

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE PROBLEM OF BUKOVINA WITHIN THE EUROPEAN GEOPOLITICAL SPACE

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**Rezumat:** Problema Moldovei nord-vestice (numită de ocupații austriece Bucovina) a apărut în spațiul geopolitic european în 1775, când teritoriul respectiv a fost anexat de Imperiul Habsburgic. Totuși, până atunci partea nordică a viitoarei Bucovina (Țara Șipenișului) a fost disputată de Polonia și Moldova. Cu toate acestea, hotarul polono-moldovenesc fusese clar stabilit, incluzând partea nordică a Bucovinei (dorită de Polonia) în Principatul Moldovei. Împăratul și administrația austriacă au folosit câteva  **motive**  pentru anexarea Moldovei nord-vestice: 1. impunerea unui cordon „sanitar” împotriva ciumei („care se stinsese de mult în Moldova”); 2. „necesitatea” anexării unei „fâșii” (în realitate, au fost anexate două mari ținuturi) din teritoriul Moldovei pentru construcția unui drum care să lege Galiția de Transilvania; 3. drepturile istorice ale Pocuției (respectiv, Galiției), ajunse în posesia Austriei, asupra nordului Moldovei (Ținutului Șipenișului). Printre **cauzele** anexării menționăm: 1. „nepotolita poftă de noi achiziții teritoriale”: pofta de expansiune a imperiului și de acaparare a noi teritorii aducătoare de profit; 2. compensarea pierderii Olteniei cu un alt teritoriu – în speță, cu cel al Moldovei nord-vestice; 3. dorința de a avea o zonă strategică din care să fie desfășurată o expansiune ulterioară în Principatele Moldova și Valahia, respectiv în regiunea Dunării de Jos și în Balcanii de Est. O soluție a problemei comunității românești din nordul Bucovinei este posibilă prin trecerea localităților românești din regiunea Cernăuți în cadrul Republicii Moldova, în schimbul trecerii localităților locuite de ucraineni și de rusofoni din Transnistria moldovenească în cadrul Ucrainei.

**Résumé:** Le problème de la Moldavie de nord-ouest (nommé, aussi, par les occupants autrichiens, la Bucovine) est apparu dans l'espace géopolitique européen en 1775, lorsque le territoire respectif a été annexé par l'Empire Habsbourgeois. Jusqu'à cette époque-là, la partie nordique de la future Bucovine (le Pays du Sipiș) a été disputée par la Pologne et la Moldavie. Pourtant, la frontière polonaise moldave avait été clairement établie, incluant aussi la partie nordique de la Bucovine (voulue par la Pologne) dans la Principauté de la Moldavie. L'empereur et l'administration autrichienne ont utilisé quelques  **motifs**  pour l'annexion de la Moldavie de nord-ouest: 1. l'imposition d'un cordon “sanitaire” contre la peste (“qui était disparue depuis longtemps en Moldavie”); 2. “la nécessité” d'annexer une “bordure” (en réalité, on avait annexé deux contrées) du territoire de la Moldavie pour la construction d'un chemin qui lie la Galice de la Transylvanie; 3. les droits historiques de Pocuția (respectivement de la Galice), entrées dans la possession de l'Autriche, sur le nord de la Moldavie (la Contrée de Sipiș). Parmi les  **causes**  de l'annexion, on mentionne: 1.

*“l’insatiable désir de nouvelles annexions territoriales”*: le besoin d’expansion de l’empire et d’accaparer de nouveaux territoire apportant de profit; 2. la compensation de la perte de l’Olténie avec un autre territoire – c’est à dire, celui du nord-ouest de la Moldavie; 3. le désir d’avoir une zone stratégique, d’où on puisse développer une expansion ultérieure dans les Principautés de la Moldavie et de la Valachie, respectivement dans la région du Bas Danube et dans les Balkans d’Est. Une solution du problème de la communauté roumaine du nord de la Bucovine est possible par le passage des localités roumaines de la région Tchernovtsy à la République de la Moldavie, à l’échange du passage des localités habitées par des Ukrainiens et des Russophones de la Transnistrie moldave dans le cadre de l’Ukraine.

**Abstract:** *The problem of the North-Western Moldavia (named later on, by the Austrian occupants, Bukovina) emerged within the European geopolitical space in 1775, when the territory has been annexed by the Habsburg Empire. However, before that moment, the Northern part of the future Bukovina (Șipeniț district) was disputed by Poland and Moldavia. Yet, the Polish-Moldavian border was clearly established, including the Northern part of Bucovina (wanted by Poland) within the Moldavian Principality. The Austrian emperor and administration used a few motivations for the annexation of the North-Western Moldavia: 1. the imposition of a cordon against the plague ("which burned down long time before in Moldavia"); 2. "the need" to annex "a strip" (in reality, two big districts were annexed) from the territory of Moldavia for the construction of a road linking Transylvania with Galicia; 3. the historical rights of the Pocușia (i.e., Galiția), which have come in possession of Austria, on the North of Moldavia (Șipeniț County). Some of the real reasons of occupation were: 1. "insatiable hunger for new territorial acquisitions; lust for the expansion of the Empire and seizing new territories bringing profit; 2. to compensate for the loss of another territory – Oltenia – in this case, with the North-Western Moldavia; 3. a desire to have a strategic area to be pursued in a subsequent expansion in Moldavia and Wallachia, respectively in the Danube region and in the Eastern Balkans. As in June 1940, the Soviet authorities have linked the issue of Bessarabia with the issue of Bukovina, I believe that the problem of Transnistria (Moldavia) should be viewed in connection with the issue of ethnic Romanian Community territory of Northern Bukovina (now in Cernăuți region). A solution for the problem of the Romanian community in Northern Bukovina is possible by the passage of municipalities inhabited by Romanians from Northern Bukovina to Republic of Moldavia, in return for passing several areas with villages and towns populated by Ukrainians or Russian speakers from Moldavian Transnistria to Ukraine.*

