

THE SOCIAL-CULTURAL FACTORS AND THEIR ROLE IN DEFINING THE SACRED CULTURAL LANDSCAPES IN BUCOVINA

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ABSTRACT

The necessity of cultural geography in the East-European geopolitical space as a studying object in Bucovina region is imposed by the present social and geographical evolution. The dynamism and the versatility of cultural geography implies the approach of studying the sacred cultural landscapes. These landscapes from Bucovina area are marked by cultural landmarks created by a large ethnic diversity formed by Romanians, Ukrainians, Jews, Hungarians, Polish, Ruthenians, Hutsuls and gypsies and by elements such as churches, monasteries, synagogues and other types of religious symbols -crosses, cemeteries, religious monuments, local religious events and festivals, pilgrimages etc.- with a rich spiritual value which reaches the local area too. These landscapes extend their value in time beyond the spatial borders of Bucovina. The ethnic plurality of the Bucovina area has generated a major interest in stating the religious particularities which have materialized in the human creation of the sacred cultural landscapes.

Nowadays the variety of the cultural and ethnic entities from the Bucovina area includes some of these unique landmarks, which are known all over the world for their authentic spiritual message driven from the profound mysticism of local villagers and expressed through images, paintings, icons and frescos.

The present paper intends to illustrate the variety of the visual means of communication by identifying and analyzing the spiritual and sacred symbols and the cultural diffusion of mental and religious concepts.

Keywords: Bucovina, cultural landscape, sacred landmarks.

INTRODUCTION

Profound changes in the European space are created amid the tumultuous nationalist storms imposed by wars and social movements from the middle of the 18th century, but especially because of the effervescence of the Enlightenment dogmas which sought to create a society based on the freedom of cultural masses by following the reports of the social space realities. Together with the creation of the official Bucovina province on May 7, 1775, the cultural landscapes of the province suffer radical changes through the intrusion of important complex heterogeneous ethnic groups.

The breaking away from the Moldovan State caused a series of changes and challenges not only sociopolitical for the population which was predominantly made up of young people from Romanian and Bucovina Province, but also a number of cultural and spiritual metamorphosis amid some beneficial or negative effects arising from the historical events.

Bucovina represented a veritable and challenging province for the imperial administration, due to its 11 ethnic groups with 9 different religious confessions, but the fundamental landmark was the tolerant behaviour of all individuals, giving birth to the expression “Homo bucovinensis” [1]

Thus Bucovina knows the much anticipated exposure to European economic progressive factors through the building of the first industrialized pillar (in the cosmopolitan *Chernivtsi* during the Austrian administration, a real boom was produced in the industrial developmental, thus over 50 factories appeared, placing the city among the most developed Romanian urban centers later)[6]. This boom has been the engine that triggered the dynamics of space and its transformation, so the cultural landscapes have suffered permanent and ongoing restructuring in an accelerated pace.

Social progress as well as the increased quality of life generated the cultural emancipation of the masses, social-psychological and conceptual changes have led to the emergence of ethnic cultural individualities which now have the opportunity to express and state their spiritual identity. There were numerous cultural associations which appeared, students' ethnic and cultural societies, culminating with the establishment of the University Franz Josef on 4th October. [1]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present paper illustrates the changes in the Bucovina's sacral landscapes. It is a part of a complex research project which includes a process of exploratory investigation and informational quantification, produced and represented by Bucovina's cultural scene. It was necessary to use a coherent set of investigatory rules in order to set the main variables and to explain what caused the phenomenon that contributed to the alteration or evolution of these cultural landscapes. The approach was focused on historical, artistic, ethnic, and geographic specialty literature. The resources used for Bucovina's demographic evolution are from the documents located at the State Archive of Suceava Region.

