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### **Abstract**

The desire to accomplish a PhD thesis entitled “Alimentary diversity and identity in Bukovina. A geographic perspective” is the natural progression of my personal preoccupation with the study of human alimentation. Yet the reason behind selecting this theme doesn’t hark to a previous point: it is the result of a desire to innovate, to open new research directions in the Romanian geographic literature, preoccupations present in my own pre-academic educational activities. From my knowledge, such an approach has not been carried out at a national level or, moreover, a regional one, so that the advantages and disadvantages of my endeavour are evidently novel and, I hope, constructive.

The idea from which this thesis commenced was represented by the recommendations of the doctoral studies admission committee, which argued for limiting the study area—in any case, not the entire country, as I first intended—and developing an extensive stage of field work for gathering a generous novel documentary material of use for the elaboration of the thesis.

The structuring of the work mirrors a logical tackling of the theme, starting from general issues—such as an overlook of alimentation or a history of research—, continuing with the development of all the aspects concerning the regional alimentation in Bucovina, and finishing with linguistic features revealed for the Romanian-speaking population of this historical region.

The current relevancy of the subject is incontestable only on account of it appertaining to the well-known trend, established on a global level, to promote cultural heritage, regardless of its form of expression, and to valorise it through proper touristic activities.

The present PhD thesis argues for fully grasping the geographical realities, from an alimentary perspective, of a historical region located at meeting point of several great ethno-cultural communities of Eastern Europe.

The present work doesn’t aim to provide a model for conducting research on the alimentation of a certain region, but is rather an attempt to shed light on the role played by this

physiological necessity. Apparently without any special meaning, the alimentation of a community, region or nation determines, directly or indirectly, the level of a civilisation and culture.

Nowadays, the global political-economic conditions favour trade in goods and, in particular, of agro-alimentary products, from countries with surpluses to those deprived, and not only. Inside each area, either national or local, a symbiosis emerged between the imported products and the native ones, determined by specific traditional alimentary practices, as well as by the perception on the most important ones.

The problem of cultural identity in general, and of the alimentary identity in particular, concerns a wide range of issues with distinct evolution across time. Bukovina, a region characterised by physical and human-geographic complexity, also displays a variety of alimentary customs and practices. It is widely acknowledged nowadays that the alimentary specificity, with its particularising impetus, is part of the intangible heritage of each and every ethnic group.

In point of fact, the preoccupation for understanding the relationship between cultural identity and globalisation consists in understanding the manner in which local and national cultures are affected by the globalisation process. Since those analysing the phenomenon firmly attest the uniformisation force of globalisation, emerges the question of what are the chances of a local culture to remain alive, to assert its uniqueness in relation to other cultures. As such, the issue of cultural identity becomes truly problematic and inciting when placed in the context of globalisation. As a matter of fact, we cannot speak of globalisation without bringing into discussion the issue of identity, and vice-versa.

With respect to the methods for collecting information, the following were taken into consideration: the reading of a vast body of work dedicated to Bukovina, the study of historical documents published in various collections, the study of certain maps published separately, posted in the virtual space or gathered from various atlases, the study of statistical data from various time periods, from the level of county to the level of village, and the minute analysis of the material available online. From among the methods of interpretation, the most used was the geographical method, which consists in the analysis of the spatial distribution of the elements of the geographical space, and the relationships that establish between them, followed by the statistical method, increasingly used since the emergence of the quantitative current.

The most notable world culinary traditions were fashioned by the agricultural manner of living. The table course mirrors the seasonal production or makes use of reserves transformed through traditional preservation methods. A portion of the harvest was used to pay taxes, and a fraction was destined for the use by other rural or urban areas.

The alimentation from Bukovina comprises both day-to-day foods, as well as special festive recipes. Because of the multiple ethnic communities, the alimentation of Bukovina lists countless day-to-day culinary creations, according to the season and the religious calendar of each community. Overall, the alimentary products consist of legumes, cereals, vegetal oils, milk and dairy produce, as well as meat and meat by-products.

Likewise, we cannot speak of Bukovinian cuisine without mentioning recipes such as *alivenci* (cheese custard tarts), poultry and pig aspic (*răcitură, piftie*), sour soup a la Rădăuți (*ciorba rădăuțeană*), Moldavian sour soup (*borș moldovenesc*), fish in brine (*saramură de pește*), meat rolls (*sarmale*), maize porridge (*mămăliguță*), Moldavian meatloaves (*pârjoale*), Moldavian lard-roasted stew (*tochitură*), Moldavian sweet bread (*cozonac moldovenesc*), Moldavian Easter pastry (*pască moldovenească*), Moldavian upturned pies (*poale'n brâu*), or pies with pumpkin, cheese, apples, cabbage, etc.

Bukovina enjoys a wide variety of food resources: animals in the mountainous area, poultry in the Siret area, game in all its forests, fish, berries, fruits and legumes from the orchards and gardens of the inhabitants. On the other hand, being a multicultural space, alongside traditional Romanian cuisine, throughout time, the ethnic minorities brought their contribution to the enrichment of the local cuisine, promoting specific culinary practices. In this sense Bukovina has a distinct particularity: it is at the same time home to sour cream and dairies, and to trout and morels. All Bukovinian sour soups are served with sour cream (including the Polish potato and beet borsch), as do stews, from among which I take care to mention the “nests in five” (five meat rolls, each with its own filling—chicken, pork, beef—wrapped in coltsfoot leaves); the Moldavian potato pancakes (*tocine*) are likewise served with an abundance of sour cream, and the trout is deliciously cooked in sour cream, as do chicken served with cauldron mamaliga. The notoriety of the Bukovinian products and recipes has spread well beyond the region, and are found across Europe.

To conclude, the human communities from Bukovina were favored by the natural setting, the varied agricultural produce, and the intensity of exchanges and trade. All these elements worked to create an assortment of foods and a varied alimentary regimen, rarely unbalanced. On the background of the demographic structures, the alimentary act acquired strong cultural values, strongly entrenched, hard to uniformise even in this era of globalization.