**Keywords:** *Bukovina, Moldavia, geopolitics, Poland, Austria, Russia, Romania, USSR.*

## Introduction

The annexation of the North-Western part of the Principality of Moldavia (named *Bukovina* by the Austrian occupants) in 1775 was preceded by periods of occupation of certain areas of the concerned region, and of the fortress of Hotin, by the neighboring Poland. The annexation of Bessarabia by Russia in 1812 was

preceded by Turkish annexations of the counties of Chilia (July 14, 1484) and Cetatea Albă (August 5, 1484), the county of Tighina and Budjak steppe – where they established the Nogai Tatars (1538) and Hotin County.<sup>1</sup>

### Pre-Moldavian period

Before submitting data on the Polish-Moldavian territorial dispute, we have to report on events in 1359 in regards to Șipeniț County. Dimitrie Onciul refers to the Volokh Princes (1359), recorded by the Polish chronicler Dlugosz, who "still, are not known in Moldavian Chronicles; their names are not in the diptych which contains the oldest authentic list of rulers princes from Bogdan hither"<sup>2</sup>. After the death of one ruler, Ștefan, "his sons, Ștefan and Petru started the quarrel for the paternal inheritance. The youngest son, Petru, with the help of the Hungarians, occupied the throne and banished his elder brother; Ștefan asked for help from King Casimir of Poland, and provided obedience of Moldavia to the Polish suzerainty. In 1359, at the St. Peter and Paul festal occasion, Casimir sent an army in Moldavia as an aid to Ștefan. But the Polish army registered a hard failure in the «Plonini» Woods, land of Șipeniț<sup>3</sup>, and many Polish noblemen were made prisoners by Moldavians"<sup>4</sup>. I think that in this passage, names "Moldavia" and "Moldavians" must be accepted with some reserves, because the medieval sources mentioned the word "Vlachs": "It is known that that after a decisive win at Sinie Vody on Tatars, Podolia region – including the Bolohoven Knezats – got under the Lithuanian domination of Teodor Coriatovici. However, in 1354, he withdrawn his lordship to King Louis the Great of Hungary; he also surrendered the fortresses to «Valach» (...); the information is provided by the Russian Chronicle of Bychowich", and those fortresses are represented by Hotin, Țețina and Hmielov"<sup>5</sup>. Referring to the Hotin fortress, Gumenâi stated: "Of course, being situated in a territory inhabited by Valachs (...) the garrison was composed of Romanians, information in this respect presenting Bycovich, in 1354"<sup>6</sup>. In the same respect, Gheorghe I. Brătianu stated: "In the same year [1359], a Polish expedition against the small Moldavian [?] Northern State of Șipeniț, at the edge of Galiția, ended by a disaster in the Bukovina forest: soon a matrimonial union

<sup>1</sup> In 1713, the Turks took control of the fortress of Hotin, and in 1715 the land was converted into a Raya.

<sup>2</sup> Dimitrie Onciul, *Din istoria Bucovinei* [From the history of Bukovina], Chișinău, Editura Universitas, 1992, p. 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Sepencensis terra*, in Bukovina, between the Prut and Dniester, where today is located the village of Șipeniți.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>5</sup> Ion Gumenâi, *Istoria Ținutului Hotin. De la origini până la 1806* [History of the Hotin land. From its origins to 1806], Chișinău, Editura Civitas, 2002, p. 68.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

favored a merger of that voivodship from North, with that which was created by the Princes who emigrated from Maramureș; this will give enough force to the unified Moldavia to the extend its border to the East, and to ensure a full control of the commercial road, which will be its main economic and political reason of existence"<sup>7</sup>. It is known that in 1392 Moldavia has imposed a control over that road: "This road is the one that, ultimately, without any doubt, led to the foundation and to the development of the Moldavian State, from its cradle in the Carpathians of Bukovina to the "Big See", which its rulers declared that they have reached in 1392"<sup>8</sup>. Whereas, with "convincing evidence", Ștefan Gorovei showed that *Dragoș' settlement* occurred in 1347, and the overthrow of his dynasty by Bogdan after 1364<sup>9</sup>. I believe that, in 1359 was recorded the small Valachs voivodeship resistance against Poland, and the Polish chronicler Dlugosz named it *Șipeniț Country (Terra Sepenecensis)*. As Brătianu stated, the year **1359** remained in Moldavian Annals/Chronicles as ***the year of the independence*** of the common State of the Principality of Moldavia, which, however, only later acquired the independence against Hungary. If subsequently, in blurry conditions, the Șipeniț Country became a part of Galiția, the information presented above explains why the rulers of Moldavia were being interested in that territory.

