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Editorial
From the City to the Mountains: Imagining the Carpathians in Culture and Art

by Bohdan Shumylovych and Joshua First

This special issue of *Euxeinos* explores the ways that urban Poles, German-Austrians, Ukrainians and Soviets have imagined and constructed an image of the Carpathian mountains from the mid-19th century to the current day. The city is often seen as the epitome and engine of modernization and progress, whether through trade, technological advancements, or industrial development. It is in the city that cultural institutions, commerce, and political power predominantly reside. Urban centers, whether large or small, have been the epicenters of massive mediatization, shaping our imagination of places beyond the cities. Urban dwellers have actively imagined, reinvented, and transformed rural life, often through a process of destruction and reconstruction. Folk arts and rural lifestyles were invented and reinvented, imagined, and reimagined, resulting in new forms of culture. Natural phenomena, like mountains and rural areas, were transformed into imaginary spaces that expressed anxieties about urban conditions, community bonds, environmental crises, human relations and power structures. The landscape became integral to depicting practices and imposing ideas about belonging, authenticity, roots, communities, states, hierarchies, and borders.

Nature, beginning just beyond city limits, became a reachable Arcadia. Artists, writers, and urban dwellers engaged in both real and imagined escapes into nature, and armed with pens, cameras, skis, or walking boots, were the agents of transformation. Simultaneously, the projections onto nature reflected urban public discourses: the contours and composition of empires, the strength and rootedness of nation-states, and the progressiveness and justice of socialist projects. Mountains held a special place in these discussions and imaginations. They served as spaces that divided and delineated, as boundaries defining what lies within, and as sources of authenticity. However, mountains were not merely subjects of overlapping and layered imaginations and policies emanating from urban centers but also sites of human existence and interactions. They can be viewed as contact zones where rural cultures intersect with urban imaginaries, locals and outsiders must cognize each other, ethnic groups encounter national agents, empires shape landscapes, and people reconnect with nature.

The Carpathians were incorporated and cultivated over the centuries by various kingdoms, empires, and ethnic groups. In the late 19th century and later in the 1920s-1930s there emerged “new” border regions, frontiers (or the outer

limits),[1] boundaries,[2] transcultural zones[3] or spaces of colonial encounters.[4] The Ukrainians'/Rusyns' imagination about the Carpathians Mountains and its people went through significant evolution during the 19th century.[5] An important role was played by multiple trips to the mountains (and travelogues) that, beginning from the early 19th century, had different aims and produced various results. Early travelers collected folk songs and were interested in regional popular culture. Iakiv Holovatskyi (1814-1888) from Galicia made his first trip[6] to the Carpathians (including to Uhorska Rus' [Hungarian Rus]) and later issued his observations in the form of a book, *Mandrivka po Halytskii i Uhorskii Rusi* [A Trip Through Galician and Hungarian Rus'] (1841), originally published in German, Polish and Czech languages.[7] This was a typical travelogue where the author strived to depict local color and to mix it with his knowledge about regional culture and history.

Holovatskyi was a member of *Ruska Triitsia* [Rus' Triad], which published in 1837 (in Buda, Hungary) *Rusalka Dnistrovaia*, [Ruthenische Volks-Lieder, or The Dniester Rusalka, a Ruthenian Folk Song] a collection of verses and songs written in Rus-Ukrainian language.[8] In this text, the authors declared that we (Rusyns, later Ukrainians) are the last among the Slavs and "when others [Slavic nations of Europe] already reached the peaks and bask in shining sun [they develop their fiction and poetry], we still remain in the depths of cold darkness [no fine literature produced by Rusyns]."[9] Alongside Holovatskyi there were many others who left recollections and travelogues about the Carpathians in Ukrainian language: Ivan Vahylevych (1811-1866),[10] Mykola Ustyianovych (1811-1885),[11] Ivan Nechui-Levytskyi (1838-1918),[12] Ivan Franko (1856-1916),[13] Kyrylo Ustyianovych (1839-1903),[14] Volodymyr Hnatiuk (1871-1926),[15] or Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi (1864-1913).[16] At the same time, when writers and poets rediscovered their "native" folk culture and art, others strived to delineate boundaries between various ethnic groups in the mountains, envisaging these borders more and more in national terms. Even though the first publications to mark Carpathian lands that were settled by Rusyns started in the mid-19th century,[17] the more frequent imagination of lands flourished later, in the 1860s.[18] When imagining their native land and drawing ethnic borders, most Rusyns/Ukrainians borrowed from foreign cartographers while indicating that their nation was unique and separate from others, due to its ethnic and linguistic diversity.[19]

