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

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PART IV: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

1.1 Summary

The first travel accounts about Habsburg Bukovina rely heavily on the exotic appearance of the wild eastern corner of the Empire. To some, ‘uncivilised Bukovina’ promised fertile ground for evangelisation. The first signs of diffusion of Daco-Romanian nationalism were already visible. Reports on the ‘indigenous’ Romanian- and Ruthenian-speaking population of Bukovina are diverse and depend strongly on the backgrounds, positions and political agendas of the ‘spectors’. While descriptions by nationalists (Hungarians, Ruthenians) who found themselves in competition with their Romanian adversaries can be useful and mildly entertaining, their obvious subjectivity makes them less useful when Romanian speakers are discussed in an analytical sense. Reports by both Romanian and non-Romanian speakers inside Habsburg Bukovina mainly focus on stereotypes such as ‘tolerance’ and ‘hospitality’, which have survived in Romanian nationalist historiography to this day. Sloppy farming and proneness to alcohol abuse are the negative traits which continue to be addressed in recent publications focusing on ‘the Austrian civilising mission’. Bukovinian Romanian nationalists have provided useful accounts, mostly inspired by frustration and disbelief about the lack of fervour they found with those they claimed to represent. They commented on how Romanian speakers were looked down on and how, by their willingness to adjust to and mingle with other language communities, they seemed to agree with this view. Nationalists vehemently denounced the public displays of affinity with German Leitkultur by the upper class as displayed by the likes of baron Mustatza as well as the ease with which the lower classes adjusted to the Ruthenian language. Class differences were a hindrance of Romanian nationalist ambitions in their own right: whereas intellectuals were said to snub the working class, intellectual social climbers in turn complained that they were ignored by Bukovinian nobility.

Some early sources mentioned Ruthenian or Slavic speakers in Bukovina, others did not. Mostly, sources from the Habsburg era highlighted poverty and illiteracy among Ruthenian speakers aggravated by dependency on (Jewish) usurers. Their status of ‘historical inhabitants’ as opposed to ‘immigrants from Galicia’ would remain an apple of discord in the competition about ‘vested rights’ between Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists. In Galicia, the entire concept of ‘Ruthenians’ was called into question by those who saw them as ‘an invention of Count Stadion’, an artificial Viennese instrument to curb Polish ambitions. Romanian nationalists in Bukovina readily adopted this vision. Moreover, Ruthenian nationalists faced fundamental internal problems. Old-Ruthenians, or Russophiles and Young-Ruthenians (later: Ukrainians) differed bitterly on identity and language issues and did not hesitate to take their discord to the Austrian Parliament, to the amusement of some and to the horror of others. As in Galicia, Young-Ruthenians were to gradually dominate the Ruthenian debate in Bukovina.
The fact that the mountain people called ‘Hutsuls’ were so hard to classify ethnically made them an attractive set piece for quarrelling Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists, who each tried to prove that the Hutsuls were part of their respective tribe. Adding another chunk of the population to one’s own was a vital element in a time dominated by census results and this battle would eventually be won by the Ruthenian side. The Hutsul reputation of rebelliousness, violence and loose morals contributed to their exoticism. Yuriy Fed’kovych was the first to publish Hutsul poetry. He did so in Ruthenian and therewith did his bit to incorporate the Hutsul element in the Ruthenian national canon. Hutsul Lukyan Kobylytsia and his peasant revolt provided a second pillar: whereas Ruthenian nationalists glorified him as a warrior against Romanian boyars, their Romanian adversaries vilified him as a traitor of Emperor and Empire and readily expanded this element of disloyalty to all Ruthenians.

Meanwhile, ethnographers and folklorists struggled when they tried to separate Romanian and Ruthenian traditions according to the fashion of the time: Kolbenheyer concluded that handicraft was typically more ‘Bukovinian’ than Romanian or Ruthenian, while Simiginowicz-Staufe was reproached by Franzos for having the audacity to name his anthology ‘Bukovinian Fairytales’. Orthodox Metropolitan Repta had similar difficulties to divide his flock into Romanians and Ruthenians and the masses did not seem to be bothered by matters of nationality, either: considered to be apathetic in general, nationalism did not generate much enthusiasm. Those who were aware of state and national affairs usually limited their passion to issues of more mundane importance. Accordingly, nationalist periodicals struggled to have copy submitted and subscription fees settled.

Austrian authorities and their local representatives, the governors, regarded the peasantry as one and did not distinguish between Romanians and Ruthenians. The first Bukovinian peasant parliamentarians in Vienna reflected this attitude and although historians tried to apply a national division between them later on, the shoe stubbornly refused to fit. Most of them were illiterate and when it came to taking position in a matter as fundamental as the ‘Landespetition’, the deputies did not act in accordance with what could ‘nationally’ be expected of them. A closer look into the biographies of four prominent Bukovinians shows a familiar pattern of national ambiguity and flexibility: Romanian nationalist Metropolitan Morariu has Galician-Ruthenian roots. Archimandrite Călinescu purposely swapped his Ruthenian-speaking background for a Romanian one, seemingly for career purposes. Ruthenian nationalist politician Mykola Vasylko was born the son of a Bukovinian nobleman of Romanian orientation, but resorted to the Ruthenian cause in order to rise to political prominence. Constantin Tomasciuc may have embodied the Homo bucovinensis to the fullest by being an Austrian centralist, an Orthodox Christian and a Romanian speaker of mixed Ruthenian-Romanian descent.

