## (Re-)Imagining Hutsuls in the Interwar Period: Type Photographs in Nationalizing East Central Europe

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#### ABSTRACT

In the late Habsburg Empire, type photographs became an important tool to visually order a complex and multicultural landscape of diverse regions. These frontal images not only stereotypized the image of "typical" representatives of a nation but also ascribed social and cultural roles to them. The East Central European follow-up states, in particular Czechoslovakia and Poland, adopted this imperial tool to create new images. Those images were ascribed with new meanings, adjusted to the realities, needs, interests, and concerns of the interwar "nationalizing states" (Rogers Brubaker). This paper focuses on photographic representations of Hutsuls, an ethnographic minority in the Eastern Carpathians. It contrasts official photographic narratives in Czechoslovakia and Poland with approaches by the Ukrainian national movement, who insisted that Hutsuls would constitute and ancient "tribe" of their nation. I advocate the hypothesis that photographs served as equally important tools to communicate "nation" and "ethnicity" as the census or the museum (Benedict Anderson), which could be used to preserve "traditional" images or modernize selected features. Both the nationalizing states and the Ukrainian movement adopted photography in order to propagate their specific vision of the region and thereby rebrand it in the light of the new realities of the interwar period.

KEYWORDS: History of knowledge, visual history, nation-building, nation-branding, borderlands, interwar Europe, Ukrainian history

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The author has declared that no conflicts of interest exist.

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#### Introduction

"The Hutsuls in particular present us, not only in their character but in all the details of their being, with so much still-intact originality that when curiously admiring them, every now and then you almost have to remind yourself, as it were, that you are among the Ruthenian people."

The Polish ethnographer and anthropologist Izydor Kopernicki conducted several studies of Galician Ruthenians, pointing out elemental differences between the inhabitants of the plain and the Hutsul highlanders in southeast Galicia.<sup>2</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, Hutsuls became increasingly prominent as a result of ethnographic, literary, and artistic works dealing with them. In Habsburg imperial ethnography (Volkskunde), they were considered the "Carpathian dweller type par excellence," while both representatives of the empire and of various national projects focusing on the Hutsuls ascribed certain characteristics to the constructed group, including their supposed national belonging—or a lack thereof. Split between northeastern Hungary, Galicia, and Bukovina during the Habsburg era, during the interwar period the Hutsul region became part of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Romania, while being considered a national landscape by the Ukrainian national movement. Multiple projects of both imperial (Habsburg, Russian) and national (Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, Ukrainian) provenance attempted to appropriate the region during these periods.4

Only a marginal fraction of the representatives of these national and imperial projects ever set foot in the Eastern Carpathians. During this period, photography became a crucial medium for the popularization of landscapes and their inhabitants over great distances due to its promise of objectivity and to technical progress in the production and reproduction of images in the nineteenth

IZYDOR KOPERNICKI: O góralach ruskich w Galicyi: Zaryz etnograficzny według spostrzeżeń w podróży, odbytej w końcu lata 1888 r. [On Ruthenian Highlanders in Galicia: An Ethnographic Survey According to Observations on a Journey Conducted at the End of the Year 1888], in: Zbiór Wiadomości do Antropologii Krajowej 13 (1889), pp. [1]–[53], here p. [21].

ZYDOR KOPERNICKI: Charakterystyka fizyczna górali ruskich: Na podstawie własnych spostrzeżeń na osobach żywych [The Physical Characteristics of Ruthenian Highlanders: On the Basis of the Author's Own Observations of Living Persons], ibid., [separate pagination], pp. [1]–[54].

<sup>3</sup> KURT SCHARR: Von der unzivilisierten Wildheit zum Binnenexotismus einer konstruierten Originalität des Eigenen: Karpatenbewohner in Reiseberichten und Landesbeschreibungen seit dem 18. Jahrhundert, in: Danubiana Carpathica 8 (2015), pp. 261–286, here p. 272.

For an overview of those projects and their entanglements with each other, cf.: MARTIN ROHDE: Wissenstopografien des Grenzraums: Die ruthenisch-ukrainisch bewohnten Ostkarpaten im Visier von "frontier"-Wissenschaften des langen 19. Jahrhunderts, in: LINA SCHRÖDER, MARKUS WEGEWITZ et al. (eds.): Raum- und Grenzkonzeptionen in der Erforschung europäischer Regionen, Dresden 2023, pp. 231–255.

and twentieth centuries. For all too long, researchers neglected photographs as mere illustrations of travel guides or scholarly works, and there was no analysis of the "photograph as a social artifact." However, recent histories of photography have emphasized the crucial role of ethnographic photography and the reproduction of such images in nation-building processes in East, East Central, and Southeastern European case studies, as well as in colonial and global histories. Herbert Justnik shows how photography (and its manipulation) became a tool for representing populations in the Habsburg Empire. Dominik Gutmeyr and Manfred Pfaffenthaler demonstrate the co-opting of photographic objects for politicized knowledge production and circulation in the Russian and Habsburg Empires. Ewa Manikowska shows how the photographic archive of the Polish nation-building project brought together inhabitants of all the lands that were considered Polish, both in the pre- and the interwar period, thereby including, for example, Ruthenians, Hutsuls, and Jews.