The process of incorporation of the alpine landscape into the modern Polish imagination also started before the Great War.[20] For the Polish intelligentsia, living in three different states, the Tatra Mountains (the western part of the Carpathians) formed the natural space where the national substance remained, unconstrained from the limitations of imperial powers.[21] Patrice Dabrowski confirms that predominantly metropolitan (often Varsovians from the Russian Empire) intellectuals (not only artists but also urban dwellers of various new professions) at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries re-colonized the Carpathian mountains

in national terms.[22] An important role in this re-imagination was played by the Tatra Society (originally the Galician Tatra Society), which was established in 1873, and was later renamed the *Polish* Tatra Society, which indicated the developing national character of this organization.[23] The Tatra Society stood behind the "rediscovery" of the Southern margins of Galicia and Bukovyna, the mountains mostly populated by the Orthodox or Greek-Catholic Rusyns.

Even this brief introduction shows that several national groups considered the Carpathian Mountains to be their "place of power," and this natural landscape is up to this day divided between Hungarians, Slovaks, Romanians, Ukrainians, and Poles, not to mention various ethnic subgroups that did not or could not form into separate nationalities. The Carpathians were an important "borderland" for interwar Poland and a source of conflict with the Slovaks and Czechs. After the occupation of Prykarpattia (former Galicia and Bukovina) and Zakarpattia (former Czecho-Slovakia) by the Soviet Union in 1939 and 1945, these lands turned into the westernmost outpost of Soviet socialism. Enterprises were built here, and the region was rapidly modernized but also militarized. After the collapse of the USSR, the region underwent another change and transformation.

This special issue emerged from an international project carried out by the Center for Urban History (Lviv, Ukraine) in 2021, with the support of the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland. We aimed to explore how cities and their inhabitants influenced the imagination of those living in non-urban areas and how the creative interaction between these two spaces fostered new cultural phenomena. We sought to highlight how urbanites constructed a social imagination of the mountains and how this imagination began to shape reality. Patrice Dabrowski (HURI, Harvard, University, USA) inaugurated the program with her lecture "Discovering the Carpathians" (March 2021), which posed the questions: What does it mean to discover mountains that are already, to some extent, known and even inhabited? What impact did these encounters with the mountains have on the discoverers as well as the mountains and the indigenous mountain folk?

In our series of lectures, we explored various contexts in which the Carpathian Mountains were approached and engaged. Collaborating with researchers from Ukraine, Austria, Poland, Canada, and the United States, we examined how the Carpathians have been viewed, visited, written about, and depicted in photography and cinema. Our chronological scope extended from the late-19th century to the current day, covering the discovery and appropriation of the mountains, their representation in writing, photography, and film, and the evolving experiences of inhabiting and reimagining these landscapes. By addressing this wide range of topics, we traced the changing perceptions of the mountains and rural landscapes—as spaces for agriculture, exotic (pre-modern) living, and sources of urban symbolism and imagination. This approach revealed how mountains and the city are inextricably intertwined and interdependent, highlighting their mutual

influence and significance.