The Orthodox Church was the quintessential Bukovinian institution. Habsburg authorities regarded its radical reform as vital for the wellbeing of land and people. Initially, the Church owned an overwhelming part of the land’s resources, exercised feudal rule by means of servitude and played a limited social role while its clerics were badly educated. The most radical reform under the new Austrian rulers had been the establishment of the Church Fund, which resorted directly under Vienna and comprised all worldly possessions of the Orthodox
Church. By separating the Bukovinian Church from the Iaşi Metropoly and bringing it under the Metropolitan in Karlowitz, Vienna brought it in its entirety under the Austrian flag. When Bukovina obtained autonomous crownland status in 1861, Galician claims to Church Fund assets were halted. The 1867 Compromise between Austria and Hungary obstructed Transylvanian ambitions to unite all Romanian Orthodox in the Empire in one Metropoly, but the subsequent Bukovinian church autonomy and the appointment of the Romanian nationalist metropolitan Morarui-Andrievici turned the Bukovinian Consistory into a battlefield for Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists. The Romanian side tried to maintain its traditional dominant position, with its Ruthenian competitors attempted to break it. It was no longer possible to keep religious and national affairs separate. Austrian governors who tried to balance the situation were invariably attacked by Romanian nationalists. Metropolitan with similar intentions like Hacman and Czuperkowicz shared this fate. It was rapidly becoming clear that there was no possibility of following a policy which would not cause indignation on at least one side. The Bukovinian press - and at times even nationalist periodicals - deplored the polarised situation. Especially the German-language newspapers appealed to the belligerent parties to keep nationalism away from religion. Church authorities only involved themselves actively in the strife when they considered attacks too personally or too directly aimed at the church hierarchy.

The idea of a church split into a Ruthenian and a Romanian Orthodox Church for Bukovina originally came from the Young-Ruthenians, who fiercely campaigned against what they labelled the ‘Romanisation’ of Bukovina. As the years passed, the Ruthenians saw their influence as well as their numerical preponderance (according to the official censuses) rise and started to ponder over their initial zeal: becoming the dominant factor in the still-united Orthodox Consistory might have been more attractive after all. By contrast, Romanian nationalist warmed to the suggestion of a church split since they saw a possibility of getting rid of their Ruthenian antagonists without having to part with Church Fund assets. Meanwhile, insistence from Vienna to have a Ruthenian appointed as vicar general (and as such the first in line to eventually succeed the metropolitan) was more or less openly opposed by Metropolitan Repta and led to mass rallies organised by Romanian nationalists. With a Ruthenian candidate appointed eventually, Romanian nationalist outrage and subsequent Austrian press censorship did little to improve relations between Vienna and Bukovinian Romanian politicians.

On a local level, Young-Ruthenian parliamentarians from Bukovina industriously gathered cases of what they deemed infringements of Ruthenian rights in Orthodox parishes. Whereas some of their complaints were justified, a closer examination of the cases submitted in the Austrian Parliament reveals that many of them had in fact little to do with nationalist conflicts or ethnic tensions. They were of a personal nature, dealt with local envy, inappropriate cleric behaviour (including sexual harassment) and were nationally framed to claim maximum attention in Vienna for the concerns of Young-Ruthenians in Bukovina. Since language was the main - and maybe the only - distinguishing mark in Orthodox communities, many of the Young-Ruthenian attempts to disqualify ‘Romanising’ priests concentrated on their alleged lack of Ruthenian language skills. It is doubtful that this was really the source of tension
which plaintiffs claimed it to be, since almost all priests had a command of both languages and their flock was used to mass being celebrated in Romanian. Nevertheless, Austrian authorities applied pressure on the Orthodox Consistory to do its utmost to harmonise the mother tongue of local parishes with that of the cleric to be appointed in order to avoid further unrest. Then again, in at least one case they ordered exactly the opposite: the governor told the metropolitan to transfer an Old-Ruthenian troublemaking priest to a ‘Romanian’ district to isolate and defang him. Patterns similar to those related to complaints about discrimination and language deficits are found in the matter of conversions from the Orthodox to the Uniate Church. Although often depicted as acts of despair caused by oppression of Ruthenians, they were generally speaking inspired by more practical causes of dissatisfaction and local grievances. Once the source of discontent was taken away, converts not seldom returned to their church of origin.

The position of Bukovinians with a German linguistic and cultural orientation differed profoundly from that of the Orthodox community. The overwhelming majority of German speakers, Jewish and not, arrived after the Austrian occupation. Especially in the Romanian and Ruthenian nationalist discourse, they represented the new ruling power and as such they were branded ‘foreigners’ or ‘strangers’. In nationalist debates, both German nationalists and their opponents depicted German culture increasingly as specific for the German ‘tribe’ and not as an all-comprising Austrian ‘civilisation vehicle’. As a consequence, its so far undisputed mediating role was now scrutinised and threatened while Vienna was accused of pursuing Germanisation policies. Simultaneously, German ethno-nationalists tried to evict Jews from the German cultural community.

The most obvious element of the omnipresent German culture was its language. With its status as lingua franca of the Empire, it substantially enlarged the career possibilities of Bukovinian German speakers and cemented a new, cosmopolitan Bukovinian elite. A specific brand of Bukovinian German language developed its own dialectal peculiarities. Apart from the elite, however, it remains difficult to assess what the general level of German language knowledge was in Habsburg Bukovina. The situation as envisaged by the Austrian authorities of a crownland where basically everybody was capable to communicate in the three official languages - German, Romanian and Ruthenian - remained utopian: sources suggest that the peasantry had only a very basic knowledge of the language and encountered difficulties when they were confronted with it in court or in other encounters with Austrian officialdom. Austrian government officials who were only temporarily assigned to Bukovina mostly lacked any knowledge of Romanian and Ruthenian, while educated Romanian and Ruthenian speakers in general only mastered German next to their mother tongue. For nationalists who rebelled against what they regarded as cultural imperialism from Vienna, the German language was a major stumbling block. First and foremost, they criticised its dominance at the Franz Joseph University, but their actions gradually spread even to small-town municipalities.

The German speakers from rural areas had little in common with the Austrian ‘cultural imperialists’ targeted by Romanian and Ruthenian nationalists, but the progressive confusion
of cultural and ethno-national Germanity dragged them into the public debate just the same. In general, their fellow Bukovinians perceived them as diligent, decent, distant and, probably also because of their limited knowledge of languages other than German, somewhat arrogant.