### The Polish – Moldavian territorial dispute

In accordance with the Moldavian chronicles, an action that led in future to the Moldavian-Polish dispute can be identified during the reign of Petru I Mușat "Prince of Moldavia (1375-1391), founder of the *Mușatin's Dynasty*, son of Margareta Mușata, the Lațcu Voievod's sister"<sup>10</sup>. Petru "borrows the Polish King, which was in all respects very puzzling, a sum of 3,000 Italian silver coins, and receives as surety the *Halici County*. But this County of Halici was only proper to the North of Upper Moldavia, nowadays Bukovina; so Petru could certainly have very well this country through his chancellors. But then they established the most appropriate Land for such possession, in the so-called *Pocuția*: this province, in direct touch with the northern border of Moldavia, included the *Șipeniț Country*, where Lord did put a "staroste", according to the Polish fashion; the County was including the fortress of *Țețina*, the ruins of which can be seen near Cernăuți – and *Hmielov*, that was utterly destroyed;

<sup>7</sup> Gheorghe Brătianu, *Marea Neagră* [Black Sea], Iași, Editura Polirom, 1999, p. 386.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Neagu Djuvara, *Thocomerius – Negru vodă. Un voivod de origine cumană la începuturile Țării Românești* [Thocomerius – Negru vodă. A voievode of cuman descent at the beginnings of Wallachia], București, Editura Humanitas, 2007, p. 208.

<sup>10</sup> *100 de portrete istorice color. Regi, domnitori, alte personalități* [100 historical portraits in color. Kings, rulers, other figures], Iași, Editura Porțile Orientului, f.a., p. 14.

maybe even the *Hotin*, a big fortress, placed on the right bank of the Dniester river, right on the water. That country remained in the Moldavia's possession for a long time, although the Polish kings never accepted to leave their right on it, considering it as a hostage for money which the Polish did not want to pay at all"<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, it seems that when the Şipeniţ Country was incorporated into the Principality of Moldavia for money lent by the Moldavian ruler. From the point of view of Polish, it was the putting into service of that territory, not a surrender of it: they have never accepted to leave the right over the territory in question, whilst they did not want to return the contracted debt.

During the reign of Alexandru cel Bun (1400 – 1432) it was recorded a further stage of negotiations on the territory in question: "Alexandru leaved to the King of Poland 1,000 Silver coins of Genoa from the debt and got from the King, who no longer called back Şepeniţ country in 1411, "the true" *Pokutsya*, with the famous fortresses of Sniatin and Colomea"<sup>12</sup>. We can see that Alexandru cel Bun obtained a legal regulation by an interstate (international) act (an agreement) on the membership of the Şipeniţ Country to Moldavia, but also the right (as a hostage on account of unpaid debt of 2,000 "Genoese Silver coins") on "the true *Pocuţia*" – the southern part of Halici Country (with the citadels of Colomea and Sniatin). However, the Polish did not pay back the debt, so in 1432, Alexandru cel Bun has conducted a predatory campaign in *Pocuţia*, as a result of which Moldavia wasted the *Teţina* and *Hmielov*<sup>13</sup>. After the death of Alexandru cel Bun, Moldavia has failed into decline: "Moldavia, which was not threatened by any enemy, did fail quickly in a few years after the death of Alexandru cel Bun. Although *Ilie* was the older brother, though his father has took him, a piece of time, as the companion near the throne (...), although, last but not least, he was the legitimate son unlike other sons born from voivode's relations and, there for he deserved to get as wife the *Vladislav* the younger's sister, the new King of Poland, - his brother *Ştefan* dared to rise up against him. They have fought a number of years, and Moldavia dwindled in importance, meaning it must recognize, in humiliating conditions, the sovereignty of Poland and to leave for Poland the *Pocuţia*"<sup>14</sup>. Namely Poland supported the replacement of *Ilie* (or *Iliaş*) with *Ştefan*, as the first "followed his father's foreign policy, while maintaining Moldavia within the anti-Poland Coalition"<sup>15</sup>. Polish King *Sigismund Kiestut* in 1433 "agreeing with Moldavia's Lord [*Ştefan*] by an exchange of letters, in addition to the fact that *Teţina* and *Hmielov* will be returned to Moldavia (lost by Moldavia during

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<sup>11</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor* [History of Romanians], Chişinău, Editura Universitat, 1992, p. 74.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup> Ion Gumenăi, *Istoria Ținutului Hotin...*, p. 69.

<sup>14</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor...*, p. 92.

<sup>15</sup> Ion Gumenăi, *Istoria Ținutului Hotin...*, p. 69.

the campaign of Alexandru cel Bun in Pocuția, in 1432), established the boundaries between Moldavia and Poland. The act stated: «And between these towns Țețina and Hmielov and our Country Russia will be this border: first between our town Sneatin and Șipeniț – Șipeniț that belongs to Moldavia, these are separated by the Kolachin river, and from the Kolachin river to the great river Dniester, above the village Potok, which village Potok belongs to Moldavia, and from this village down on the Nistru river, up to the [Black] Sea belongs to the Country of Moldavia, and over the shores of the Dniester river is our Country of Russia». As is indicated by this act, Hotin was in possession of Moldavia. But disputes for the throne between Iliăș and Petru will determine the first to request the support of Polish, making them a concession, namely offering them Șipeniț Country, «the country which Moldavia had from Crown, with the towns of this Șipeniț Country namely Hotin, Țețina and Hmielov and with all districts, places and villages of this country we giving them back. Iliăș justified the fortress' relinquishment as a reward for the Alexandru cel Bun predatory campaign in Pocuția"<sup>16</sup>. But the document indicates that the Poles took over the territory because the Moldavia Country "had it from the Crown", meaning that the owner has returned what is his.