As Patrice Dabrowski highlights, it took the view of outsiders from the lowlands, particularly those from further away, to appreciate the unique Hutsul highlands and their inhabitants. Building on this notion, I consider the Hutsul region in the Eastern Carpathians an "imaginary landscape" that was produced through diverse transnational discourses on its environment, geography, and inhabitants and became an integral part of travel guides and advertisements for the region. As I will argue, type photographs played a crucial role in transporting the view of the population beyond the boundaries of its settlements. Shaping a specific ethnographic gaze, which produced visual distinctions between groups according to preexisting knowledge, 11 types played an important role in the appropriation of the Hutsul region beyond the level of mere illustra-

<sup>5</sup> JOANNA COHAN SCHERER: Historical Photographs as Anthropological Documents: A Retrospect, in: Visual Anthropology 3 (1990), 2–3, pp. 131–155, here p. 132.

<sup>6</sup> HERBERT JUSTNIK: "Volkstypen"—Kategorisierendes Sehen und bestimmende Bilder, in: PETR LOZOVIUK (ed.): Visualisierte Minderheiten: Probleme und Möglichkeiten der musealen Präsentation von ethnischen bzw. nationalen Minderheiten, Dresden 2012, pp. 109–136.

DOMINIK GUTMEYR, MANFRED PFAFFENTHALER: Co-Optation and Autonomy of the Photographic Object: On Ethnographic Photography in the Russian and Habsburg Empires, in: SIEGFRIED GRUBER, DOMINIK GUTMEYR et al. (eds.): From the Highlands to Hollywood. Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Southeastern Europe: Festschrift for Karl Kaser and SEEHA, Zürich 2020, pp. 181–198.

<sup>8</sup> EWA MANIKOWSKA: Photography and Cultural Heritage in the Age of Nationalisms: Europe's Eastern Borderlands (1867–1945), London 2019.

<sup>9</sup> PATRICE M. DABROWSKI: The Carpathians: Discovering the Highlands of Poland and Ukraine, Chicago 2021.

<sup>10</sup> THOMAS ETZEMÜLLER: Landschaft, Tourismus und Nation: *Imaginary landscapes* als Medien des inneren *nation building* in der Moderne, in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 45 (2019), 2, pp. 275–296.

<sup>11</sup> On delegating the "gaze" in the field to photographers, cf.: AGNESE GHEZZI: Framing the "Delegated Gaze": Handbooks for Travelers and the Making of Anthropological Photography in Italy at the End of the Nineteenth Century, in: La Rivista di Engramma 179 (2021), pp. 137–155.

tions. The production of types and their usage in texts describing the Hutsul region are therefore practices reflecting on the respective gaze of their authors, which I will deconstruct throughout this paper.

In this paper, I trace the co-construction of the Hutsul region through types and the image-text relation in the nationalizing states of Czechoslovakia and Poland against the backdrop of previous approaches by late Habsburg *Volks-kunde*. The special attention these nationalizing states devoted to the liminal space is based on geopolitical relevance, determined by relative location in a tri-state border area (cf. Fig. 1 and 2). I will show how representatives of these states acted as miniature empires while renegotiating their imperial heritage, both in terms of photographic approaches and the complex contact zone that is the Hutsul region. Furthermore, I will demonstrate how Ukrainians—as a transregional national movement and minority in both states—partially cooperated with and partially opposed these projects. By focusing on the usage of Hutsul type photographs in the interwar period, mostly in the form of published popular writings and guidebooks, this paper discusses the renegotiation of their belonging and their significance in the discursive production of ethnic hierarchies for newly composed regions.

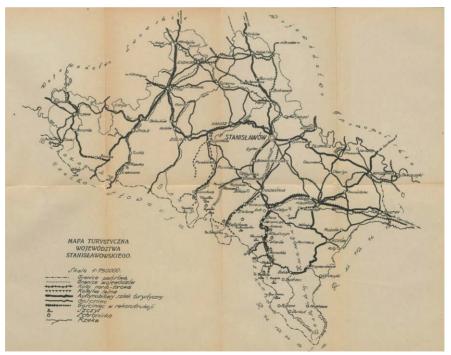


Fig. 1: Mapy turystyczna województwa stanisławowskiego [Touristic Map of the Voivodeships Stanisławów], 1930. The Hutsul Region is located in the South, in: ROMUALD DĄBROWSKI: Przewodnik ilustrowany po województwie stanisławowskiem z mapą, Stanisławów [1930], unpag. attachment. For a file in high resolution, see the online version of issue 4/2025 at www.zfo-online.de

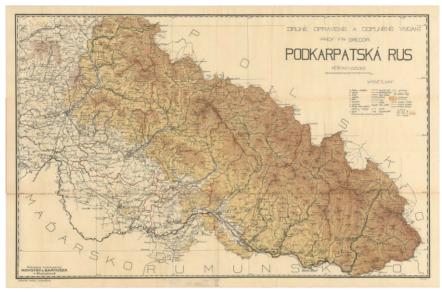


Fig. 2: Map of Podkarpatská Rus by František Gregor, 1930. The Hustul region is located in the mountainous eastern outskirts. © Map Collection, Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences, sign. MAP A 2568. For a version in high resolution, see: https://www.chartae-antiquae.cz/cs/maps/83032/?view=-118.53125,180.0625,4 (2025-05-16)

