small elites of linguistic and religious communities, and not to forget

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512 See Part I, paragraph 3: Literature Survey, and Part II, paragraph 2.1: Historical Claims.


514 Corbea-Hoisie 2004 (La Bucovine etc.), p. 44.

515 “Die Bukowina biethet das seltene Schauspiel dar, daß man hier den größten Aberglauben neben einer fast unbegrenzten Toleranz antriff. (…) Katholiken, Protestanten, Armenier, Griechen, Lippowaner, Abrahamiten, Huzzulen, Juden und Mahamedaner wohnen hier, seltene Fälle ausgenommen, ohne Haß und Verfolgungssucht
prominent authors such as Rose Ausländer and Paul Celan, safeguarded this image long after geopolitical realities had changed. As recent as 1974, Emanuel von Kapri concluded his memoirs with the statement that ‘there were only brothers in this land, older and younger, so to speak, with Germanity as primus inter pares’.  

As far as the creation of myths goes, Bukovina was not unique in the context of Habsburg regional history. Similar processes can be observed for other crownlands, such as neighbouring Galicia, ‘an Arcadia of polyethnic tolerance and exotic, but also of human poverty, especially influenced by the Hasidic attitudes to life and the religious rites which were perceived as foreign’. Although the two crownlands and their respective myths were obviously distinctive, there is also an overlap with regard to the aspect of ‘multicultural harmony’ or ‘polyethnic tolerance’. With both myths being for the greater part derivatives of a larger, encompassing Habsburg Austrian mythology, these common elements are hardly remarkable in the nature of things.

The Habsburg myth is most lastingly represented by the monumental ‘Kronprinzenwerk’, Crown Prince Rudolph’s initiative to launch a twenty-four volume illustrated guidebook of Austro-Hungary (“The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Words and Images”) which was published in German and Hungarian between 1886 and 1902. While the diversity of the Monarchy was emphasised, the mission of the Kronprinzenwerk was to overcome national strife by getting to know each other better. However, the fatherland it projected continued to be based on the premises of loyalty to a dynasty which happened to rule over a state with interesting benefits for those living in it. While distinguishing three key elements of Habsburg Austrian mythology, Italian Germanist Claudio Magris firstly identified

the myth of the ideal of a multiform community, yet unified in its plurality. Habsburg Austria is the basis of existence for many different peoples with different languages, with the German language assuming the role of liaison between these peoples and their respective languages. ‘Austria’ is the umbrella which unites the diversity of peoples under her protection. ‘Austria’

\cite{1}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Turczynski 1993, pp. 2-3.
\item Kapri 1974, p. 124.
\item Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild/ Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia írásban és képben, K. Graeser, Vienna/ A Magyar királyi államnyomda kiadása, Budapest/ 1885-1902.
\item Schedel, James, The Elusive Fatherland: Dynasty, State, Identity and the Kronprinzenwerk, in: Csáky, Moritz and Zeylinger, Klaus (ed.) Inszenierungen des kollektiven Gedächtnisses: Eigenbilder, Fremdbilder, StudienVerlag, Innsbruck 2002, p. 78.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
as a guarantor of friendship and understanding among the nations which are in principle alien to each other, this is the first component.

The Austrian press widely introduced the Austria-Bukovina analogy during the Habsburg era, although in terms of multicultural harmony observers clearly tended to prefer Bukovina to the often tumultuous Vienna. The analogy therefore often served to present peaceful Bukovina as a model for the entire Empire, an image readily adopted by Bukovinian politicians and journalists: suddenly, backwards and unknown little Bukovina provided the perfect showcase for the ‘pluralistic myth’ Vienna endeavoured to popularise.\textsuperscript{523}

Another motive of the Habsburg myth as presented by Magris is the enlargement of the myth of Vienna, which in the minds of the Austrians was the city of the Viennese waltz embodying enjoyment of life, good food and excessive drinking, the capital of the Habsburg land of milk and honey. In this respect, too, Bukovinian mythology followed the pattern and just like Bukovina was described as Little-Austria, Czernowitz was dubbed Little-Vienna\textsuperscript{524} and its inhabitants ‘Buko-Viennese’.\textsuperscript{525} The regional capital was often deployed by Bukovinians like Raimund Friedrich Kaindl as the cosmopolitan flagship of a small crownland in need of positive publicity in the Monarchy.