The next phase related to the political evolution of the Șipeniț territory was recorded during the reign of Ștefan cel Mare (1457-1504). "From Poland, Ștefan claimed the land which his predecessor Iliăș left (promising also to return Șipeniț Country), i.e. the Pocuția. Yet before getting up on the throne the new King Jan Olbracht (...) Ștefan permeated in Pocuția and picked up in the dominion (1490). Jan Olbracht could not tolerate long time this humiliation and to receive such a significant damage; so in the year 1497 (...) began an expedition against Moldavia. At first, the young King, however, does not present him self as an enemy of Ștefan; contrariwise, he promised to help him to get back Chilia and Cetatea Albă"<sup>17</sup>. After the Poles attack and battles at Codrii Cosminului and Lențești, Moldavia keeps the disputed territory; According to N. Iorga, "Șipeniț Country, meaning Pocuția" is not "the true" Pocuția from the South of Halici Country. "In the years of old age, Ștefan had just one wish: to strengthen his domination in Pocuția and to snatch the recognition of this domination from Polish King. At 1502, fall, immediately after the death of Jan Olbracht, not recognizing the Treaty of 1499 towards his descendant *Alexander*, who was, however, an old friend of Moldavians, Ștefan put his hand across the Land on which he has having a right. Everywhere *Russians* of Orthodox law received him with joy, the Moldavian governor (pârcălab) and customs officer seated in all the fortresses of the Land, till Halici. King Alexander could not find any support against Moldavians: with the Turks and Tatars Ștefan has stood in peace, and they do not take

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69-70.

<sup>17</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor ...*, p. 121-122.

a dare to try anything against him. The far *Tsar of Moscow, Ivan*, was a relative, by the marriage of the Ștefan's daughter Elena, with the Tsar's successor. The new situation in Pocutsia, be the power of Moldavian weapons remained, so, untouched"<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, this time, Ștefan cel Mare came in possession of "the true" Pocuția, beyond the Kolachin River – the Southern part of Galiția.

To note in this context that the disputed territory – Șipeniț Country and Pocuția – do not concern the South half of the future Bukovina: the Moldova River Valley – the old hearth of the Moldavian State, where was built the monastery of Moldovița, so much the less the old capital Suceava and other ancient localities (Ștefan cel Mare built churches at Reuseni and Bădăuți<sup>19</sup>, not to insist on the monastery of Putna).

The descendant of Ștefan cel Mare, Bogdan III *the Blind* (1504-1517), for a Royal link – for becoming relatives with the King of Poland (he asked for one of his sisters) – "was able to immolate *Pocuția*". The Lord of Moldavia has ceded the region, but the Polish King did not send the bride. "Failing towards the new King *Sigismund*, who was to reign in Moldavia if Jan Olbracht would be a winner in 1497, Bogdan gets angry and raids over in Poland, trying to take control again in Pocuția (1506)"<sup>20</sup>. "When the Poles try to take revenge, they could not make a stunt (...); the war was at a stop from a time (1510) by both parties fatigue"<sup>21</sup>. Pocuția remained under the Polish domination in the effect.

Referring to Petru Rareș (1527-1538, 1541-1546), the historian Iorga writes that he was "a neighbor bent to interfere continually in the domestic affairs of Poland, through Pocuția and of Hungary by Transylvania"<sup>22</sup>. "With great prowess Petru-Vodă prepared his attack on Pocuția, keeping talking with the Polish and getting the permission from the Sultan"<sup>23</sup>. "With much easiness Petru was able to get this way Pocuția. Poles did not have a permanent army, but had fought only with the *mercenary*, which necessitate money, and the Kingdom did not want to pay, or with the routs of nobles, which gathering very slowly; castles were badly defended. But if Petru thought that to conquer Pocuția means to keep it, he was all wet. Poland has great generals, and especially Jan Tarnowski, famous everywhere. Thus, when a Polish Army had the chance to gather again, Pocuția got again quickly under the King's domination. However, Petru didn't want to leave this like that, but in a strong rushing, he got in the heart of the province. Then, on 22 August 1531, the fight from Obertyn took place, where the tactics of Tarnowski, who commended the army himself, the mastery of his gunners, has overcome Rareș; our Lord lost the guns from

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 124.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

Feldioara, and run, with three wounds on the body, to Moldavia. Petru, who sent forth the routs of predators, among which *Turks* and *Tatars*, in the country which he could not keep, judged this way the Obertyn affliction, in way that shows from what high point of view our people from the past looked at the defeats and needs which were coming upon them: «Do not be proud, for his win the King, hath he did not got it with his self power, but with luck, that changes often; and did not conquered the King, but God, who punishes Lords for their great confidence in them self»<sup>24</sup>. As a result of the actions of Petru Rareș it seems that Moldavia has resigned with the loss of "the true" Pocuția – beyond Kolachin, as well as with the amount of money borrowed by Petru I Mușat to Polish Kingdom. But Poland has acquired subsequent the Hotin fortress from Moldavians.