CULTURAL PRODUCTIONS AND SACRED LANDSCAPES

In the 17th century religion through its confessions remained a force in the plane of consciousness of social groups, the most direct tool in manipulating the dominated and less educated masses. The sacral landscapes are positioned at the pinnacle of the cultural–social spiritual perspective. In Bucovina the diverse cultural and linguistic ethnic groups corresponded to an apparently divergent ideological and cultural norms which have permanently been reported to space. The subjectivity and identity consciousness, which emerged from the cosmopolitan character and the large number of heterogeneous ethnic

communities, have created spatial changes in an accelerated rhythm after 1775 with the installing of the Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire domination and the penetration of a large number of ethnic minorities. The area has always been the support of social transformations under the pressure of multicultural variation, underlying the cultural landscapes through visible elements generated by each ethnic group. This “storage “of cultural elements is the emblem for a specific religious diversity, in the Bucovina area, identifiable primarily through the religious symbols of the architectural styles, aroused from the need to respond to the spiritual needs of society.

Confession had the purpose to ensure that the individual belonged to a common conscience, recognizing ancestral roots, stability values, to offer security and protection through its affiliation to the ethnic and confessional group. Because of this reason every ethnic group aimed primarily at imposing specific -religious moral values in a creative way, with a high intensity and visibly, through an indirect ideological struggle, seeking to impose itself spatially, economically, politically and demographically.

The administration had a dominant role in the dynamics and evolution of structure of specific sacral landscapes determining successive changes in the ethnic and confessional Bukovina. The demographic ethnic structure changed and this also led to changes in the religious structure. Bukovina knew a spectacular numerical growth due to immigration, from 146.542 inhabitants in 1789 to 571 671 inhabitants in 1880 according to the official data. [2]

The number of the Romanian population declined gradually and the ethnic structure was made up of Romanians, Ruthenians, Germans, Jews and other ethnical heterogeneous and multicultural nationalities.[1]

The ethnic heterogeneous and multicultural trait is supported by the fact that none of nationalities in Bukovina managed to become dominant. The ethnic diversity generated the present combination of mentalities, a mental transfiguration and conceptual and value influences across the entire province.

The factors that helped shape the sacral landscape to achieve the diffusion of religious symbols and spiritual values are subordinated to the approach of space. The most prominent factor was the language, to which the economic factors and the political were added. Romanian was spoken by the majority of the population however the official language was German, spoken by the people coming from the Austrian Empire but also by the ethnic Jews who lived in urban areas, while the Romanian majority population was initially a dominant presence in rural areas all over Bukovina. Gradually with the entry from the east starting with the 15th century, there were rural settlements where the Ukrainians settled. Some of them were either refugees from territories located in northern Bukovina, in an attempt to escape from the Polish government. Others settled in Bucovina because of the Ukrainian colonization of northern Moldavia during the reign of Stephen the Great through the armed Pocutia conquest completed in 1490. Some settled for economic reasons by becoming craftsmen or farmers brought by the Moldavian boyars and the prelates from the monasteries. Another event is the time of the founding of the 500 Moldavian villages in Galicia but were dissolved in mass slave population. At the

same time in the opposite direction the Moldovan dominant mass was assimilated by the native Ukrainians established in Moldova. In time there was a dual cultural assimilation resulting from the joint coexistence between the Romanians and the Ukrainians which led to a permanent restructuring of the cultural landscapes especially in the rural areas.

The markers which highlight the proof and the presence of cultural associative landscapes are the name places with a Romanian and Slavic origin. Some villages with Slav features were partially subject to a natural assimilation and preserved their identity or only the Ukrainian name, the inhabitants losing the cultural Slavic roots. The link between the two communities has structured on a religious joint Orthodox background, especially when it comes to religious symbols, marks confirming the political and cultural power of the church in a certain historical moment. Such an example is the Moldavian Church (Voloșcaia) in Lvov founded by Alexandru Lapusneanu in 1534 and finished by prince Miron Radul Barnovschi in 1629[6]

The evolving cultural landscapes are generated by the economic and political dynamics of Bucovina. The two communities have significantly contributed to the building of the viability of sacral landscapes by promoting Orthodox worship, with the use of tools such as the Slavic alphabet and Romanian as well. Orthodoxy was the first form of spiritual-religious manifestations that crystallized in the area of Bucovina province becoming the most powerful way to legitimize the Moldovan cultural identity.