\begin{quote}
And so every stranger who came to Bukovina found it more beautiful than he had expected. For instance, the progress and prosperity achieved by Czernowitz and this way by the entire land is certainly huge. Proof enough for the cultural capacity and cultural needs of the population!\textsuperscript{526}
\end{quote}

This ‘enlargement of Czernowitz’ caught on and has continued to do so: in recent decades, scholarly attention in the field of literary studies and literary criticism has been focused almost exclusively on Czernowitz and its favourable cultural climate, home to internationally acclaimed authors such as Alfred Margul-Sperber, Paul Celan, Rose Ausländer and Joseph Burg.\textsuperscript{527} As reflected by the titles of numerous works devoted to Bukovina and its myth of multicultural tolerance, their authors actually mean Czernowitz exclusively when claiming to discuss Bukovina.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{523} See for instance \textit{Hetzapostel}, Bukowinaer Rundschau, 1168, 31.07.1892, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{524} \textit{Klein-Oesterreich}, Bukowinaer Rundschau, 3287, 05.04.1900, pp. 1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{525} ‘Buko-Wiener’, an untranslatable wordplay with the words ‘Wiener’ (Viennese) and ‘Bukowiner’ (Bukovinian). Corbea Hoisie attributes the term to the Czernowitz correspondent of \textit{Der Humorist} (Nr. 260, 1844) – Corbea-Hoisie 2003, p. 22.
\item \textsuperscript{526} Kaindl, R.F, \textit{Czernowitz und die Bukowina}, Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 14.01.1905, p. 3 (previously published in \textit{Oesterreichische Rundschau}).
\end{itemize}
Myths of collective existence, of citizenship that transcends ethnicity, provoke a response from their adversaries. In Habsburg Bukovina, any depiction of multiculturalism, polyethnicism or simply any form of societal tolerance not aimed specifically at emancipation on a national level was met with suspicion and criticism from (mainly Romanian) nationalists. It was argued that ‘the mixture of peoples inhabiting Bukovina lacked uniformity in its cultural direction’, while ‘settlers had flooded the country with foreign elements and had robbed it of its purely Romanian character’. More recent sources maintained that ‘such integration of Bukovina could not be accepted as a ‘model’ of prosperity and wealth’ and that ‘the growing discontent of the natives had ultimately led to the removal of the imperial administration and reunification with Romania - and on a general level to the collapse of the Empire and the formation of national, independent states’.

Nevertheless, Habsburg Bukovinian mythology was not challenged by nationalists alone. Even staunch defenders of the Austrian ‘civilising mission’ like Franzos had had to admit that the famous Bukovinian tolerance was nothing more than a condition determined by time, place and politically motivated necessity while the lack of one clear majority had forced all nationalities to find a modus vivendi. This view was groundbreaking neither in recent times nor in the days of Franzos, as is illustrated by the previously quoted report from 1855. It can also be called in question exactly to which extent the observation holds true for the population of Bukovina, since every societal phenomenon can be labeled ‘a condition determined by time and place’ and therefore does not provide useful new insights. That ‘tolerance’ can develop out of ‘politically motivated necessity’ is not surprising either, to which should be added that ‘political motivation’ as such can only be expected from those with a political agenda, or, at least, with political awareness.

A recurring theme in Habsburg Bukovinian historiography is the role of Habsburg authorities, firstly in actively establishing a ‘multicultural oasis’ and secondly in creating the myth that the project as such had actually succeeded. Its value is therefore questioned:

one may wonder about the reality of the harmonious coexistence of nationalities in a province as multi-ethnic as Bukovina. Highlighted repeatedly between 1849 and 1918, the theme of the harmonious cohabitation of communities of different religions and languages was meant to justify Austria’s civilising mission and was used to justify Austria’s stranglehold over the regions where the German-speaking element was only a minority among others.