The first German nationalist movements were established in Vienna and soon spread to other parts of Austria, mostly as a reaction to the nationalist forces in the Austrian crownlands which questioned the dominant position of German. Since the major force behind this ‘threat’ were Slavic nationalists, Romanian and German nationalists in Bukovina discovered a common enemy: Ruthenian nationalists. From this moment onwards, Romanian-German cooperation would remain an important factor in Bukovina’s typical politics of national coalitions. Political anti-Semitism was another new element. It led to a separate movement of ‘Christian Germans’ and would become a crucial stimulus for Jewish nationalism in Bukovina. Although anti-Semitism was not a political success right away, this changed when charismatic Karl Lueger and his Christian-Social Party entered the stage in Vienna. The party became a dominant force in entire Cisleithania. In Bukovina not only the German, but also the Romanian nationalists joined their ranks. The Bukovinian flirt with the Christian Socialists was short-lived, but their anti-Semitic legacy persevered.

In the final years of the Habsburg Empire, Bukovinian Raimund Friedrich Kaindl opted for a more regional approach of German nationalism with his Association of Carpathian Germans. According to Kaindl, Germans in the East were the gatekeepers of European civilisation and just like the preceding German nationalist movements, his used the ‘Christian’ argument to exclude German-oriented Jews. In the end, it was exactly this attitude which turned German nationalist influence in Bukovina into a ‘quantité négligeable’: German culture in Bukovina strongly depended on its Jewish supporters. By excluding the Jews, the small number of Bukovinian German ethno-nationalists had rendered themselves insignificant.

Although Jews had been in Bukovina long before the Austrians arrived, their number rose significantly after the occupation because the living conditions the young crownland offered were significantly better than those in the surrounding areas. In general, the new rulers pursued an active immigration policy, but their position with regard to Jewish immigrants was inconsistent. Nevertheless, as government regulations further enhanced the position of its Jewish citizens, the number of Jews coming to Bukovina continued to rise. Their presence in agriculture was negligible and they were mainly active in trade (including alcohol) and money lending. Jewish Bukovinians eagerly embraced the newly created possibilities to send their children to school and as such greatly improved chances for Jews on the labour market. However, the focus on secondary and university education held in the different nationalist but to an even greater extent in Jewish circles also caused tensions: Bukovina lacked trained craftsmen and farmers and saw itself confronted with a large surplus of academics. There was a successful Jewish business elite in Bukovina, but also a substantial proletariat. When the local economic situation deteriorated in the late 1800s, many of the emigrants from Bukovina were Jews.
Poor living conditions in Bukovina had always been closely related to irresponsible money borrowing and excessive alcohol consumption. Since money lending and spirits trade were mainly in Jewish hands, Jews were generally blamed for the ensuing misery. The nationalist discourse of the time was best served by the image of classless national solidarity and not by tensions between an exploitative upper class and an irresponsible peasantry. As such, the Jews were the perfect scapegoats. Aware of their vulnerable position, they regarded the Viennese authorities as the essential guarantee for their well-being in Bukovina and had the reputation of being very loyal to Empire and Emperor.

The capital Czernowitz was the prime example of the large Jewish influence in Bukovina. There was hardly a city in nineteenth-century Europe where Jews represented such a large percentage of the population. The bourgeois upper crust was mainly Jewish, and although Czernowitz never had an official ghetto during the Habsburg years, its poorer quarters clearly resembled one. Contrasts were not only a matter of wealth and poverty, as nearby Hasidic Sadagora illustrated. The seat of the Friedman dynasty of ‘wonder rabbis’ embodied a substantial part of those Bukovinian Jews who had not adopted a German-oriented urban way of life. Abhorred by many for resisting modern development and encouraging superstition, Sadagora also significantly contributed to Bukovina’s exotic reputation in- and outside the Habsburg Empire. The struggle between those in favour of Jewish Enlightenment and those opposing it also affected urban Czernowitz, where for a short time the Jewish religious community was even split in two. Jews in rural areas more often had a traditional, Orthodox profile and largely because of this, they were less integrated in the non-Jewish section of their respective communities. Reports on the relations between Jews and non-Jews provide a mixed image: while some complained about the rising number of Jews in some villages, other (mainly Jewish) sources mentioned a peaceful coexistence. In the later Austrian years, Jewish life in rural Bukovina started to modernise as well.

Zionism and socialism provided the first alternatives to German acculturation for Bukovinian Jews. That said, the populist and nationalist brand of Benno Straucher’s politics became the undisputed force of the Bukovinian Jews. Straucher was an omnipresent pragmatist who defined Bukovinian Jewish identity outside of the German realm and who actively opposed anti-Semitism. Whereas nationalism in those years relied heavily on linguistic identity, Jewish nationalists often embraced the Yiddish language. Straucher did not promote the position of Yiddish in Bukovina, but lawyer Max Diamant did: as one of the organisers of the first international conference of Yiddishists in 1908, Diamant was a prominent initiator of the lobby for official recognition of the Yiddish language in Austria. Radical Jewish students in Czernowitz uttered similar demands and requested to be registered as Jews in the university records. Eventually, and uniquely, they were granted this privilege in 1912. Efforts to have Yiddish recognised as an official language, and thus as a ‘language of conversation’ which would be admitted to the 1910 census, failed. Similarly, Straucher and his supporters were refused a separate register in the 1911 Bukovinian electoral reform, although a gerrymandering trick secured Jewish representation. This way, Straucher remained the only deputy in the Austrian parliament who was elected on a specifically Jewish ticket. Still, his failed ‘national mission’ had weakened his power base in Bukovina.
With the necessary caveats, historians have in general found relatively little anti-Semitism in Bukovina. Nicknames like ‘the Jewish El Dorado’ are mostly interpreted in a positive sense. Admittedly, part of the positive imaging originated from Jewish memoirs which inevitably compare the situation under Habsburg rule with the agony that was to follow. For a long time, the Czernowitz press had claimed that political anti-Semitism was decidedly un-Bukovinian, but in fact forms of state anti-Semitism had existed before and after Austrian occupation.