The issue begins with Ksenya Kiebuzinski's (University of Toronto, Canada) exploration of the lost career of photographer Juliusz Dutkiewicz, whose images (mostly anonymously or incorrectly attributed) graced the more famous ethnographic books by Volodymyr Shukhevych and others. An examination of Dutkiewicz's work and career shows that the urban imaginary of the Carpathians involved the cross-pollination of ideas formed and expressed by business people, artists, intellectuals, tourists, and the Hutsuls themselves (often objects of study and curious fascination). Although Dutkiewicz himself was largely peddling stereotypes of the Hutsuls, his work and career nonetheless demonstrate the complex cosmopolitanism of the Pokuttia region of the Carpathians.

In "Habsburg Imperial Image-Space," Martin Rohde (Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg, Germany) and Herbert Justnik (Folklore Museum, Vienna, Austria) continue the exploration of photography and the circulation of images as a primary site for urban knowledge of the Carpathians and its "colorful" inhabitants. Their sophisticated treatment of the use of photography (largely Dutkiewicz's images) from tourism to ethnography highlights how its meanings shifted accordingly. Rohde and Justnik are keen to mention, however, that, despite the urban use of images of the mountains, all the purveyors of ethnographic knowledge were themselves from the Carpathian region but were acting "like urban intellectuals when they reproduced and redefined image-spaces."

Vladyslava Moskalets's "The Roads of Baal Shem Tov" offers a needed corrective to the Hutsul-centered urban imaginary of the Carpathians. She demonstrates how Jewish scholars, rabbis, poets and other intellectuals sought to dispel the idea that Carpathian Jews were "aliens" among the "native" highlanders. Through the retrieved (and constructed) memories of the Hasidic leader, who meditated in the mountains at various points in his life, Moskalets argues that these Jews attempted to build their own narrative of belonging.

The article by Joshua First (University of Mississippi, USA) takes up the "discovery" of the mountains within the space of Ukrainian cinema during the post-war period, after the Soviet Union had "re-united" the Carpathians with the rest of Ukraine. First situates this cinematic interest in the Carpathians within a broader discourse of "mountains and meaning" that occurred within the global nationalisms of the first half of the 20th century.

Finally, in "Vernacular Landscapes in the Carpathians," Roman Lozynskyi (Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv, Ukraine) explores architectural designs and the aesthetics of property in the mountainous region of Boikivshchyna in Lviv Oblast' in the present Lozynskyi examines notions of urbanness among affluent highlanders since the fall of the Soviet Union. As in many of the articles collected in this special issue, he reveals the problems with ascribing "folk-ness" to the

Carpathians, but also that a variety of Marxist materialism was correct in that, under certain material conditions, the highlanders will happily abandon their colorful backwardness and embrace the culture of urban mass culture, and that this gets reflected in the very ways that Hutsuls choose to build their houses, that most iconic expression of the "everyday."

We wanted to thank all the participants of the original conference for setting the stage for this issue, the authors of these articles for their insightful contributions, and the editors of *Euxeinos* (Oleksii Chebotarov and Elena Natenadze in particular) for helping us through a long process that was interrupted by Russia's continued invasion of Ukraine.

About the authors

Bohdan Shumylovych holds a master's degree in modern history from the Central European University (Budapest, Hungary, 2004-2005) and a diploma in art history from the Lviv Academy of Arts (Ukraine, 1993-1999). In 2020, he earned a Ph.D. from the European University Institute in Florence. He has been a fellow in several academic programs and has worked with the archive of the Faculty of Visual Arts at George Washington University, Washington (USA), and the archive of the Open Society Institute in Budapest. At the Center for Urban History in Lviv, he lectures, develops thematic exhibitions, and conducts research. Combining history and art history, he has created numerous exhibitions as a public historian. He initiated the Urban Video collections (2008-2011) and led the Urban Media Archive (2011-2019), later shifting his focus to Public History projects (2020-2022) and concentrating more on research since 2022. At the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, he teaches courses in visual studies and aesthetics, leads the visual laboratory, and coordinates research seminars for BA students. His work primarily focuses on media history in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union, media arts, visual studies, urban spatial practices, and urban creativity. Since the onset of the Russian war against Ukraine in 2022, he has been collecting diaries and ego documents of the war, with a particular focus on dreams. In 2024, he plans to concentrate on the changes in nightlife and urban temporalities during the war.