The following historical moment linked to the territory in dispute was the one relating to the period from the reign of Alexandru Lăpușneanu (1552-1561, 1564-1568). Pointing out that his reign meant "disunity, cruelty and losses towards foreigners", Iorga pointed out: "From now on Moldavia did not take a dare to ask from Poles, seriously, Pocuția; if, thanks to the Turkish demands, *Hotin* become Moldavian again, Alexandru-Vodă does not reinforce it, but contrariwise, commanded, in his second reign, to broken walls, that can no longer be a threat to neighbors beyond the Dniester and, especially, to the Turks, who wanted that never from the country over which Ștefan and Petru Rareș held sway over cannot rises any distress for them"<sup>25</sup>. However, Ioan Voda cel Cumplit (1572-1574) "held up Pocuția"<sup>26</sup>. Nevertheless, the question had been clarified, meaning that the border between Moldavia and Poland settled on the Rivers Cheremush, Kolachin and Hotin.

However, Poland has demanded on several occasions from Ottoman Porte the area from the Moldavian framework, which can be identified as the Șipeniț Country. By "capitulations" (treaties) between Moldavia and Ottoman Empire – basic element of Moldavian-Turkish relations in medieval times, the Porte did not cede it. The first capitulation was completed in 1511 by Bogdan, the Prince of Moldavia, and the second one, by Petru Rareș, in 1529. These agreements stipulated that "The Porte is obliged to defend Moldavia against any aggression" and that "The borders of Moldavia will be keep intact throughout their extent"<sup>27</sup>. Although some historians dispute the authenticity of the "capitulations" principle of taking under protection of a State that has voluntarily subjected its borders and defence (in return for a tribute) by the suzeran power is known in the Islamic world, which has belonged the Ottoman Empire too. In 1699 it ended a conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish State by the peace of Karlowitz. The northern part of the Moldavia Country, which

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153-154.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>27</sup> Mihai Eminescu, *Basarabia* [Bessarabia], Sibiu, Editura Mileniul Trei, 1990, p. 19.

was under the occupation of Poland, was restored. About the peace concluded, the Moldavian chronicle says: "The Poles still hardly demanded Country of Moldavia, but the Turks answered to Poles about the Country of Moldavia that they can not give the Country of Moldavia to be them a gift because it is free, it is dedicated to the Turks, it is not taken with the sword. Thus, the Poles seeing that, agreed this way: in the fortresses and monasteries they took and other places, everything to give back the Moldavians. And Turks to return Camenița fortress to Poles, with all its land, and Ukraine, and to raise the all the Nohai from Bugeac and to remove them beyond river Don, only the Tatars from Bugeac to be able to remain. And Turks never will repair Hotin, or another fortress in Moldavia the Turks will nor build"<sup>28</sup>. In the 1700s the Polish King sent an envoy to Istanbul in order "to show for Ottoman dragomans the instability from Moldavian-Polish border and to ask for a correction of borders for the benefit of the Kingdom, by including Hotin and Cernăuți counties in its composition. The Ottoman Porte still did not cede and the borders were re-established by the Treaty of Delimitation of 14 October 1703, on the previous line before the war"<sup>29</sup>.

Slightly later, Austria began to claim on the territory of Moldavia. At the end of the 17th century, Transylvania entered within the Austrian Empire as an autonomous Principality. In 1685 the Austrian troops entered territory of Transylvania, and, in 1699, by the Treaty of Karlowitz (Sremski Karlovci, in present-day Serbia), the Ottoman Empire ceded to Austria: Hungary, Transylvania, Croatia and Slavonia. Banat of Timișoara remained in the Ottoman Empire, but was annexed by Austria in 1718 by the Treaty of Passarowitz (Požarevac). In 1718, in an answer given to the Austrian authorities, who demanded Moldavia, the Ottomans used the same argument – they can not cede Moldavia Country because it's "dedicated, not conquered with the sword". After 1793, after the second partition of Poland, Austria came into possession of Galiția and it oriented its claims on a part of Moldavia – its northwestern side.

### **The annexation of the North-Western Moldavia (future Bukovina) by Austria**

In 1775 we consign the moment of annexation by Austria of the North-Western part of Moldavia. "Although at the peace of Passarowitz the Porte declared it may not yield the Country of Moldavia to Austria, being dedicated, not conquered with the sword, however, later it ceded Bukovina and Bessarabia in 1812, i.e. the Hotin district, a large part of land of Moldavia and the properly Bessarabia by the Danube River"<sup>30</sup>. By the Treaty of Passarowitz from July 21, 1718 ended the war between the

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<sup>28</sup> Ion Neculce, *Letopiseșul Țării Moldovei* [Chronicle of Moldavia], Chișinău, Editura Știința, 1993, p. 36.

<sup>29</sup> Ion Gumenăi, *Istoria Ținutului Hotin...*, p. 90-91.

<sup>30</sup> Mihai Eminescu, *Basarabia*, Chișinău, Editura Verba, 1991, p. 30.

Ottoman Empire on one side and the Habsburg monarchy and the Venetian Republic of the other part. Austrian imperial troops have defeated the Ottomans, which had ceded to the House of Habsburg Banat of Timișoara, Northern Serbia, including Belgrade, Northern Bosnia and Oltenia. However, after 21 years of administration (1718-1739), due to the increasingly large difficulties encountered by the Austrians, after the war of 1737 and 1739, ended by the peace of Belgrade, Austria returned Oltenia to Ottoman Empire.