Romanian, Ruthenian and German national movements all had their own specific attitudes towards Jews. Generally speaking, all nationalist movements in Bukovina originated outside of the crownland and all of them had strong anti-Semitic inclinations. With nationalism, Bukovinian politics also imported political anti-Semitism. The fact that it seemed the strongest with the German nationalists is closely connected to the fact that German culture was claimed by both Jews and non-Jews. As such, German ethno-nationalists, unlike their Romanian and Ruthenian counterparts, could not claim that ultimate national treasure: an exclusive language. Therefore they resorted to the next best divisive tool, religion. ‘Christian Germans’ now distanced themselves as explicitly as possible from German-oriented Jews.

Romanian nationalist anti-Semitism was rooted in the socio-economic hardship of its adherents. Jewish social climbers with their language skills provided stiff competition for Romanian speakers while Jewish usury and spirits trade were blamed for peasant misery. This often added an anti-Semitic twist to sobriety campaigns initiated by Orthodox village priests. The early 1900s saw an increase of anti-Semitic agitation in the Bukovinian Romanian press under the influence of the strong anti-Semitic currents among Romanian nationalists from Transylvania and the Kingdom. It got even more intense once Bukovinian Romanian nationalists joined Lueger’s Christian-Socialists: instead of blaming their own followers at least partly for the dire straits they found themselves in as they had done in earlier days, Romanian nationalists now exclusively charged the Jews with all local economic misery. Anti-Semitism provided a convenient common denominator for the traditionally divided Romanian nationalists in Bukovina, but forced the Bukovinian Orthodox Church to perform a delicate balancing act: one the one hand, it could not afford to alienate the nationalists, but on the other it had to fend off attacks from activists like Iorga who accused the Church of being philo-Semitic.

Anti-Semitism among Ruthenian nationalists in Bukovina became less vocal in press and debates once Vasylyko and Straucher had joined forces to counter the Romanian-German coalition in Bukovina in 1904. Before that time, Anti-Semitism had found its way into Bukovinian Ruthenian nationalism from Galicia, where Jews were often accused of siding with the Polish oppressors. Ruthenian local associations had the reputation of being strongly anti-Semitic. It was therefore not surprising that the Bukovinian (Jewish) press was suspicious when Jewish and Ruthenian parties decided to cooperate and as time passed, the marriage of convenience started to show significant cracks.

Since the most important (liberal and German-language) newspapers were in Jewish hands and since the voice of Benno Straucher was a powerful political force in both Czernowitz and
Vienna, protests against anti-Semitic agitation in Bukovina could easily be ventilated. Straucher’s open battle against political anti-Semitism in Bukovina enhanced his popularity.

The fact that political anti-Semitism was clearly an import product does not mean that anti-Semitism as such had thus far been unknown among the population. Sources reveal peasant resentment against exploitation by Jews and popular imaging of ‘the evil Jew’. In villages where Ruthenian speakers (often Hutsuls) and Jews built the majority, anti-Semitic unrest and threats against Jews were at times serious enough for the government authorities to take action. In general, the Austrian authorities kept a watchful eye on anti-Semitic ranting, not in the least because it was often linked to animosity towards Empire and Emperor. The distribution of anonymous threatening pamphlets – which occurred regularly - was taken less seriously and the threats they contained were never executed.

With nationalism’s claim to exclusivity and its accompanying religious overtones put into perspective, other identifications need to be addressed with the focus on the roles of ‘Bukovinian’ and ‘Bukovinianness’. Two institutions seen as quintessentially ‘Habsburg Bukovinian’ as well as their achievements and reputations are therefore examined more closely. First, there is the most prominent political forum of the crownland, the regional Diet or Landtag. Although Bukovina was to obtain regional autonomy after the 1848 Revolution, it took until 1861 before this promise was fulfilled and its rightful political representative organ was installed. The diet drafted laws which, after they had attained the necessary majority, were forwarded to the governor who negotiated them with the central powers in Vienna where they eventually had to be approved by Imperial signature. The second track which conveyed the Bukovinian voice to Vienna was the Imperial Parliament with its crownland representatives. The Bukovinian Diet principally communicated in German, but also allowed Romanian and Ruthenian since these were the other two customary languages. Traditionally, the diet was dominated by the increasingly nationally-defined Romanian-speaking aristocracy which over the years produced some influential political dynasties. Of all the initiatives the diet took, the one leading to the establishment of the university might have been one of the most important. With its different national factions, Bukovinian politics were coalition politics by definition. The fact that conservative forces were largely defined ‘Romanian’, peasants mostly ‘Ruthenian’ or ‘Romanian’, and urban-bourgeois voters were largely ‘Jewish-German’ blurred the distinction of what was to be considered a ‘political party’ and a ‘nationality’ in Bukovina.