# Photography and "Frontier Science": Ordering Uncertainty in the Habsburg Periphery

With the rise of costume books (from the late sixteenth century onward) and depictions of peoples in paintings such as the "table of peoples" (*Völkertafel*; early eighteenth century), which directly combined stereotypical images of peoples with a limited set of attributes they supposedly represented, pictures became elemental tools for shaping the way in which peoples were imagined, both imagined "others" and "ours." When Balthasar Hacquet, professor at the university of Lemberg (Ukr. L'viv; Pol. Lwów), <sup>13</sup> travelled the Carpathians to describe the natural circumstances and inhabitants of these newly-acquired parts of the Habsburg Empire in the late eighteenth century, he included a drawing of Hutsuls—or "mountain Ruthenians" (*Gebirgs-Ruthenen*), as he called

<sup>12</sup> FRANZ K. STANZEL: Europäischer Völkerspiegel: Imagologisch-ethnographische Studien zu den Völkertafeln des frühen 18. Jahrhunderts, Heidelberg 1999.

<sup>13</sup> I will be referring to the relevant administrative name for the respective time-period throughout the paper. For literature references, I preserve the spelling of the city in the respective language.

them in his extensive exoticizing description.<sup>14</sup> He started a trend of othering with an imperial gaze while classifying these new peripheries. As Kurt Scharr points out, this early exoticization of presumed "others" turned into an inner exoticism over the course of the nineteenth century, with both imperial and national groups increasingly considering Hutsuls as their "own."<sup>15</sup>

In this era of growing nationalization in the multiethnic regions of the empire, new developments in photography and image reproduction allowed the massive circulation of type photographs. Types were mostly frontal images. The captions assigned them to social, occupational, ethnic, national, linguistic or spatial categories and suggested a representativeness for these images. In most cases, the names of the persons depicted and the time and the place of the photograph are missing. The types thus functioned as tools of stereotyping, which enjoyed great popularity in the academy—due to their supposed "objectivity"—and in upscale popular culture, both on a global scale and in the Habsburg Monarchy in particular. In addition to mass circulation in the form of cabinet cards and postcards, the types were used for publications (scholarly and popular-scientific, travel guides) and events (exhibitions, slide film shows). In the popular Habsburg encyclopedia Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild, photographs were widely used as models, based on which artists produced even more romanticized drawings and paintings of the types in question.<sup>16</sup>

Images thus contributed to the dissemination of a "categorizing gaze," which had a great influence on academic and popular thinking about groups in the late

<sup>14</sup> BALTHASAR HACQUET: Hacquets neueste physikalisch-politische Reisen in den Jahren 1791, 92 und 93 durch die Dacischen und Sarmatischen oder Nördlichen Karpathen: Dritter Theil, Nürnberg 1794, pp. xix, [xxiii]—[xxiv], 15–38.

<sup>15</sup> SCHARR.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. exemplary: RAIMUND FRIEDRICH KAINDL: Die Huzulen, in: Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild. Vol. 20: Bukowina, Wien 1899, pp. 271-282, here the illustrations on pp. 275, 279; their photographic patterns are to be found in: Universitätsarchiv Graz, Nachlass Kaindl, fasz. 8; ALEXANDER BARWIŃSKIJ: Das Volksleben der Ruthenen, in: Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild. Vol. 19: Galizien, Wien 1898, pp. 376-440, here p. 436; its photographic pattern is the photograph "Osterspiele (Glockenthurm) in Tyszkowce" by Volodymyr Shukhevych, in: Volkskundemuseum Wien, Fotosammlung, pos. 743; FRANZ BYLICKI: Musik und Volksmusik, in: Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild, vol. 19, pp. 539-566, here p. 543, illustration "Ein ruthenischer Leierspieler (Lionite)"; its photographic pattern is a depiction from the ethnographic department of the Galician Land Exhibition 1894 by an unidentified photographer "Fragment of the Ethnographic Section," in: Urban Media Archive (L'viv), https://uma.lvivcenter.org/uk/photos/4024 (2025-05-06). I have widely analyzed these depictions and their usage in the presentation: MARTIN ROHDE: Illustrating Empires, Illustrating Nations-Circulating Photographs in the Late Habsburg Monarchy and its Successor States, "State Descriptions Revisited. Historical Forms of Territorial Representations, 17–21th Centuries," Workshop at IOS Regensburg, 29-30 September 2022.

nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.<sup>17</sup> The immense popularity of the medium means it has to be considered a crucial tool for practices of ethno-national (self-) identification and ordering, as relevant as maps, museums, and census/nationality statistics. 18 Against this backdrop, from the late nineteenth century ethnographers cultivated the idea that limited collections of photographs provided complete overviews of political entities, covering their diversity in social, religious, linguistic, and national or ethnic terms. <sup>19</sup> This idea was not only present in regional exhibitions and photographic surveys, but also in published descriptions of states. For example, the two-volume anthology Mein Österreich, mein Heimatland set itself the task of depicting as completely as possible the ethnographic diversity of the entire Austrian half of the empire in a manageable number of photographs.<sup>20</sup> Types of peoples were therefore not only colorful postcards, but also a visual tool used to create regions and represent them in their supposed entirety according to both scholarly and popular belief. The common imagination of ethnically pure regions (which can only be considered a myth in such highly diverse contact zones) meant that such pictures served as "territorializing images," intended to represent a whole ethnographic group in the space it inhabited.