The Orthodox Church in Bucovina was the image of the power in the spiritual and social life rooted in Byzantine Christianity. In Bucovina, orthodoxy showed its spiritual strength through the deepest forms of visual esthetics. Orthodox churches stated the idea of political and ethnic resistance manifestation through spiritual-artistic pictorial creations which have become emblems of the Romanian national identity.

Perhaps the most successful expression of semiotics in Bucovina Orthodox church emerges from the presence of the icon as a spiritual fundamental element leading to perfection. Generally in Bucovina as well as in the Orthodox Church the visual elements, the frescoes and the icons are a sublime combination between art and faith, a unique phenomenon in the Christian space. To this, we also add the strong manifestation of the Byzantine branch of monasticism and which through its exemplary spiritual strengths proposed to the masses was the ultimate model towards the spiritual consciousness of the Orthodox believers. The worldwide famous churches for the breathtaking paintings Arbore, Humor, Moldovița, Pătrăuți, Probota, St George of St. John the New Monastery of Suceava, Sucevița, Voroneț, Dragomirna, Bălinești and Râșca were included in the World Heritage List. The monasteries of Bucovina had a privileged social position as they owned territories, forests, farmlands, villages, thesauri, books and valuable manuscripts, gathering impressive fortunes and an important political position. Monks had an important role, they supported the theological activities, ecclesiastical art, religious practice and cultural activities including cultural ones. The Rulers, the Moldavian boyars and the dignitaries were the direct promoters of Orthodox worship through the raising of the religious establishments.

The painted monasteries and churches are built in the characteristic style of the 15th century developed in Constantinople, which became again Christian and which highlighted its smaller sizing but also the impressive paintings which take the mosaics place. Mural painting is diversified and more profound in expressions as well as better organized. The iconographic programme of the paintings are presented in highly structured and long selected scenes from The Cycle of the Passion. The lives of saints, scenes of hymns and religious songs, eschatological themes, The Menology- full calendar of the days in Church year) etc.

The strongest sacral elements of the Bucovina's religious landscapes are the painted monasteries and churches. The most profound and valuable cultural landscapes were built on account of these churches. During the centuries the paintings were gradually attacked by harmful factors, whether natural or anthropogenic. This situation led to a rapid degradation of sacral landscape. At the Voronet Monastery was evident the transformation of blue azurite in the malachite green.

There are many scratches or damage caused by overlap of names and dates. Paradoxically, in some cases this damage gets documentary value as in case of mentioning scrawled over the paintings, of the return date of the relics of St. John the New in Suceava.

The dramatic and difficult destiny due to the succession of unfavorable historical circumstances of the Hebrew population in Northern had a complex oscillating social and political dynamic. One of the first factors that influenced this development was caused by the psychological marginalization and the anti-Semitism emerged amid a German background, either paradoxically nationalist developed inside the Bukovina area with the reputation of being ethnically tolerant, to which other factors can be added such as prosperity, commercialism and ethnic characteristics .

In Bucovina the sacral landscapes developed by the Hebrew community have certain peculiarities of identity arising from the historical conditions. The mosaic common consciousness was manifested less towards the dependence on space, but especially on the attention given to the conservation and preaching of Jewish cultural and spiritual creations. The reinterpreted Jewish mysticism under the tragic pogroms and the social pressures started and developed a new dogmatic direction, a new unique concept of religious life, *Hasidim*. *The Hasidic movement* peaked in its forms of expression in Sadagura city in northern Bukovina, where the landscape is dominated by the sacral image of Hasidic Jews. The Hasidism supported concepts based on a permanent relationship with God, in goodness and piety, an open spiritual life, with no borders because of the theological customs.

In Bucovina, the Jews joined the German community as they used German in official situations and education was achieved in schools which taught in German, this created some difficulty in assessing clearly the numerical demographic of this ethnic group.