The early 1900s saw a split in all Bukovinian national parties between the ‘Young’ and the ‘Old’, with the Young as the defenders of social and electoral reforms. In order to broaden their base, they agreed to put ‘national interests’ second and to cooperate as a united platform, the ‘Freethinking Alliance’. It was thus easy for their conservative competitors to label the Alliance ‘traitors of the national cause’ and as a result, the theme of ‘state loyalty’ was a prominent feature in the 1904 election campaign. The Alliance won the elections and backed by Bukovina’s progressive governor Prince Hohenlohe, the newly elected politicians launched reform proposals. They also introduced a national segregation of educational facilities since
they believed national(ist) issues were best kept outside of the common political arena. The Alliance cooperation suffered from personal ambitions and animosities, however, and not even managed to stay in power for a year. Their elections reforms agenda did - as well as their notion of ‘defending Bukovinianness’ - and under influence of the ‘Moravian Compromise’, which was the result of a division of Czech and German voters along ethno-nationalist lines, Bukovina set out to develop a compromise of its own. Since the former Freethinking allies all had political capital to gain from a separate voters’ register, they found each other once more. The very complicated result of the ‘Bukovinian Compromise’ did not satisfy all nationalist interest groups: Lippovan Old-Believers were simply added to the Ruthenian register, Magyars to the Romanian one and since Vienna refused to acknowledge Jews as a separate nationality, both German and Jewish factions disgruntledly remained stuck together. Liberal voices complained that the system, designed for the much more bitterly divided Moravian crownland, did not defang national hatred in Bukovina but rather encouraged it. Political adversaries expected different things from the new system: where Austrian centralists hoped it would lessen national tensions, nationalists welcomed it as a promising step towards complete segregation. The effects of the new system remain largely unknown: the first and only election held according to national registers took place in 1911, only three years before the World War ended political life in Habsburg Bukovina.

Although Bukovina’s diet was initially seen as a triumphant symbol over Galician dominance, the growing unpopularity of Bukovinian politicians soon cast a shadow over its local reputation. The emergence of the Freethinking Alliance with its figureheads Onciul, Vasylko and Straucher added to the liveliness of diet debates, but also to the deterioration of social graces. An additional problem was the inability of Bukovinian parliamentarians to unite in a ‘Bukovinian Club’ in Vienna. Nationalist divisiveness proved stronger than the dire economic conditions in Bukovina and as such, parliamentarians tended to gang up with their ‘co-nationals’ from other crownlands rather than with their fellow Bukovinians. Moreover, the small number of Bukovinian representatives failed to take part in the larger Austrian debates: they limited themselves to specific local demands and complaints which were perceived ineffective at home and boring and repetitive in the Imperial capital.

In later scholarly work, analysis of Bukovinian parliamentarian life remains largely restricted to the phenomena of the Freethinking Alliance and the Bukovinian Compromise. The Alliance is generally appreciated as open-minded and selfless enough to go beyond national boundaries in order to improve the fate of the rural population, as home-grown ‘reconciliatory Bukovinism’, while a more accurate study reveals an occasional coalition with national segregation on crownland level as its most striking accomplishment. Even that did not do anything to improve relations between nationalist factions: when schools and voters had been duly separated, Romanian and Ruthenian activists moved to the now even more fiercely contested area of the Bukovinian Orthodox Church.

The second institution which can be considered a cornerstone of Habsburg Bukovinian society is the Franz Joseph University. Established as a personal gift from the Emperor at the occasion of the centenary of the Austrian appropriation of the territory, the German-language educational facility was meant to bring ‘culture’ to the easternmost part of the Empire while,
at the same time, it was expected to facilitate access to higher education for the local population: after universities in Transylvania had been Magyarised and the Lemberg university Polonised, Bukovinian students had only Vienna left to go to and this option was too expensive for many. The university’s founding was a specific request from the Bukovinian elite and enjoyed large local support. However, it had to battle a disputable reputation from its earliest days. The university had unique features such as chairs for Romanian and Ruthenian linguistics as well as for Orthodox theology. Still, in the early decades especially university staff came from the western parts of Austria and regarded their posting in Czernowitz as either a way to grab a quick promotion somewhere else or as a punishment for unwelcome political activism. They not only added fuel to the flame of nationalist tensions, but also voiced their personal discontent with their positions and repeatedly suggested to move the entire facility to another part of the Monarchy altogether.

In Bukovina proper, the persisting lack of a medical faculty was a constant reminder of the perceived inferior status of both crownland and university. Critics denounced the Bukovinian university as an uninspired production facility for the necessary local reservoir of priests, officials and pharmacists. In later years when education increasingly became a status symbol of nationalist movements, a serious imbalance emerged when the growing quantity of university graduates started to outnumber the badly needed craftsmen. This in turn led to what was called ‘an academic proletariat’: instead of a tool to advance Bukovina’s prosperity, its university was now seen as a hampering element.

The influx of university staff and a student population had a profound influence on Bukovina and on its capital Czernowitz especially. Students organised themselves in associations with either a general Austrian or a specific nationalist orientation. This way, typical Bukovinian debates (Romanian-Ruthenian competition, the Jewish national question, language demands) entered the academic realm and with them the occasional unrest and brawls. Following the pattern of Bukovinian nationalist politics, fights and open conflicts occurred more regularly between different associations with the same national affiliation than between those of different national groups.

The World War brought the activities of the Franz Joseph University to a halt. There was general disillusionment in Bukovina with the perceived lack of solidarity from the struggling Empire: Czernowitz academic staff had difficulties finding employment elsewhere and once more, the permanent relocation of the university had been made became a topic of discussion. Once it became clear that under the Romanian flag the university would lose its German-language character, most scholars decided to leave.