These images could be used for discourses about the self, informing a national group about regional diversity in costume. Similarly, they could be used to construct an "Other," postulating similarities or differences to one's own group. Central to these different attributions are thus the publication context and the relationship to the text in question, both regarding longer ethnographic descriptions and the frequently altered captions of the images. Type photographs were therefore a medium susceptible to the inscription of meanings, including (but not limited to) geographic origin, educational level, ethnographic statements about the "traditions" of a group, and ascribed national character. The extremely context-reliant medium could be manipulated by both its "narrative framing" and visual manipulation techniques, making type photographs

<sup>17</sup> JUSTNIK, "Volkstypen"; HERBERT JUSTNIK: Kolonialismus in der Bauernstube: Oder: Wie sich die Volkskunde ihr Objekt machte, in: PIA SCHÖLNBERGER (ed.): Das Museum im kolonialen Kontext, Wien 2021, pp. 304–326.

<sup>18</sup> BENEDICT ANDERSON: Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, rev. ed., London—New York 2003.

MANIKOWSKA; SACHA E. DAVIS: Ethnophotography, Nation Branding, and National Competition in Transylvania: Emil Sigerus' *Durch Siebenbürgen*, in: Nationalities Papers 51 (2023), pp. 1375–1396; NATHANIEL KNIGHT: The Empire on Display: Ethnographic Exhibition and the Conceptualisation of Human Diversity in Post-Emancipation Russia, Washington, DC 2001.

<sup>20</sup> BENNO IMENDÖRFFER: Geleitwort, in: SIEGMUND SCHNEIDER, BENNO IMENDÖRFFER (eds.): Mein Österreich, mein Heimatland: Illustrierte Volks- und Vaterlandskunde des Österreichischen Kaiserstaates, vol. 1, Wien 1914, pp. xxi–xxiii.

<sup>21</sup> MARTIN ROHDE, HERBERT JUSTNIK: Habsburg Imperial Image-Space: Negotiating Belonging through Photography, in: Euxeinos 14 (2024), pp. 44–75, https://doi.org/10.55337/36/IIYH2750.

a medium susceptible to political appropriation.<sup>22</sup> On the basis of these points, I consider type photographs tools of producing and circulating knowledge, which was of utmost relevance for ordering contested spaces and people.

In the case of the Hutsul region, the images that became the best-known and most representative images in the Habsburg Empire were those produced by Juliusz Dutkiewicz. They were found not only in exhibitions and museums, but also circulated massively in the form of postcards and cartes de cabinet. He conducted an initial survey for the ethnographic exhibition in Kolomea (Pol. Kołomyja; Ukr. Kolomyja) in 1880, held under the auspicies of the Tatra Society, on behalf of Polish ethnographer Oskar Kolberg. 23 Dutkiewicz's task was to conduct a representative survey of the surrounding area, Pokutia, which encompassed both the Galician Hutsul region and the adjacent lowlands. In ethnic terms, the photographs defined the region through Armenians, "gypsies," Hutsuls, and Jews, while the largest Galician language groups, Poles and Ruthenians, were absent from the German album. Apart from ethnic categories, the people presented were categorized by their gender, occupation or social status, e.g. as peasants, noblemen, a beekeeper, sausage sellers, workers, girls, a woman, musicians, a lyre player, or the wife of the mayor of the Hutsul town of Żabie (today Ukr. Verkhovyna).<sup>24</sup>

The Polish narrative was co-constructed by Dutkiewicz's photographs as presented in the exhibition. The official Habsburg approach was that Hutsuls were defined as Greek Catholics and Ruthenian-speaking, and therefore considered Ruthenians (Ukrainians). Ethnographic and anthropological works in the Academy of Sciences in Cracow had built on the Polish narrative since the 1870s, emphasizing fundamental differences between lowland Ruthenians and the Hutsul highlanders.<sup>25</sup> The underlying idea was to present Hutsuls in particular and Ruthenians in general not as a political nation, but as culturally heterogenous peoples belonging to the Polish nation in the understanding of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which Polish elites aimed to restore. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, an era of intensified nation-building processes, these claims should be considered quasi-imperial. While Hutsul handcrafts—or "national cottage industries" in the Austrian discourse—provided prospects for the economic development of the region, the makers of the exhibition suggested that this goal be pursued under Polish guidance. In this way, Poles, represented as ethnographers and local economic elites, postulated their superiority and their own civilizing mission for the

<sup>22</sup> GUTMEYR-PFAFFENTHALER, p. 198.

<sup>23</sup> ROHDE, Wissenstopografien.