Such hesitations provoke the justified reaction that ‘critically intended questions whether life of the peoples in Czernowitz really was as harmonious as alleged time and again (…) are not very helpful if they do not result in concrete research’, so as long as one ‘may wonder’

529 Safran 1939, p. 183.
531 Rychlo 2006, p. 28. See also literature survey, par. 1.2.5.3.
532 Beaumont 2004, p. 84.
without providing arguments to substantiate one’s doubts, such criticism remains an empty shell. Then, the Austrian authorities may have used the Bukovinian myth for their propagandist purposes, but this in itself does not automatically mean the representation was incorrect. The ‘stranglehold’ thesis seems to rely heavily on the misguided notion that German dominance within the Empire was nationalist-ethnic instead of cultural. Its connecting role as a lingua franca in the broadest sense of the word between all elements of the Monarchy therefore did not need the justification suggested here.

The factors of Bukovina’s young history, the dramatic shift of its population within a few decades, consecutively combined with its reputation of multi-ethnic tolerance and its nickname of a ‘miniature Austria’ tempted some to see the crownland as a laboratory for the creation of homo austriacus, the model citizen of a Habsburg empire untroubled by ethnic and religious differences. Wolfgang Höpker saw this development as an organic process during which nationalism had been neutralised first, after which ‘a national neuter’, the ‘Bukovinian’ had emerged. He concluded that ‘in no other part of the Habsburg Empire national forces were cancelled by each other in such a way, historical antagonisms had faded to such extent, the great awakening of the peoples had met with such lukewarm response that in fact the phenomenon of shaping ‘the Austrian Man’ began here’. Homo austriacus, ‘a supranational mediator between nationalities, polylingual, adaptable, art-loving, and deeply immersed in the traditions of the Habsburg Empire’, was one among numerous elements regarded eligible to promote a Gesamtstaatsgefühl (loyalty to the dynasty, compulsory education and conscription are other examples). However, this concept fitted in fact only aristocratic and haute-bourgeois Austrians and had little to do with, say, Tyrolean mountain farmers or Styrian factory workers. The profile certainly suited a certain number of people, but had never represented the Empire as such and was poison to nationalists. In the words of Tomáš Masaryk:

*If I really hate anything, it is Austrianism - or rather Viennism, that decadent aristocratism, chasing after tips, gratuities, that false, mean Habsburgism, that nationally nondescript and yet chauvinistic medley of people known as Vienna.*


537 Thaler 2001, ibid.

Yet many post-Habsburg intellectuals claimed that, given the circumstances, no species came closer to *homo austriacus* than *homo bucovinensis*, ‘the descriptor for those many Romanians (and others), including the political elites, landowners, and officials, and their adherents, who embraced the spirit of political accommodation and collaboration between national groups that had developed under Austrian rule’ and whose ‘attitudes appear to have found wide acceptance’.

*Homo bucovinensis*, a term which only appeared well after the demise of the Austrian crownland and which was coined by Bukovinian-born Hans Prelitsch in 1954 as well as what Ion Nistor called ‘Bukovinism’ were denounced by Romanian nationalists as the deadly foes of nationalism. Nistor claimed that ‘according to the principles of this doctrine, all peoples in Bukovina, especially the Romanians, had to rid themselves of their national convictions, to break all ties with their co-nationals in other countries, to abandon their language, and to forget their ancestral traditions and mores so as to melt together with the other peoples into an exotic Bukovinian species, having German as the language of conversation’.

One of the principle mistakes made by Nistor in his observations was the decisive anti-national character he attributed to the accommodating spirit of *homo bucovinensis*: as indicated in Stambrooks definition, crucial here is ‘political accommodation and collaboration between national groups’, because the Bukovinian politicians who first pursued the ‘Freethinking Alliance’ and later aspired after a ‘Bukovinian Compromise’ did so with their respective nationalist agendas in mind. Now, hijacked by nationalist rhetoric, the phenomenon which Höpker had presented as the organic development of a *homo austriacus* had been transformed through its regional confinement in the shape of *homo bucovinensis*, into a deliberate Viennese strategy to thwart justified national ambitions. The ‘Bukovinist’ became a new and useful enemy in Romanian nationalist strategies: whereas the Ruthenian adversaries were the obvious enemies, the Romanian-Ruthenian nationalist struggle was largely one of rival groups with remarkably similar agendas. The ‘Bukovinism’ label could from now on be attached to those individuals the nationalists had expected to be on their side but had proved a disappointment, such as Baron Nicholas Mustatza, who had flaunted his German upbringing while being introduced to, of all people, the King of Romania. Bishop Eugenie Hacman, who had refused to see his church as one of two nationalities, but instead only recognised his parishioners as Orthodox, was another obvious target and was accused by Nistor of ‘preaching Bukovinism in his encyclicals, maintaining that Bukovinians are not