The Jews in Bucovina came from Bohemia, Poland and Russia. However there were Jewish merchants and craftsmen in Moldavia according to some documents even from the 16th century. The Habsburg administration found a quite fast growth in the number of ethnic Hebrew, so in 1774 there were 526 people, and in 1782 there were 714 Jewish

families. In 1799 there were 3366 ethnic Hebrew and 1904 there were almost 100,000[5]. From a religious point of view the Jews in Bucovina formed two distinct groups: the Orthodox Jews or the traditionalists and the modernists Jews -the reformed based on new ideologies open to progress.

Throughout the time, the Jews have built an average class of the small bourgeoisie. They spoke both Hebrew and German. The Jews settled mainly in large cities, the first centers being Suceava, Siret, Radauti, Chernivtsi, Sadagura subsequently contributing to the development of the rural settlements and their transformation into semi-urban areas between 1780 and 1859, thus new 65 towns appeared.

The changes in the urban landscapes caused by the presence of ethnic Hebrew were not only emphasized by the economic features, the appearance of factories, workshops, stores or banks. At the same time the economic progress led to the social and the cultural Hebrew landscapes were marked primarily by the presence of typical elements of Jewish worship, places of worship called synagogues.

The sacral landscapes were well defined for the Hebrew community that through its large number of churches reflected the interest for culture and education, but also for the high level of material wealth. Once the Jewish synagogues disappeared gradually, most of them have closed since 1960 and converted into warehouses or workshops. The last outpost of the Jewish spirituality is the Great Temple in Radauti. Synagogues were in the care of the rabbis who had an important social role in addition to the prelate and the counselor or judge. Throughout the Romanian Jewish history In Moldova there were more than 85 synagogues and other houses of worship, of 11 which located in Bucovina cities and which played an important role in maintaining the Jewish rite.

The first synagogue built in 1830 by Gewölbe-Schull appeared in Radauti, then other 22 more were built, three being the most important ones. Initially there were also prayer houses set up in private homes. In 1880 the building of a temple similar to that of Chernivtsi was decided. The Great Temple of Radauti was true to the Moorish architectural style. Its construction started in 1879 and it represents a picture of Hebrew architectural mastery. The central positioned building dominates with its stature its neighborhoods represented by green spaces and houses. The front of the building is carried between the two large towers on a series of colonnades marking the eardrum floor. The diffusion of the architectural elements can be seen in the form of Orthodox domes of the twin towers that surround the Great Temple. The two towers illustrate the Orthodox-Byzantine influence in the trefoil appearance of the superior window frames and in the Moldavian monastic style of the towers' domes. The sober interior brings together the religious elements in an ensemble inspired by the Moorish, Baroque and Renaissance style.

Together with the gradual extinction of the Hebrew community through emigration, the disappearance of most of these religious buildings took place, in time only a very small number of synagogues resisted the transformation of the sacral landscape (there are 11 declared synagogues as functional). Among the most important ones, which were built in the early-19th century, the oldest ones maintain the Jewish symbolical sacred value

landscape, others have become simple buildings of secondary importance in the years following World War I. They fulfill various functions such as residential, administrative, industrial functions or have simply disappeared.

A second value for the Hebrew community, a visible and well-defined space is the cemetery sacral landscape. The Jewish cemeteries were a clearly represented space, usually bounded by high walls. The Hebrew cemetery is important for its deeper connotations from the perspective of an exiled dispersed people without a country of its own, under the pressure of successive pogroms from other social forces and nations. The cemetery represents the *Bet olam* or the house of eternity, where the oscillation ends for the one who passed away.

The large number of Hebrew cemeteries and their surface represent indicators of the intensity of the Hebrew dwelling in Bukovina.