In 1775, Turkey had breached the provisions of the capitulations with Moldavia and allowed the annexation of the North-Western Moldavia by Austria. There are several causes and motivations of the annexation of the North-Western Moldavia (named Bukovina by the Austrians). Iorga notes that "*The Austrians* would have wanted to use the war [from 1768-1774] in order to uproot once again *the Oltenian districts* from the Turks. Failing, they made a deal with the Russians, and thus, when peace was now settled, scouts passed in Upper Moldavia, under the word that they came to establish a *cordon* against the plague and the imperial troops had reached, lodging pillars of border, up to *Roman*. But the Government in Vienna found that this breach would be too scandalous, so they picked only the whole *Cernăuți district*, the *Câmpulung district* and the largest part of *Suceava district*, along with *Putna*, where is buried Ștefan cel Mare, and with *Suceava*, where the greatest Lords of Moldavia had resided. Boyars protested to no avail, and Turks were influenced to agree by gifts. So in 1775 is concluded the Convention which gave to Austria, under the name of *Bukovina* (the Moldavians were saying: *Cordun*), Upper Moldavia, with the most beautiful forests, the most brilliant monasteries and villages where were living better the conscience of old peasant's independence. The Austrians hurried to break any links between these Moldavians and the old Lord's Moldavia"<sup>31</sup>. Referring to the decision to restrict the lusts of the Emperor of Austria, the historian Ion Nistor's quoted a letter: "On 19 June 1773, and Emperor Joseph visited Transylvania and reaching the Saxon's Reghin wrote from there to his mother, Empress: «I visited right now with trecătoarele and Ciuc and Gurgh with the passes leading in Moldavia, as well as a part of the territory occupied in 1769. This is a real wildness, covered with beautiful trees, but which rot without any use. If by returning of that territory to Moldavia, otherwise pretty stretched, but almost without any value, being uncultured and unpopulated, we might get the corner of Moldavia that touches and Transylvania, Maramureș and Pocuția, then it would make a useful stunt and therefore I would ask your Majesty to request Kaunitz to take into deliberation this issue». The corner of Moldavia that was mentioned by Joseph in his letter was the Upper Country of Moldavia, named after the occupation, Bukovina. But without waiting for response, Emperor Joseph II charged Carol Enzenberg, commander of the 2nd Regiment of the

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<sup>31</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria românilor...*, p. 288-289.

Romanian border guards from Năsăud, with the discreet mission to pass in Moldavia in order to collect information on the popular masses spirit and attitude of Moldavians in the case of a possible Austrian occupation"<sup>32</sup>. After the Austro-Turkish agreement from 1775 on the illegal cession of the North-Western Moldavia, "in a letter addressed on 4 February 1775 to his son and her co-regent Joseph II, Empress Maria Theresa said that she is not right in the issue of the cession and that this matter is doing a press on her conscience and she did not know how escape honorable from this abashment. From these considerations they have recourse to the appointment of the attached province, by famous beech forests - *silvae fagine* – named by chroniclers *bucovine* - after slavic name *buk* - beech, which ranged throughout the Upper Country of Moldavia, stretching out between Prut and Dniester as *small bucovins*, and between the Prut and the Valley of the upper Ceremu as *large bucovins* - *silvae faginales* or *bucovinae maiores* or *dictae minores*. And so it came to the name of *Bucovina/Bukovina* - Buchenland – for the Upper Moldavia Country, occupied by the Habsburgs and incorporated within their empire"<sup>33</sup>. Austria called the two lands of the frontier "*Bukovyna*, to cover the territorial spoils in the eyes of European diplomacy"<sup>34</sup>. Pressing of consciousness did not prevent the Maria Theresa to agree "the devouring" by the State apparatus of the Moldavian territory annexed to Austria, so those remorse were not anything but tears of a crocodile before to devour the victim.

Ion Nistor referred to some causes and motivations of the Austrian annexation. He confirmed the Iorga's thesis about annexation of North-Western Moldavia "for account of" Oltenia, mentioning the most often cited motif – the need to obtain a strip of routes linking Gali ia with Transylvania: "By the Act of partition of Poland between the three neighboring powers – Russia, Austria and Prussia – august 5, 1772, Austria is in possession of Pocu ia, Lodomeria and Gali ia, incorporating within the Habsburg empire an area of 81 900 km<sup>2</sup>, with a population of more millions souls. But in its insatiable lust for further territorial purchases, the Government from Vienna is looking to exploit the weakness of the Porte, trying to grab Oltenia, as a reward for its role of mediator between Russians and Turks. But as the occupation of Oltenia would woke up too much noise among Western powers, which agreed to hold up Poland in order to save the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, the Vienna Government endeavoured to obtain in exchange for the claims on Oltenia an extend of territory in Upper Moldavia Country, which was less exposed to the European powers, seeking to materialize their claims by occupying a narrow strip of land in Moldavia, in order to be able to open a more convenient way of communication between Transylvania and

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<sup>32</sup> Ion Nistor, *Istoria Bucovinei* [History of Bukovina], Bucure ti, Editura Humanitas, 1991, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15-16.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 398.

Gali ia, although they existed long before, through Körösmezö pass, leading from Gali ia to Maramure , by the upper Valley of the Prut and Tisa to Sighetul Marma iei"<sup>35</sup>. The reason for obtaining a road between Gali ia and Transylvania has been communicated to the Moldavian authorities from Ia i, but they have exposed the act of annexation of a stretched territory, under the pretext of invoking "the necessity" of a strip for a road link between Gali ia and Transylvania: "Information collected by Enzenberg in Moldavia cane true by the fact that the Moldavia's nobility, led by Prince Grigore Ghica opposed to the Austrian occupation, sending over memoirs to Porte, accompanied by maps by which denounced to Porte the Austria, under the pretext of opening of a road between Gali ia and Transylvania, and wants to occupy two of the most wealthy lands of Moldavia. Austria did not consider the Moldavians protest"<sup>36</sup>. In 1814, the Habsburg authorities have finished the construction of the road "by which Austria said, at the annexation of Bukovina, it needs to link Gali ia with Transylvania"<sup>37</sup>. Another formal motif of Austrians was to set up a health cordon against the epidemic of plague, "which is much ebbed in Moldavia"<sup>38</sup>.