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Romanians, Ruthenians, Poles or Germans at all, and therefore should give up their national individuality and become all brothers.\(^{543}\)

In present-day Romanian nationalist historiography, acknowledgement of a Habsburg Bukovinian regional identity is regarded detrimental to the historical Romanian claims. So, no matter how useful \textit{homo bucovinensis} had proved to be as an adversary during the days of Austrian rule, admitting its actual existence today would blemish the authorised version of Bukovinian Romanian history. While Romanian historiography generally presents ‘Bukovinism’ as an undermining Viennese strategy, its representative \textit{homo bucovinensis} is said to have never existed or is depicted as a fictional character, invented to serve anti-Romanian policies.\(^{544}\) Regional identification is dwarfed into the insignificance of ‘local patriotism which could be found in any region and which could not possibly compete with Romanian nationalism’.\(^{545}\)

One basic problem with ‘Bukovinism’ as a denominator is its ill-defined nature. Branded a ‘doctrine’ by nationalists like Nistor, who then felt free to pinpoint its disciples, the concept of ‘Bukovinism’ as a conscious design still dominates the debate. Confusingly, the ‘doctrine concept’ has also been adopted by scholars with a much less biased approach towards Habsburg Bukovinian society than the Romanian nationalists who rallied against it. To complicate matters even more, ‘Bukovinism’ tends to mean different things in different contexts, even in the oeuvre of one and the same author. Corbea-Hoisie, who has dealt extensively with the issue, at one point stated that the doctrine ‘was supposed to reconcile the ideological legacy of liberalism with the federal realism Taaffe-style in the programmatic basis of the supranational Freethinking Alliance of Romanians, Ruthenians, Jews and Germans’,\(^{546}\) and thus presented ‘Bukovinism’ as a political program. In a publication on Karl Emil Franzos, Corbea-Hoisie referred to ‘the later ideologeme of ‘Bukovinism’ with Czernowitz as a simplified symbol of a triumph over the ‘semi-Asiatic’ fate made possible only by German culture’,\(^{547}\) and now apparently regarded the phenomenon as an instrument to fight cultural barbarism from ‘the East’. In yet another analysis, the same author describes how in the Czernowitz of the last decades of the 19th century the conditions for the emergence of a \textit{homo austriacus}, of a Habsburg bourgeois ideal, had been much more favourable than in other provinces, ‘since with the help of the so-called Bukovinist doctrine, allegedly inspired by Jews, the ethnically mixed and supranational liberal Czernowitz


\(^{544}\) See Part I/3: Literature Survey.


German-language culture was able to uphold itself against the various nationalist impulses.\textsuperscript{548} In this case, the reader is invited to see ‘Bukovinism’ as a viable alternative to nationalism.

As argued above, the concept of ‘Bukovinism’ and its usage is complicated enough when applied within the strict framework of Habsburg Bukovina. However, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the consecutive acquisition of Bukovina by Greater-Romania opened the way to Habsburg nostalgia and gave new impetus to the concept of ‘Bukovinism’ in the process. Kurt Rein described this ‘new Bukovinism’ as ‘an enhanced Bukovinian regional consciousness displayed by the old-established Bukovinian Romanians towards their co-nationals who had arrived from the Kingdom (\textit{Regatler}), analogous to Transylvanism in the vicinity’.\textsuperscript{549} Without speaking of ‘Bukovinism’ as such, Höpker had made a similar observation when he noted in 1936 that ‘the rise of national consciousness after the reunification with the ancestral lands probably strengthened collective Romanian nationalism, but at the same time promoted and aroused to no lesser extent the forces of the local self-esteem and in this way the awareness of otherness, the peculiarity of the Romanian province of Bukovina’.\textsuperscript{550} The notion of \textit{homo bucovinensis} also altered after the demise of the Dual Monarchy: post-Habsburg Bukovinian poets like Rose Ausländer and Georg Drozdowski evoked the region’s main characteristics such as the multitude of languages and the perceived interethic harmony. Some authors regarded Bukovina not only as a European region par excellence, but also as a testing ground for united Europe. In this context, \textit{homo bucovinensis} resurfaced as the ‘new man’ whose essence was rooted in respect for ethnic, cultural and religious otherness: \textit{homo bucovinensis} as a model for \textit{homo europaeus}.\textsuperscript{551}