<sup>24</sup> Konvolut "Erinnerungen an Kolomea," in: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv Austria, sign. Pk106, https://search.onb.ac.at/primo-explore/search?institution=ONB&vid=ONB&onCampus=false&query=lsr19,contains,Erinnerungen%20an%20Kolomea%20:%20Konvolut&search scope=ONB gideon (2023-05-24).

<sup>25</sup> KOPERNICKI, O góralach ruskich; KOPERNICKI, Charakterystyka fizyczna.



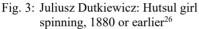




Fig. 4: Juliusz Dutkiewicz: Hutsul married couple, 1880 or earlier<sup>27</sup>

region.<sup>28</sup> Dutkiewicz highlighted the Hutsuls' potential for this project through the prominence of costumes and depictions of Hutsuls engaging in handcrafts such as woodwork or spinning (Fig. 3).

Furthermore, his visual strategies provide a clear narrative regarding the Hutsuls in relation to the space they inhabited. While some of his photographs were taken on a trip to the Carpathians, accompanied by a Polish ethnographer, others were staged in Dutkiewicz's studio in Kolomea. The photograph of a Hutsul married couple (Fig. 4) was produced in a studio, with trees arranged on either side, giving the impression that they were standing in their "natural" landscape. Hutsuls were thereby presented as an immobile group, bound to the landscape of the Carpathian forest, even though the people in the picture presumably came to the city of Kolomea to be photographed in Dutkiewicz's stu-

<sup>26</sup> GRIGORIY KUPCHANKO: Galichina i ei russky zhitely: Knizhechka dlya naroda s mnogimi obrazkami staroy Rusi i Pol'shi i tepereshnoy Galichiny [Galicia and Its Russian inhabitants: A Folk Book with Many Images of the Old Rus, Poland, and Today's Galicia], Veden' 1896, p. 65.

<sup>27</sup> RAIMUND FRIEDRICH KAINDL: Haus und Hof bei den Huzulen: Ein Beitrag zur Hausforschung in Oesterreich, in: Mittheilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien 26 (1896), pp. 147–185, here p. 178.

<sup>28</sup> ROHDE, Wissenstopografien.

dio. Such a fusion of ethnic narrative and landscape was no less prominent in overseas colonial contexts, as Pratt has shown in the case of Brazil.<sup>29</sup>

World War I and its aftermath brought not only military, but also intensified national mobilization to all three parts of the Hutsul region, which challenged the previous assumption of a passive ethnic group and created a borderland of concern for the follow-up states of the Habsburg Empire. This view was cocreated through visual materials. A postcard promoting Ukrainian Sich Riflemen, based on a painting by Osyp Kurylas, shows Hutsuls, clearly identifiable by their costume, coming to a city in order to sign up as volunteers and leave for their service—yet still in their traditional Sunday costume, not in uniform. However, photographs of Hutsuls were no longer confined to types and people wearing traditional costumes, since some Hutsuls appeared in newspapers as soldiers, or even higher ranking officers, who were praised for their military success. As I will demonstrate in the case of Czechoslovakia and Poland, both nationalizing states put considerable effort into coining and propagating traditionalist images of Hutsuls and adjusting it to suit the specific circumstances of their dominant state- and nation-building discourses.

## Podkarpatská Rus

In 1919, Czechoslovakia formally incorporated the new province of Podkarpatská Rus. <sup>32</sup> This process was supported by local national councils, who were promised territorial autonomy in Czechoslovakia, although this was never realized. In addition, the territorial delineation between Podkarpatská Rus and Slovakia remained a challenge for the nationalizing state. By the time of the annexation, Podkarpatská Rus was essentially a blank spot on the mental map of Czechoslovakia, with only a small number of ethnographers and experts in Slavic Studies being partially familiar with the region. Czechoslovak officials, journalists and scholars took part in a series of knowledge-making activities regarding the new province, which served to appropriate a region—a region which did not exist as such beforehand and therefore appeared yet to be made. <sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> MARY LOUISE PRATT: Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation, 2nd ed., New York 2008, p. 232.

<sup>30</sup> Osyp Kurylas: Departure of the Volunteers to the Service at the Riflemen, in: Národní archiv [National Archives], Prague, fond 922: Ukrajinské museum [The Ukrainian Museum], no. 81, p. 7b.

<sup>31</sup> Cf., e.g.: Bukovyna, 1916-02-26, p. 3; Bukovyna, 1916-03-05, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Contemporary Ukrainian term: Pidkarpats'ka Rus; today: Zakarpattia/Zakarpats'ka Oblast' (Transcarpathia).