We can identify a number of symbols in the sacral landscapes such as monasteries and churches, either Catholic or Orthodox old style. The first religious buildings were made of wood, just as the two churches in Chernivtsi that were destroyed by fire. In their place, the Armenian community raised an imposing Catholic Baroque building but with obvious local and Polish influences in red brick in the period between 1870-1875. You can see a number of similarities with other sacral buildings from Bukovina during the 19th century, the porch entrance being the one that stands out. The lack of parishioners and clergy led to a tainted significance and initial functionality, the original church transforming into a concert hall. Other Armenian settlements were the churches in Suceava, known as Hagiigadar Church (or Hagiugadar) built by Dragan Danovac and dedicated to St. Mary. Unfortunately the agitated historic events transformed the religious edifice with a succession of destructive incidents, the settlement being robbed by invaders or losing its sacral function, temporarily becoming a storage room. The appropriate reverse slope cuestasiform space area, Zamca was the development area of the Armenian cultural landscape.

The Armenian cemeteries are testimonies about their long temporal presence in Bukovina. In Suceava there are two small cemeteries. The first one has stone crosses and is dominated by the chapel built in simple Baroque lines belonging to the Prunku family one of the richest families in Bukovina. The Red Tower downstream cemetery, named as the church, reveals a series of sumptuous and elegant stone crypts that are carefully crafted with ornamental stucco are an illustration of the material welfare of the Armenian bourgeoisie.

The presence of the ethnic Ukrainians in Bukovina was reported starting with the Middle Ages, an eloquent example being the Ukrainian prisoners that Stefan the Great brought to the Moldovan lands. Numerous villages were previously inhabited by small communities of Ukrainians and Poles Tartars and Turks, before the annex of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first contacts between the Romanians and the Ruthenians / Ukrainian were made in terms of neighborhood, but mostly because of the common Orthodox spiritual fund.

After 1775, together with the massive penetration of Ukrainians from Galicia, but also with the contribution of the imperial administration the population from the northern Bukovina gradually became dominantly Slav. At the foundation of a large Ukrainian community with a Greek Catholic confession along with the Orthodox confession, there was the interest of the imperial management to undermine the power of the Orthodox Church, a process which started with the massive migration of Catholics in Galicia after 1770.[3]

A testimony of the Ukrainian presence with a Greek Catholic confession are represented by the places of worship raised by them: The Church of the Assumption from Cacica built in 1865 or the Greek Catholic church in Radauti called “The Birth of Virgin Mary” in 1935. In the villages from the north of Bucovina, the Ukrainian churches have many similarities with the Orthodox Romanian churches.[3]

Once the ethnic structure has been modified among the rural communities by the increased number of the Ukrainians in most of the Northern Bucovina changes appeared in terms of the holly landscapes. This way the wooden Orthodox churches built before 1780 by the Romanians were taken by the Orthodox Ukrainian communities in some cases making room for new elements and adjustments specific to the old tradition Orthodox Church. Many churches were built with the help of the Religious Fund of Bucovina after 1780. This was the case with the churches in Coțmani, Mitcău, Ocna, Iucăuți, Verbăuți, Cuciurmic, Lașchiuca, Pohărlăuți, Șișcăuți villages which were first mentioned in documents in the XV-th century In the Southern part there add up Milișăuți, Bălcăuți, Frătăuți devenit Călinești Enache, Călinești Cuparenco, Serbăuți, Hatna became Dărmănești villages where can be found Ukrainian elements like Slavic style icons, the eight edges cross, the long octagonal spires and floral decorations. After 1940 the church from Southern Bucovina belonging to Romania are structured respecting the Romanian patterns.

The Ruthenians living on the top of Obcina Low Mountains were named “Hutul’s” existing in villages like: Răstoace, Câmpulung Ruse, Putila since Vasile Lupu’s reign being under the management of the powerful monastery of Putna. In time there can be noticed a contribution to holly landscapes of Ukrainian and Romanian elements related to the political situation, the movement of ethnic communities to the arrival of some communities either Slavic or Romanian. They left a trace by creating a complex cultural-religious environment which embodies both Slavic and Latin elements.