In summary, the terminology regarding the Habsburg Bukovinian myth and its subordinate phenomena \textit{homo bucovinensis} and ‘Bukovinism’ represent a confusing toolbox for the student of Habsburg Bukovina. The myth of multiethnic tolerance, partly shared with Galicia and overarched by the myth of a benevolent, civilising, multifaceted and tolerant Mother Austria poses less of a problem and can be defined with a certain accuracy. Its diverging interpretations by various representatives of different schools of thought are quite another matter. \textit{Homo bucovinensis} might have served well as the possible allegoric realisation of the yearned vision of \textit{homo austriacus} were it not for its quick deformation by Romanian nationalists: from an abstract symbol of civilisation, the notion was turned into a pillory in which nationalists could put those they deemed not sympathetic enough to their ambitions. Whenever the term is used, this ambiguity should be taken into account.

\textsuperscript{548} Corbea-Hoisie 2003, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{550} Höpker 1936, pp. 83-84.
With ‘Bukovinism’, matters are even more complicated. Although the term shares the fate of *homo bucovinensis* in the sense that ‘Bukovinism’, too, rapidly became a favourite among nationalist curses, it does not suffice to blame nationalists alone for its blurry instrumentalisation. First, it does not only mean different things to different authors, but it even proves to be stretchy material in the hands of one and the same author. To confuse matters even more, post-Habsburg nostalgia added yet another meaning to it. The fact that ‘Bukovinism’ has been so readily applied by nationalists, anthropologist, literary critics and historians has reduced its value to a catch-all term which is best avoided when debating aspects of identity in Habsburg Bukovina.

However, the fact that the name ‘Bukovinism’ has been shaped and reshaped, formed and deformed renders it impossible to be ignored altogether. The allegation that it represented a conscious Austrian strategy to counter nationalism has only been uttered and never been substantiated so far. If anything, only a conscious ‘Galicianism policy’ can be substantiated by one quote: Metternich was quoted after the Austrian annexation of Galicia, stating: “May it never be attempted to make the Poles with one stroke into Germans; before anything else, they must become real Galicians so that they may cease to regard themselves as Poles”. If ‘Bukovinism’ on the other hand really constituted such a concrete ‘program’, it must have left behind obvious traces such as written testimonies of sponsors and interested parties. Therefore the central question here is not about the existence of an obscure notion which might be found both everywhere and nowhere, but about clear indications of regional identification and its possible initiators and supporters.

5 ‘Bukovinian Diseases’: Images, Allegories and Stereotypes

With a growing number of educated Bukovinians, a bourgeois urban middle class and a thriving press, not only a Bukovinian cosmopolitan and liberal current came into being, but also a sense of pride: the crownland’s exotic features such as the Hutsuls, the Lippovans and Sadagora’s wunder rabbi with his court were hardly known in the west. *Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung* added Bukovinian women to this lot, stating that ‘the appeal of these most precious gems of the land still awaited its praise’ which was well-deserved since ‘West and East mixed in their blood, the charm of the Viennese woman and the restrained blood of the Oriental woman, the spirit of the city dweller with the disposition of the child of nature’. On another occasion, the paper commented that ‘rather than the noble self-consciousness which otherwise quite adorns Bukovinians, thorough consideration was in order’, while

553 *Turcynski 1993, pp. 83-84. Der Ball des Männergesangvereines (Fasching), Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 01.03.1906, p. 4.
554 Unsere Landesaustellung (Czernowitzer Angelegenheiten), Czernowitzer Allgemeine Zeitung, 30.04.1905, pp. 4-5.