Joshua First is the Croft Associate Professor of History and International Studies at the University of Mississippi, in Oxford, MS. He specializes in the history of Russia and Ukraine during the 20th and 21st centuries. First received his Ph.D. in History from the University of Michigan. He has published articles on Ukrainian cinema, Soviet film sociology, and the politics of melodrama. His book, Ukrainian Cinema: Belonging and Identity during the Soviet Thaw (I.B. Taurus) appeared in December 2014 and a follow-up volume on the Ukrainian film, Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors (Sergei Paradjanov, 1964) was published in late 2016. First's current project examines literary, cinematic and administrative representations of technology, scientific management, and medicine under late socialism in the USSR.

Endnotes

1 This concept of frontier was developed by Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932), who presented in 1893 paper "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," at American Historical Association, later published as a book, see: Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1920). About the concept see: Nurit Kliot and Stanley Waterman, *Pluralism and Political Geography: People, Territory and State* (Routledge, 2015), 139.

2 Political boundaries as modern definitions of territorial sovereignty discussed in: Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (University of California Press, 1989), 2–7.

3 The idea of 'transcultural zones' is discussed in: Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Routledge, 2007), 32–33.

4 Pratt interested in 'spaces of colonial encounters', describes these contact zones as social spaces where different cultural groups meet and interact, often in conflict, emphasizing how subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other. Key Askins and Rachel Pain admit that the concept of 'zones' "has since been deployed widely in anthropology and postcolonial studies, while geographers have utilized it to suggest that humans create contact zones that are both embodied and metaphorical, emphasizing interconnections as well as conflict, and destabilizing overly simplistic representations of bounded geographical worlds," see: Kye Askins and Rachel Pain, "Contact Zones: Participation, Materiality, and the Messiness of Interaction," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, no. 5 (October 1, 2011): 805.

5 The general history of Carpathian Rusyns and their national aspirations see: Paul Robert Magocsi, *With Their Backs to the Mountains: A History of Carpathian Rus' And Carpatho-Rusyns* (Central European University Press, 2015).

6 He traveled to Carpathians (Dzików, Tarnobrzeg) while being a university student in 1832 to catalogue the collection of books and publications in the library of count Zdzisław Jan Tarnowski (1862-1937). Also, he frequently visited mountains in Eastern Galician and Bukovina, travelled to Košice (Slovakia) and Pest (Hungary), where he studied.

7 M. Valio, ed., *Podorozhi v Ukraiinski Karpaty* [Travel to the Carpathian Mountains] (Lviv: Kameniar, 1993), 11; Nelia Svitlyk, "Zakarpattia u Publitsystychnii Retseptsii Halychan (Seredyna XIX Pochatok XX Stolitta) [Zakarpattia in Journalistic Reception of Galicia (mid-19th-early-20th centuries)]," *Naukovyi Visnyk Uzhhorodskoho Universtytetu* [Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod University], History, no. 27 (2011): 285.

8 This work was the first in Ukrainian West, in which authors used the so-called phonetic Cyrillic version of Ukrainian language. Holovatskyi's career is very interesting since he shifted from populist position to Russophile/Panslavist and after being a rector of Universität Lemberg in 1864-1866 he was accused in separatism and left Austro-Hungary, baptized in orthodoxy and settled in Vilnius (Russian Lithuania). He also published *Halytski prypovidky I zahadky* [Galician Riddles and Bywords] (1841) collected by Mirosław z Horodenki (Hryhorii Ilkevych).

9 *Rusalka Dnistrovaia* (Buda, 1837), 3. Later Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841-1895) became known to say that Hungarian Rus was more cut-off from Europe than Australia from the rest of the world, see: Ivan Petrushevych, "Vrazhinnia z Uhorskoii Rusi [Impressions from Hungarian Rus']," *Literaturno-Naukovyi Visnyk (Lviv)* [Literary Bulletin] 5 (1899): 51.

10 *Berda v Urychi* [Mountains in Urych], 1843.