<sup>33</sup> SEBASTIAN RAMISCH-PAUL: Fremde Peripherie—Peripherie der Unsicherheit? Sicherheitsdiskurse über die tschechoslowakische Provinz Podkarpatská Rus (1918–1938), Marburg 2021; on knowledge-making on the region in particular, cf. id.: Mit "liebevoller Sorgfältigkeit und strenger Wissenschaftlichkeit": Zur Wissensgeschichte der Uhors'ka Rus'/Podkarpatská Rus/Zakarpattja von der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts

They depicted the province as socially, culturally, and politically backward, justifying a need for modernization and democratization through Czech influence. The prominent comparison of Podkarpatská Rus to a child, in need of intensive care, help and guidance from the Czechs, placed the new province in a colonial narrative, even though Czechs denied that they treated it as a colony.<sup>34</sup>

Photography played a crucial role in Czechoslovak endeavors to collect and circulate knowledge, appropriate and brand the new province, and yet it had barely formed part of historical investigations so far. Actors of different cultural backgrounds were involved in the visual production of the region and its part of the Hutsul lands. Some of them were short-term visitors whose photographs remained unpublished, like the German photographer Else Seifert, while others were Czech scholars or officials who produced larger sets of photographs and used them for publications and slideshows. From the latter group, I will discuss the images produced by Amalie Kožmínová and Rudolf Hůlka, since they produced the most prominent type photographs.

The first comprehensive ethnographic and cultural survey of Podkarpatská Rus was published by Amalie Kožmínová (1876–1951) in 1922. As a teacher of textile crafts, she was tasked with conducting an ethnographic survey and also with learning about local textile traditions. She set off on an extensive journey through the region, during which she took photographs for her subsequent book, liberally illustrated with pictures of landscapes, towns, folk types and, in an appendix, textile patterns.<sup>37</sup> Her survey of Podkarpatská Rus provided a typology of people, buildings and landscapes, with an examination of its subregions. She considered Hutsuls "a part of the Little Russian nation,

bis in die 1920er Jahre, in: MARTIN ROHDE, GUALTIERO BOAGLIO (eds.): Kontaktzonen in Zentraleuropa, Innsbruck-Wien 2022 (Geschichte und Region / Storia e regione 31, 2), pp. 45-61.

<sup>34</sup> STANISLAV HOLUBEC: Mezi slovanskou vzájemností a orientalismem: České zobrazování Podkarpatské Rusi a jejích obyvatel v publicistice dvacátých let minulého století [Between Slav Reciprocity and Orientalism: Czech Depictions of Carpathian Ruthenia and Its Inhabitants in Journalism of the 1920s], in: Soudobé dějiny 23 (2016), 4, pp. 529–562.

<sup>35</sup> Else Seifert: Erinnerung an Karpathen-Russland: 1934 (in schneelosen Weihnachtstagen) [folder containing photographs], in: Deutsche Fotothek, http://www.deutsche fotothek.de/documents/obj/81457710 (2023-07-20).

<sup>36</sup> Apart from the photographers discussed in this text, Florian Zapletal and Volodymyr Sichyns'kyi have to be mentioned for their large collection of photographs of churches. The earliest published album I found does not name an author, publisher or photographers, yet is outstanding, as besides the views of towns, villages and land-scapes only two type photographs are included—and both of them depict Hutsuls: Carpathian Ruthenia (original: Podkarpatska Rus'/Podkarpatská Rus), [1920], in: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/2021669084/ (2023-07-20).

<sup>37</sup> AMALIE KOŽMÍNOVÁ: Podkarpatská Rus: Práce a život lidu po stránce kulturní, hospodářské a národopisné [Podkarpatská Rus: Life and Work of the People in Cultural, Economic, and Ethnographic Perspectives], [Praha] 1922.

which is settled in parts of Galicia, former Bukovina, and today's Podkarpatská Rus," while stating that they appeared to be "ethnographically most preserved in Galicia." While listing the different theories regarding their origin, she did not opt for one of them, pointing to their "strong flavor of romanticism" on which it was hard to base assumptions about the Hutsuls' belonging.<sup>38</sup> While Kožmínová read recent Ukrainian literature and did not critically argue with it, she also did not adhere to it or draw any further conclusions on Hutsul belonging. Her descriptions of the "wildly romantic and beautiful landscape" of the region and the artistic design of Hutsul huts and costumes, all supplemented with photographs, are themselves not free of romanticism.<sup>39</sup> Lastly, she makes the assumption that the folk industry in Podkarpatská Rus "has a future" under proper guidance, an assumption very much based on her observation of the Hutsuls. 40 Similar to the Polish case, 41 Kožmínová was evaluating the potentials for modernization projects regarding local handcraft and the so-called "house industry." Both states drew on the Habsburg heritage, which attempted to develop local handicraft into a tool to strengthen the populations in mountainous regions socioeconomically, with the popularity of these goods being based on the popularity of *Volkskunde* in the last decades of the empire. 42

The types she included showed Hutsuls working in the fields or with a background of trees and wooden buildings, such as a mountain pasture and a wooden church. Other images depicted groups of Hutsuls in the town of Jasiňa (Ukr. Iasinia), a cultural center of the region. Almost all the images, apart from the one showing Hutsuls in the fields, show them in ornamented Sunday costumes. In keeping with the Habsburg tradition, Hutsuls were mostly photographed in these highly-decorated clothes instead of their everyday ones, highlighting the artistic textile production in which she was personally most interested. Kožmínová's photographs differ from Dutkiewicz's images in that the people and scenes depicted appear more vivid and less staged. This is mostly due to advancements in photographic technology, which allowed more vivid photographs to be taken in the field. Both in terms of the narrative and the subject of the images, she walked in the metaphorical shoes of Habsburg Volkskunde. In many works on Hutsuls from the Habsburg period, Hutsuls in northeastern Hungary had been neglected, and only the group in Galicia and Bukovina described. While the images of stereotypical Hutsuls were therefore projected on to both of these regions, they neither applied to nor originated

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>41</sup> PATRICE M. DABROWSKI: Hutsul Art or "Hutsul Art"? Ukrainians, Poles, and the "Discovery" of the Hutsul Kilim in the Interwar Period, in: Canadian-American Slavic Studies 50 (2016), pp. 313–331.