The reason of annexation by a state of a foreign territory of another state for a need regarding a road course seemed ridiculous even in that time. Therefore, Austrian specialists in strategies have resorted to another reason: after incorporating Gali ia within the Austrian Empire, Vienna Court claimed its right (taken over from Poland) to put the problem of the territory that throughout history has been in dispute (between Poland – as a possessor of Gali ia and Moldavia): "As the reason for taking this strip of the North-Western Moldavia in order to obtain the connection between Transylvania and Gali ia was not sufficiently convincing, they tried to make other arguments, more thorough. Then they launched the hypothesis that Northern Moldavia would have belonged to the Pocu ia (a county situated between the rivers Prut, White Cheremush and Black Cheremush), which now had been annexed by Austria and the Vienna Court and would demand the "historic rights" on this county. Colonel Seeger had left recently to Warsaw, to collect historical evidence in favour of Austria pretensions on Bukovina, since Kaunitz has taken the decision to claim from Turkey this territory as part of Pocu ia"<sup>39</sup>. The Austrians would be "identified" even the old frontier between Pocu ia ( ipeni Country) and Moldavia: "Already in may 1774, two detachments of Austrian Hussars, under the pretext of a repair, have entered into Bukovina, so that immediately after the departure of the Russians to take over this territory and to fix the terminals of the frontier along the new border lines

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8-9.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>39</sup> Constantin Ungureanu, *Bucovina în perioada stăpânirii austriece (1774-1918)* [Bukovina in the time of Austrian rule, 1774-1918], Chi in u, Editura Civitas, 2003, p. 10-11.

already drawn by Mieg. During his journey in Bukovina, the captain Mieg spotted a mane of hills and mountains, which, with some interruptions, stretched from Hotin to Transylvania and which he regarded as a natural border very favorable towards Moldavia. Mieg even "discovered" a milestone, and this was interpreted as evidence that the times Poland borders would be stretched up to the ridge of the hills. In addition, Colonel Seeger, who was in Poland, worked to support the Mieg's opinion by historical data. These successes have been accepted in full by the Court of Vienna, and for these merits Captain Mieg was elevated to the rank of major"<sup>40</sup>. It should be noted that Austria had hoped to obtain the fortress Hotin with the surrounding area, or even several villages in the northern part of Hotin County, but Turkish authorities have retained their territory which they have annexed in 1715.

It deserves to be evoked some concrete means by which Austria has come into possession of the North-Western Moldavia: "On 10/21 July the Treaty of Kuchuk – Kainarji was signed by Russia and Ottoman Porte, and the Russians even in April 1774 did withdraw a part of the troops stationed in Cern u i and Suceava counties. Then the most favorable moment to make the planned annexation has come. Marshal Rumean ev was bribed with 5,000 golden and a gold tobacco holder, obtaining the tacit consent of authorities of Russia for the Austria claims"<sup>41</sup>.

Therefore, there were several **motifs** for the annexation of the North-Western Moldavia by Austria:

1. The imposition of a cordon against the plague ("which burned down long time before in Moldavia");

2. "The need" to annex "a strip" (in reality, two big districts were annexed) from the territory of Moldavia for the construction of a road linking Transylvania with Gali ia;

3. The historical rights of the Pocu ia (i.e., Gali ia), which have come in possession of Austria, on the North of Moldavia ( ipeni County).

Among the **causes** of annexation we can name:

- a) "insatiable hunger for new territorial acquisitions; lust for the expansion of the Empire and seizing new territories bringing profit;
- b) to compensate for the loss of another territory Oltenia – in this case, with the North-Western Moldavia;
- c) a desire to have a strategic area to be pursued in a subsequent expansion in Moldavia and Wallachia, respectively in the Danube region and in the Eastern Balkans.

Although in the 143 years of Austrian occupation the territory has been subjected to colonization and assimilation processes – Ukrainization (especially from

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

1786, when it was incorporated into Galicia, until 1849, when it obtained a statute of autonomy, and became a Duchy under the Empire) in 1918 Bukovina issue has been solved by the reincorporating of the North-Western Moldavia (hereinafter referred to as the Austrian Bukovina) in Romanian state, founded in 1859, including by the Principality of Moldavia (which the Bukovinian territory had been broken of, at 1775). This triumph of justice and historical truth had been possible thanks to Romanians from Bukovina, but also due to the negotiations of Romania with the Entente States: "One of the conditions of the secret Treaty, through which the Romanian Government entered into war together with the Entente Powers, was beside regaining Transylvania, also the regaining of Bucovina, down to the Prut River with its capital Cern u i, in which the Russians only after lengthy negotiations renounced and after it was demonstrated the notability of this small town for the political, ecclesiastical, cultural and economic life of Bukovina. The secret Treaty of recovering of Bukovina and Transylvania was signed in Bucharest on 4/17 august 1916"<sup>42</sup>.