In later appraisals, views on the Czernowitz University and its merits for Austrian Bukovina varied between the extremes of admiration for the ‘civilising influence’ the German-language institute had exercised and criticism of its ‘colonial intentions’. Apart from these ‘intentions’, nationalist sources also admit the decisive role the university played in the education of key figures in the different national movements. Paradoxically, the university which had been created to bring the ‘soothing and unifying effect of German scholarship’ had also been instrumental for the import and the production of nationalism.
Whereas the ‘Austrian identity’ is commonly ignored in studies of particular ‘nationalities’, it should be noted that the Austrian self-image had a strong presence in Bukovina. From the early days, during which allegiance to the state primarily had the character of military support, there was a general mood of contentment with Austrian rule. Although some of the pledged popular support for the Austrian state was clearly enforced by the local authorities, there was a strong sense of loyalty to the state and the imperial dynasty which strengthened local self-confidence in comparison with other regions in the Dual Monarchy. Feelings towards the Habsburg dynasty were evidently stronger than towards the more abstract notion of ‘Austria’. Particularly the shadow of Emperor Franz Joseph, whose reign almost exactly coincided with the period of Bukovinian autonomy and who was therefore widely regarded as a father figure, loomed large over the crownland. Next to more general praise, the Emperor was praised for giving Bukovina its autonomy and its university. Cases of lèse majesté only occurred sporadically. Nationalist groups vied for the status of ‘the Emperor’s favourite nation’ and ensured that he was made aware of their devotion. Especially among the Young-Ruthenian movement it was a widely felt that they owed their national development to the Emperor’s benevolence and expectations regarding a future Ruthenian/Ukrainian autonomous region under his rule were equally high. Next to Franz Joseph, there was also attention for other Habsburg family members from both past and present. Crown Prince Rudolph occupied a special place in Bukovinian adulation because he had visited the region shortly before his tragic death, and student memorial preparations even led to public unrest in 1889.

Bukovinian loyalty was not met with blind trust from Vienna. Cases of possible disloyalty were carefully investigated; suspects were tried but regularly acquitted in cases the authorities feared for a public reaction in favour of those suspects. The most widely published ‘treason case’ in Habsburg Bukovina was centred around the Romanian nationalist ‘Arboroasa’ students’ association which had ties to the Romanian government and which had shown sympathy for counter festivities in Romania surrounding the centenary of Habsburg occupation of the Bukovina territory. The subsequent trial attracted attention in both Austria and Romania and although the students involved were released, the affair remained firmly embedded in the collective conscience. Next to Romanian irredentist activism, it was Russophile propaganda which demanded most attention from the authorities. The fact that both movements were linked to foreign powers explains why this focus only intensified once the World War had started.

Nationalist movements not only pledged loyalty to the Emperor, they generally advocated compatibility between their allegiance to both the Austrian state and the respective nation in a time when the nation-state was not automatically the envisaged goal. Most nationalists in Bukovina were devoted to the Habsburg state as long as it could guarantee undisturbed national development within its borders. This balance was disturbed once war broke out. The three periods of Russian occupation of Bukovina put the area beyond Austrian state control and almost the only way to monitor state loyalty was through the interception of private mail. The impression of a throughout loyal population prevailed, its pro-Austrian attitude being further encouraged by Russian war atrocities. Once the occupying forces had left, Austrian investigators concluded that while the Bukovinian peasantry had remained loyal to Empire
and State, the same could not be said about nationalist activists. The most prominent Bukovinian with a blemished record was Orthodox Metropolitan Repta, who had openly said prayers for the Russian Czar and consequently was forced to abdicate upon the return of the Austrian troops.

Local newspapers with a tendency to promote a stronger regional affiliation among their readers faced the dominant nationalist rhetoric and the readily available accusation of being unfaithful to the nation. Just like nationalists had combined national and state loyalties, the Bukovinian press carefully ensured that regional identification was often presented as an enhancement to the national one. Even the introduction of national registers was seen by some as a step towards stronger regional cooperation: once national insecurities were reassured by safely fencing them in, the focus would naturally shift to common regional interests.

Nationalists would often declare their love for ‘nation’ and ‘homeland’ alike, but were irritated when solidarity between Bukovinians with different mother tongues proved stronger than their own ardently promoted ties between ‘co-nationals’ from different regions. Sometimes those co-nationals proved too intrusive, as especially Bukovinian-Romanian nationalists experienced when from Romania, Nicolae Iorga’s anti-Austrian campaigning damaged their reputation and annoyed them by portraying the living conditions in Romania as much more positive than in Bukovina. For Ruthenian nationalists, who had neither the comfort nor the discomfort of a powerful Ruthenian nation across the border, the national vs. regional debate was complicated by the proximity of the large number of Ruthenian-speakers in Galicia: whereas for Young-Ruthenian propaganda reasons the similarity between Galician and Bukovinian Ruthenians was stressed, Old-Ruthenians endeavoured to underline the differences between true ‘Bukovinian Orthodox Russians’ and ‘Galician Uniates’. When solidarity conflicts emerged between ‘nation’ and ‘region’, there was still the diminution solution: instead of defining oneself as either, say, Romanian and Bukovinian, one could resort to the subset of ‘Romanian Bukovinian’ or ‘Bukovinian Romanian’.

The idea of a ‘Bukovinian homeland’ sat rather comfortably with national identifications, much opposed to that of a ‘Bukovinian people’, since the latter competed directly with the core notion of nationalism. Still, the term appeared regularly - in nationalist publications as well. ‘Bukovinianness’ as a dominant identification emerged from the early years of crownland autonomy, though it may be argued that the notion was a prerequisite for the demand for autonomy first and for all. The initial component of ‘Bukovinianness’ thus was ‘non-Galician’, soon followed by concepts of shared history and shared historical figures, both from before and during the Austrian days. Most German-language newspapers of the crownland presented themselves as the mouthpiece, if not the embodiment of Bukovinianness.

Bukovina’s swift development soon compared favourably with neighbours Moldavia and Galicia. Especially the contrast between Bukovina and its Habsburg ‘big brother’ Galicia, enhanced by the positive reports on exotic yet cosmopolitan Czernowitz, can be regarded as the first building block of what was to become the ‘Bukovinian myth’: the notion that in Bukovina, the enlightened and civilising Austrian influence had created a harmonious multicultural society from which an Austrian role model emerged, the homo bucovinensis. In part, Bukovina shared this multicultural, tolerant image with Galicia, while much of the
‘Bukovinian myth’ served as a *pars pro toto* of a utopian view of the entire Habsburg Empire. Its supranational character made ‘Bukovinism’ a target for Romanian nationalists who depicted it as a deliberate Austrian design to sabotage their cause, and who to this day deny the existence of a *homo bucovinensis*. Experts on Habsburg Bukovina have so far contributed neither to the clarification nor to a consistent application of the term ‘Bukovinism’ and, apart from the question of its actual existence, usually operate in the grey territory between ‘phenomenon’ and ‘conscious doctrine’.