<sup>42</sup> On *nationale Hausindustrie* in the Habsburg Empire, cf.: CORINNE GEERING: The Hinterland on Display: Establishing a Market for Rural Handicraft in Austria-Hungary, in: Jahrbuch für Geschichte des ländlichen Raumes 17 (2020), pp. 72–93.

from the part of the Hutsul region that was now in Podkarpatská Rus. It was primarily Ruthenian-Ukrainian works, both of Russophile and Ukrainian national provenance, which included and emphasized Ruthenian highlanders in Hungary in this ethnographic and spatial imagination. The only major research project from the prewar period to include them was Fedir Vovk's anthropological survey of the Hutsul region in the early twentieth century. A Kožmínová and other Czechoslovak researchers of the time relied on them as the most comprehensive previous works on the new province. A She thereby very much transferred the Habsburg view of the artistic, colorful and fascinating Hutsuls to this relatively neglected part of the Hutsul region.

As in Kožmínová's study, in both nationality policy and academic debates covering ethnographic mapping it was a crucial task for Czechoslovak officials and scholars to demarcate Ruthenians and the space they inhabited from the surrounding others. 45 As a result of this overall tendency, the dominant Czechoslovak discourse aimed to create a shared Ruthenian identity rather than focusing on the diversity amongst the Ruthenian population. This tendency is particularly visible in a 1923 collective volume on the province, highlighting cultural, economic and political issues around the province through the lenses of several experts and the disciplines they represented. The Eastern Galician immigrant Ivan Pan'kevych, a Ukrainophile teacher and linguist, was the only author who explicitly highlighted the distinctions between the Boyko, Hutsul, and Lemko highlanders in the region, while others focused only on a general distinction between lowlanders and highlanders, which became typical of the Czechoslovak discourse. 46 Even though his paper was dedicated to the language issues in the region, Pan'kevych put some effort into highlighting Hutsul costumes by including three prominently-placed Hutsul type photographs.<sup>47</sup> This is not accidental, as Hutsuls were most important for the argument he was trying to make. According to Pan'kevych, their dialect was the "most pure," "free from Hungarian and Slovak influences," "essentially the original Ukrainian" and "the language of the first awakeners of Galician Ukrainians." 48 Making Hutsuls the most representative and most "original" elements of the province by putting their types on the first pages of his text allowed the author to

<sup>43</sup> FEDIR VOVK: Antropometrychni dosliidy ukraiins'koho naselennia Halychyny, Bukovyny i Uhorshchyny [Anthropometric Research on the Ukrainian Population of Galicia, Bukovina and Hungary], in: Materialy do ukrains'ko-rus'koii etnol'ogiii 10 (1908), pp. 1–67.

<sup>44</sup> Kožmínová, p. [124].

<sup>45</sup> Cf., e.g.: Jan Hušek: Národopisná hranice mezi slováky a karpatorusy [The Ethnographic Border between Slovaks and Carpatho-Ruthenians], Bratislava 1925.

<sup>46 [</sup>IVAN] PANKEVIČ: Jazyková otázka v Podkarpatské Rusi [The Language Question in Podkarpatská Rus], in: JOSEF CHMELÁŘ, STANISLAV KLÍMA et al. (eds.): Podkarpatská Rus: Obraz poměrů přírodních, hospodářských, politických, církevních, jazykových a osvětových, Praha 1923, pp. 130–150.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 131, 133, 135.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 150.

prepare an argument that suited his crucial political goal as a national activist, language teacher and author of grammar books: pushing the standardization of the local teaching language towards the standards taught by Ukrainians in former Eastern Galicia.

Amongst Czech photographers, Hutsuls appear most prominently in the works of Rudolf Hůlka, a Czech economist and self-taught translator of Ukrainian. He went to work in Podkarpatská Rus in 1920 to organize cooperatives and became one of the most productive photographers of the region in the interwar period. <sup>49</sup> As Hůlka remembered decades later, his main motivation in focusing on the Hutsul region derived neither from politics nor his work, but from fascination:

"When in 1920 I visited the then Podkarpatská Rus for the first time [...] and drove to its easternmost tip, I was captivated not only by the beauty of the region, but especially by the magnificence of its inhabitants, the Hutsuls.