11 *Nich na Borzhavi* [Night on Borzhava Mountain], published in 1852 but depicts his trip from Slavske (Galicia) to Hungary in 1841.

12 He published in 1884 his recollections from the Carpathian resort in Shchavnyk (now Polish

Szczawnik), the land of orthodox Lemko people.

13 Except multiple literary works in which Franko depicted Carpathians he also organized trips to the mountains for young people, especially known is one from 1884, that resembled similar organized Polish travels to Tatra Mountains, which aimed to re-establish national feelings among participant by the means of landscape and local culture.

14 Son of Mykola Ustyianovych, in 1902 he published in Chernivtsi (Bukovina) a literary-historical essay *Put za Beskyd* [the Way Behind Beskyd Mountain], which was part of his book *Try Tsikavykh Zahadky* [Three Interesting Riddles].

15 Hnatiuk was one of the most prominent Ukrainian ethnographers in Galicia and published many works on the mountains starting from *Ethnographic Materials from Hungarian Rus* [Etnografichni materialy z Uhorskoii Rusi] printed in 1897. He also played a role of intermediary between artists and the mountains attracting attention of Ukrainian writers to the region and its folk culture.

16 The most known literary work of Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi about Carpathians was *Tini Zabutykh Predkiv* [Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors] which he wrote in 1911 after visiting in 1910 a village of Kryvorivnia, on the way back from Italy to Russian Empire. In 1911, the same village after the initiative of ethnographer Volodymyr Hnatiuk, became a place of meeting for many Ukrainian intellectuals, like Oleksandr Oles, Hnat Hotkevych and many others, see: Maria Halushka, "Tvorcha Spivpratsia Volodymyra Hnatiuka i Mykhaila Kotsiubynskoho [The Creative Collaboration between Volodymyr Hnatiuk and Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi]," *Naukovi Zapysky Ternopilskoho Natsionalnoho Pedahohichnoho Univ Ersytewtu Im. V. Hnatiuka*, Literaturoznavstvo [Scholarly Notes of the Ternopil National Pedagogical University, Literature Studies], no. 32 (2011): 15–19.

17 Among the ideas of Rusyn/Ukrainian scholars was to delineate Rusyn, Polish, Hungarian or Romanian population in various lands, see for instance: Dyonizy Zubrzycki, *Granice Między Ruskim i Polskim Narodem w Galicyi* [Dyonizy Zubrzycki: Borders Between the Russian and Polish Nation in Galicia] (Lwow: Druk. Inst. Stauropigijańskiego, 1849). Ukrainian cartographers followed Czech, German and other cartographers, like Csaplovics J. (1829), Šafařik P. J. (1842), Fröhlich R. A. (1849), Berghaus H. (1845), Haeufler J. V. (1845), Raffelsperger F. (1849), etc.

18 Neonila Padiuka, "Pochatky Ukraiinskoii Etno-Kartohrafii [The Beginning of Ukrainian Ethno-Cartography] (Druha Polovyna 19 Stolittia)," *Zapysky Lvivskoii Natsionalnoii Naukovoii Biblioteky Ukrainy Imeni V. Stefanyka* [Notes of the Lviv Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine], no. 1 (2008): 436.

19 Padiuka, 457.

20 Patrice Dabrowski, "Encountering Poland's 'Wild West': Tourism in the Bieszczady Mountains under Socialism," in *Socialist Escapes: Breaking Away from Ideology and Everyday Routine in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989*, ed. Cathleen M. Giustino, Catherine J. Plum, and Alexander Vari (Berghahn Books, 2013), 76–78.

21 Patrice M. Dabrowski, "Constructing a Polish Landscape: The Example of the Carpathian Frontier," *Austrian History Yearbook* 39 (April 2008): 53.

22 Dabrowski, 65.

23 This society was founded in 1873, at the same time was formed *Hungarian Carpathian Association* [Magyaroszági Kárpátegyesület, Ungarischer Karpathenverein], see: Dabrowski, 57.