With the emergence of regional identification came a more or less fixed set of images and stereotypes. Bukovinians took pride in exotic features such as the Hutsul tribe, the Lippovan Old-Believers and Sadagora’s wonder rabbi as well as in their position of ‘the Emperor’s border guard in the East’. From the first geographical publications on Bukovina came the stubborn image of a colourful society of tolerant, but in essence very different - and segregated - groups of people which was soon depicted as a ‘miniature Austria’. When it became gradually clear that just like other Austrian regions, Bukovina would not remain untouched by political nationalism, initial designations in the ‘exemplary crownland’ category made room for sharp self-criticism and depreciation. Depending on the critic’s political views, certain groups were blamed for all things wrong in Bukovina, but there was also a strong sense of blaming the population as a whole and the persisting state of ‘still developing towards a cultured province’. The local press consistently operated the images of ‘Semi-Asia’ (coined by Bukovinian author Franzos), ‘Austria’s penal colony’ and the State’s ‘stepchild’ or ‘Cinderella’. ‘Semi-Asia’ appeared when Bukovinians congratulated themselves on having overcome earlier barbarism, when they chastised themselves for still being stuck in primitivism or when they complained about how they were viewed in arrogant Vienna. The term thus aptly covered the confused feelings among Bukovinian prominentst with regard to the creator of this label, Karl-Emil Franzos. The ‘penal colony’ image, which initially referred to the crownland as a whole, obtained a more specific connotation once the Czernowitz University reputedly served to ‘exile’ troublesome or inadequate Austrian scholars. It was applied by both Bukovinians and non-Bukovinians, unlike the ‘stepchild’ and ‘Cinderella’ images which were undoubtedly Bukovinian creations, meant to underline how underprivileged Bukovina was in comparison to other Imperial regions and crownlands. Equally, when the early 1900s witnessed a growing regional consciousness and a regionally inspired political agenda under the Freethinking Alliance, in Bukovina impatience grew with the tendency to blame others for Bukovinian misery and with the repetitive Bukovinian complaining in the Imperial Parliament which so far had only harvested indifference.

Being deliberately discriminated against was still better than being not known at all. The general perception in Bukovina was that nobody was aware of its existence. In Vienna, the crownland was said to be confused with regions like Bosnia or Herzegovina. Locally, the situation was not much better with less than minimal attention for local history in the school curriculum and among local scholars. Economically, obscurity was felt to be the reason for a lack of railway developments and preferential treatment of Austrian regions with a more powerful industry sector. Another way Bukovinians measured the degree of neglect was the frequency of visits to Bukovina. The most prestigious guests were understandably members of
the Imperial family, first and foremost the Emperor. The emotional reactions in Bukovina after the death of Crown Prince Rudolph in 1889 were unquestionably linked to his recent Bukovinian visit. A second category consisted of government ministers, who were accused of steering clear of the crownland - an accusation simply transplanted from Vienna to Bucharest when Bukovina was united with Romania. Once modern tourism started to blossom around the turn of the century, Bukovinian tourism associations began to promote the region as a travel destination, but soon resorted to the well-known complaints about disregard when tourists did not come in droves. Again, a lack of railway development was deplored as a reason for the disappointing numbers of visitors. Here as well, Bukovina was presented as ‘miniature Austria’, since it was commented that Austrians in general hardly cared for visiting the Empire’s own beauties - and the situation in Bukovina was not much better. Bukovinian tourism promoters invited journalists to the land and published a first tourist guide to the region, but also wondered if Bukovina was such an attractive destination to begin with: the crownland, its capital and its inhabitants were possibly too backward, the facilities too primitive and once the anti-Semitic Christian-Socials had entered the political arena, aspiring Jewish travellers might be scared off, too.

In the other direction, there was plenty of movement. From the later 1880s there were initiatives from Budapest to bring Bukovinian Magyar speakers ‘home’, while Russia tried to repopulate its war-ravaged zones with Bukovina’s Lippovans. Around the turn of the century, however, most large scale emigration from Bukovina was bound for the Americas. The local press mostly published scary stories of ruined immigrants and poetry full of yearning for the homeland. Strikingly, in those poems the ‘region’ and not the ‘nation’ dominated. Ambitious professionals mostly took to Vienna, and Bukovinian newspapers eagerly and proudly mentioned when these attempts were successful. In 1904, the Viennese Bukovinian community (mostly from Czernowitz) numbered almost 3000 and consisted, next to the obvious group of Bukovinian parliamentarians, of urban professionals and students. The community sense among those Bukovinians resulted in the formation of associations which, next to their entertainment function, tried to lend a helping hand to their less fortunate compatriots in Vienna.

The growing sense of a Bukovinian identity and the related sentiment that Bukovinians had to stand up for their own rights enhanced the urge to defend the ‘native children’ against ‘foreigners’. Staunch criticism was reserved for Austrian state officials who only came to the crownland for a few years, meddled in its political scene and left to obtain a better position somewhere else, but generally speaking, those ‘foreigners’ were Galicians accused of dominating Bukovinian institutions and taking Bukovinian jobs. Galicia was an obvious and easy target for Bukovinian politicians, anyway: collectively, the days in which Bukovina had resorted under Lemberg were not fondly remembered and a demand to cut the last administrative ties (railways and judiciary) still connecting Bukovina to the former ‘oppressor’ was always sure to go down well with the electorate. In Vienna, the distinction between the two crownlands was not always so clear. It was a further cause for Bukovinian indignation to be mentioned in the same breath as the big neighbour, which was not only regarded a big bully by the Bukovinian upper crust, but uncivilised on top of that. They had to
acknowledge, however, that there were benefits to be reaped of Galicia’s effective and powerful parliamentary lobby in the Imperial capital. As the years progressed, there was repeated envy for the dynamics of Galician development which were seen against a background of Bukovinian misery and stagnation. That negative image was often projected on the land’s initial pride and joy, Bukovina’s ‘Little Vienna’ Czernowitz. The city was now being criticised for its uneven development, its ‘Oriental’ characteristics and its lack of facilities and sanitation.