Thus, Russia was intended to incorporate the extension, at the North of Hotin County, of the territory between Prut and Dniester rivers (Bessarabia). In June 1940, when the Soviet Union included in the diplomatic note (ultimatum) the demand regarding the annexation of the Northern Bukovina, the Soviets wanted to secure a direct and short link between Gali ia and Bessarabia, including a railway which connects Bessarabia with Gali ia. By collapse of the Russian Empire, Romania has been able to incorporate the entire Moldavian historical territory (including the Bukovinian territory between Prut and Dniester rivers, located north of the Hotin County) that Austria had annexed in 1775.

By annexation on June 28, 1940, of the Northern Bukovina by the totalitarian and aggressor Soviet Union, the problem of Bukovina was reopened. After August 24, 1991 – the day of Declaration of independence of Ukraine – the historical Moldavian (Romanian) territory of Northern Bukovina is under the control of the authorities from Kiev.

## Solutions

After the incorporation of North-Western Moldavia in the Habsburg Empire, several variants of administrating that territory were proposed, which, by extension, since then, could be seen as some solutions to the problem of Bukovina. "Some expressed the opinion to include Bukovina in military confine of N s ud. Others were for joining [of Bukovina] to Gali ia. An intermediate solution was of those who stipulated cutting in half of the Bukovinian territory, so that the Northern part to be

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<sup>42</sup> Ion Nistor, *Istoria Bucovinei...*, p. 371.

annexed to Gali ia, and the Southern to the confine of border guards from N s ud. (...) A single voice acted for the creation of an autonomous province of Bukovina, in order to to acquire on the way this *sympathy and confidence of the Moldavian nation* (...)”<sup>43</sup>. In June 1940, the Soviet Union invaded Northern Bukovina with the motivation that the Soviets take over that territory because "population [from that part of Bukovina] in its majority is related to Soviet Ukraine by the historic community of destiny, as well as through the national language and national [ethnic] composition". Also, the totalitarian Soviet authorities noted that "the transmission of that Northern part of Bukovina to the Soviet Union could represent – it is true only to a limited extent – a mean of compensating for that big damage, which has been brought to the Soviet Union and to the Bessarabia’s population by 22 years of Romania’s domination in Bessarabia”<sup>44</sup>. In the light of the outcome of the processes of colonization with Ukrainian population (during the Austrian occupation), perhaps even the presence of old of a Ruthenian population in ipeni Country, a solution regarding the division of the territory of Bukovina, at the end of World War I, by the ethnic criterion, between Ukrainians and Romanians, would be circumscribed in the European process of solving of the problems of the peoples of the former Habsburg Empire. In accordance with the schedule of the *14 Points* of Woodrow Wilson, the peoples got the right to constitute *states* on their historical territories. Within the terms of remaining of the North-Western territory of Moldavia (the future Bukovina) within the Moldavian State (in 1775 the territory in question was poorly populated, having a population of 70-80 thousand inhabitants on an area of 10.442 km<sup>2</sup>), through its natural development, it would certainly have been an integral part of the territory of the ethnic Moldavian (Romanian) population. Because, during the Austrian occupation, by immigrant flows – especially Ukrainians from Gali ia – it was reached a situation when, in 1918, in the Southern part of Bukovina the Romanian population was in the majority, and in the northern part the Ukrainians population was in the majority, a division of Bukovina by the ethnic criterion would be finally accepted (even if with a handshake heart for the loss of a historical Moldavian territory – of the Northern Bukovina) by the autochthonous Romanian population of the province. In June 1940, the Soviet authorities had committed an illegality against Romania, annexing a part of its national and historical territory. But the Soviets did not respect the reason/motivation from the diplomatic note (*ultimatum*): besides the illegality of an annexation of a territory which never belonged to any Ukrainian State, the crime of the Soviet authorities in 1940 consisted in the fact that the Soviet-Romanian political border has not been overlap on the ethnic border (between the two ethnic communities: Romanians and Ukrainians) as the Soviet authorities suggested that

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27-28.

<sup>44</sup> *Pakt Molotova-Ribbentropa i ego posledstviia dlea Bessarabii* [Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its consequences for Bessarabia], Chi in u, Editura Universitas, 1991, p. 19-20.

they wished to proceed. Furthermore, the Soviets annexed the Her a Region, with a compact and homogenous Romanian population, a zone that never was part of the Bessarabia or Bukovina – required by the USSR.

As in June 1940, the Soviet authorities have linked the issue of Bessarabia with the issue of Bukovina, I believe that at present the problem of Transnistria should be viewed in connection with the issue of ethnic Romanian community from the territory of the Northern Bukovina (now in Chernivtsi oblast). A solving of the problem of the Romanian community from the Northern Bukovina is possible by the passage of municipalities inhabited by Romanians (Moldavians) from the Northern Bukovina (and of the former county of Hotin) to the Republic of Moldavia, in return for passing of several areas of villages populated by Ukrainians or Russian speakers from Moldavian Transnistria within Ukraine. Regardless of the fact when this solution will be taken into account and proposed to Ukraine and to the international community by the Government from Chi in u, the Moldavian Executive must do all that is possible to help the autochthonous Romanian (Moldavian) population – from historical Moldavian estranged territories (Northern Bukovina) to preserve the ethnic identity. Currently, yet the processes of assimilation of the ethnic Romanians in Moldavian historical territories in Ukraine take proportions.