Lipovan Russians got to Bucovina by the help of Habsburg administration in the Slavic region in the nearby neighbourhood. Being motivated by the facilities offered by the authorities (practising old tradition orthodoxy, no military service, tax free) they built up small communities especially in rural areas: Climăuți, Lipoveni și Fântâna Albă dar și în unele orașe Cernăuți, Storojineț, Rădăuți, Siret, Suceava, Gura Humorului etc. In comparison with other ethnic groups strongly affected by the Catholic cultural-confessional elements, kept alive by the pressure of the Hapsburg administration, Lipovan Russians remained faithful to old tradition Orthodoxy with no modifications or deviation from the rigours of the Orthodox rites obvious in the religious landscapes created. Thus

the Lipovan Russian community built in Bucovina a series of typical holly landscapes a bit altered, fact proven by their resistance and function up to present day.

This community was keen on preserving, respecting and passing on the traditional elements, the Orthodox calendar, the old icon painting style. The icon has a primary value in the culture of Lipovan Slavic.. The cultural landscapes made in Bucovina by the Lipovan called “Staroveri” (only in this area) respect an old pattern which was not interpreted by the descendants and to which the ethnic communities in the vicinity of Bucovina area did not make any transfer of concepts or influence. Conservatism in respecting rites was supported by the pontiffs of the Lipovan Russians from Fintina Alba. The specific elements belonging to old tradition Orthodox rite are obvious in the image of the Metropolitan Cathedral Uspenia from Fintina Alba and in the churches from Manolea. The Lipovan cross had 8 edges, the vertical side was cut in three horizontal sides, the middle one being bigger than the other two.

The Polish were another community who brought a great contribution to the diversity of the multicultural aspect in Bucovina area. Historical evidence proves the presence of some ancient connections with the medieval Poland. The first Polish were spotted in Siret once there was built the first Franciscan-Catholic Bishopric which comprised a church and a monastery. The aim was expanding Catholicism in Northern Moldova. The process was difficult as the masses were mainly Orthodox. With the Catholic missionaries there came numerous stonemasons, miners, carpenters, etc. who contributed to the evolution of handicrafts and trades but they especially provoked landscape changes in the area where Moldavian communities were living. The Polish settlers came to Bucovina in different periods during The Middle Ages. After 1774 their migration benefits from the support of the imperial authorities. The first settled close to Suceava forming a community of miners. They created Cacica between 1790-1791. There were other groups of Polish who came in this area taking advantage of the support given by Viennese Imperial Court and who created important communities both in Northern and Southern Bucovina. The Polish were in majority in Bulai, Ruda, Solonețul Nou, Poiana Micului, Pleșa și Păltinoasa. They also formed a strong intellectual community in urban areas as Cernăuți, Suceava și Gura Humorului. They had a big contribution to the local landscape as they settled also in the mountainous areas of Dorna basin, Cazadca village. Another group settled down initially in Cernauti town. In short they migrated to the Southern part of the province and settled in less populated areas. This way, villages like Solonețul Nou, Poiana Micului și Pleșa were revitalised between 1832-1842.[3]. The Polish Catholic communities contributed to the evolution of the holly landscapes by building some churches which impress through their grandeur and add up spiritual value to the area. As a landmark there can be mentioned the Catholic church from Suceava.

CONCLUSION

The church from Bucovina became the unique force that was assuring national surviving for small communities caught in the circle of the geo-political fight. In Bucovina it was faith that led to identity. In difficult historical moments it was the church who offered the

individual the safety and the sense of belonging to community. The economical power of the Romanian Orthodox church was obvious after its involvement in the socio-geopolitical fight. The social and political power of Metropolitan Church of Radauti, the landmark of Romanian Orthodox Church in Bucovina which built up during more than three centuries by collecting goods became an issue for the imperial interests as it was seen as the only impediment in the process of uprooting the Romanians.

The diffusion of the holly Catholic elements was the tool which helped the imperial administration to alter in some areas the spiritual mentality provoking this way changes between the ethnic communities which manifested in bringing new elements to the holly landscapes previously created or by developing some new ones.

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