Bukovina’s autonomous status and the growing general tendency to identify with the region required careful manoeuvring at local, Austrian and foreign events. The 1875 centennial celebrations with their counter manifestations in Romania and the related ‘Arboroasa’ affair had amply made clear that different views on common history were tricky material: what Austrian circles celebrated as the arrival of civilisation after barbaric Ottoman oppression, nationalists in Romania mourned as the loss of Romanian land and the illegitimate execution of the territory’s last ‘Romanian’ ruler. The return of the ‘Bukovinian’ 41st Regiment to native soil in 1882 had provided ample opportunity for the authorities to emphasise the warm relations between Vienna and Bukovina; the celebrations surrounding its 200th anniversary in 1901 provided an extra chance to underline the close ties between the Austrian army, its regional regiment and the Bukovinian population. However, local response was not as spontaneous and excited as those in charge of the event would have liked to see: participants were mainly schoolchildren who had to be actively encouraged while speeches were bland and predictable. In spite of the jubilant image official sources tried to convey, the local press reported on misbehaviour of the troops against the civil population, on brawls and violent incidents. Even worse, the Bukovinian media took the opportunity to address a general situation of abuse in the Austrian army which was said to have led to cases of suicide among Bukovinian recruits as well. The process of collecting the necessary funds for a monument - which was produced entirely from materials outside of the crownland - to mark the occasion was such a tiresome affair that its inauguration took place only a year after the festivities. Then it was only attended by a very modest number of Bukovinian prominet.

The so-called Putna celebrations surrounding the cult of Stephen the Great provided a careful balancing act for the Austrian authorities: they were first and foremost an occasion for Romanian nationalist pilgrims and therefore a security risk for the government. Then again, Vienna had been sensitive to the nationalist sentiments and had renovated the burial church of the Moldavian king. In the final decades of the 19th century the celebrations had been mainly organised by students, visited by leading figures from Romania and avoided by Bukovinian noblemen who feared for their relations with the central authorities. In contrast, by 1904, when the 400th anniversary of Stephen’s death was to be commemorated, those Bukovinian noblemen who were now nationalist politicians themselves played an important role in the preparations. To keep the government happy and suspicions of irredentism at bay, in public communication and in local press releases the revered king was more and more presented as a Bukovinian rather than a specifically Romanian hero. Guests from Romania - with the predictable exception of Nicolae Iorga - equally tried not to offend their Austrian hosts. When
Austria was criticised later on for the way Bukovinian Romanian speakers were treated, the Stephen commemorations served as tool to debunk those allegations.

In the age of ‘Grand Exhibitions’ with a predominantly national character, regions also carefully considered similar events. A modest Bukovinian fair had taken place in 1886, but when in the early twentieth century a new initiative was considered and it turned out that in Bucharest the Romanian government planned a large-scale national exhibition, the Bukovinian plans were quickly dismissed and a discussion started on if and if so, how Bukovina would participate. First, there were Romanian nationalists in Bukovina who claimed the event was for Romanians only and second, Bukovinians who embraced the opportunity to present the land as a whole. When it became clear that non-Romanian foreign states were also invited, it was decided that there would be a Bukovinian pavilion with a separate Romanian section. Contrary to the Bukovinian nationalist intentions, the difference between the Bukovinian and the Bukovinian-Romanian exhibits were not that striking. There was a feeling of disappointment that the Romanian section of the Bukovinian pavilion had not focused on more recent accomplishments and now made a rather dusty impression. The Romanian government had meanwhile provided visits for ‘Romanians from across the borders’ and had paid for their journey in full. Though those groups from Bukovina reportedly made sure to accentuate their loyalty to the Austrian Emperor in Bucharest - Austria had made participation for Romanian speakers from its realm a lot easier than Hungary - Romanian nationalist sources would later claim that those visitors had demonstrated a massive longing for unification with the Romanian Kingdom.

The ultimate chance to show ‘arrogant Vienna’ what Bukovina had accomplished and what it had on offer came when in 1908 Franz Joseph’s sixty years on the throne was celebrated with a giant parade through the Austrian capital, the first part representing highlights from Habsburg history and the second an overview of contemporary society. Czernowitz had commemorated its 500th existence shortly before with a parade focusing on Austrian accomplishments and symbols; the Vienna event however was meant to highlight ethno-national diversity and thus nationalist leaders in the regions of the Empire were sought to inspire their constituents to form committees and to delegate groups. For different reasons, Transleithanian Hungarians as well as Czechs were absent. Moreover, the way Austrian history was represented- and especially events connected to the revolutionary year 1848 - had to be lengthily negotiated. In the Bukovinian preparations, the image created in the ‘Kronprinzenwerk’ of an ethnically segregated but harmonious society was maintained. Feelings of self-confidence about the colourful spectacle would offer the languid capital city prevailed. Ironically, the images the crownland prepared to send to Vienna where exactly those which the local press had been fighting for decades: those of the faraway, peasant-oriented barbaric yet colourful ‘Orient’. Next to that, the character of national subdivisions reduced Bukovina (and other regions) to only the sum of its national(ist) parts. The opportunity was missed to show elements not confined to nationalist parameters - modern Czernowitz society and its bourgeoisie might have been granted some space in that case and the now conspicuously absent Jews as well. It was hardly surprising that in the press the
traditional criticism surfaced again: nobody in the West really knew about Bukovina and the cheerful folksy tableaux on display hid the persistent economic misery in the land.