For years I went there, deepening my love and my friendship with the intelligentsia and the common people. [...] Then followed [...] the desire to visit the beautiful regions bordering the easternmost outskirts of Podkarpatská Rus. My wish came true. I went both to Galicia and Bukovina."<sup>50</sup>

He contacted several Ukrainian experts on the region in former Eastern Galicia, such as Mykhailo Kurylenko, the founder of the cooperative Hutsul Art (Hutsul's'ke mystetstvo), and the ethnographer and folklorist Volodymyr Hnatiuk, who travelled the region for years himself. <sup>51</sup> Kurylenko helped him to obtain "traditional" Hutsul products, while Hnatiuk helped him to find the necessary literature for his projects and offered to support him organize a trip through the Hutsul region in Poland. <sup>52</sup> On Hnatiuk's advice, Hůlka ordered extensively from the bookshop of the Shevchenko Scientific Society in Lwów to familiarize himself with Ukrainian perspectives on the region. <sup>53</sup> However, he did not use his knowledge to create ethnographic publications, but only slideshows, which he held in the Bohemian lands. <sup>54</sup>

<sup>49</sup> HANA OPLEŠTILOVÁ, LUKÁŠ BABKA: Rudolf Hůlka a jeho dokumentárni dílo / Rudolf Hůlka and His Documentary Work, in: HANA OPLEŠTILOVÁ, LUKÁŠ BABKA (eds.): Zmizelý svět Podkarpatské Rusi ve fotografiích Rudolfa Hůlky (1887–1961) / The Lost World of Subcarpathian Rus' in the Photographs of Rudolf Hůlka (1887–1961), Praha 2016, pp. 8–39.

<sup>50</sup> RUDOLF HŮLKA: Doslov překladatele [Afterword by the Translator], in: LES MARTOVYČ: Mužická smrt a jiné obrázky, Praha 1946, p. 192.

<sup>51</sup> Letters from Mykhailo Kurylenko to Hůlka, in: Slovanská knihovna [Slavonic Library], Prague: Special Collections, Hůlka, Rudolf—Collection of Photographs and Archival Documents (Hůlka Collection), T–A 792/3456–3465; Association Hutsul's'ke mystetstvo to Hůlka, ibid., T–A 80/407–409; Letters from Volodymyr Hnatiuk to Hůlka, ibid., T–A 67/373–381.

<sup>52</sup> Hnatiuk to Hůlka, 1923-06-04, ibid., T-A 67/375.

<sup>53</sup> Hnatiuk to Hůlka, 1922-09-30, ibid., T-A 67/374; Invoices from the bookstore of Shevchenko Scientific Society to Hůlka, 1922-1923, ibid., T-A 795/3472-3473.

<sup>54</sup> OPLEŠTILOVÁ/BABKA, p. 29.



Fig. 5: Rudolf Hůlka: Jasiňa: Hutsul farm workers, young men in costumes, first half of the 1920s<sup>55</sup>

Among his vast collection of photographs, a set of lavishly hand-colored photographs stand out. Most are dedicated to Hutsuls and the Hutsul region, proving his great interest in this part of Podkarpatská Rus as well as his desire to emphasize them during his slideshows. The collection includes various types of Hutsuls, male and female, of different ages, groups, photos of ethnographic scenes, huts, and folk art, many of them taken in the town of Jasiňa, which was one of the central towns of the region. Most of his photographs present the types in idyllic surroundings (Fig. 5) which is also emphasized by his photographs of the landscape. His photographs thereby confirmed Kožmínová's

<sup>55</sup> Hůlka Collection, T-H-1-111.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. the photo collection on Podkarpatská Rus, ibid., T-H-1.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., T-H-1-32.



Fig. 6: Rudolf Hůlka: Jasiňa: Haymaking, lunch during a *toloka* (communal assistance), 1921<sup>58</sup>

narrative without accompanying text. Some of his photographs have a realistic and documentary character—his depiction of a sad-looking Hutsul boy, <sup>59</sup> for example, a subject not usually found in types. Furthermore, he provided a glimpse into the state's efforts to counteract the poverty of the region with a photograph showing Hutsuls during a communally-provided lunch (Fig. 6). <sup>60</sup> However, without this contextual information, the image seems to be an idyllic depiction of a common meal. Its interpretation thus relied entirely on Hůlka's explanation during the slideshow, and the text of this is not preserved.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., T-H-1-41.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., T-H-1-39.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. also another image from the same scene, ibid., T-H-1-270.



Fig. 7: Rudolf Hůlka in Hutsul clothing, 1921<sup>61</sup>

While it is not known if Hůlka used his photographs from the Polish and Romanian parts of the Hutsul region in his shows, he stands out as the only non-Ukrainian author discussed in this paper who dedicated his work to Hutsuls from other countries. This travel and work outside the country were neither state-sponsored nor in the direct interest of the state, so it has to be assumed they were conducted out of interest and dedication, as he expressed in his aforementioned memoirs. One of his photos shows him in Hutsul clothing (Fig. 7). This could be interpreted as a colonial gesture and a form of cultural appropriation. However, given his overall attitude towards Hutsuls and the Ukrainian movement, it seems more plausible that he was imitating the practices of Ukrainian visitors to the region such as his acquaintance Hnatiuk, who dressed up in Hutsul clothes as well. <sup>62</sup> With the exception of these elements of

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., T-H-1-353.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. the photograph "Volodymyr Hnatiuk z sim'ieiu" [Volodymyr Hnatiuk with His Family], in: Volodymyr Hnatiuk: Vybrani statti pro narodnu tvorchist', New York 1981 (Zapysky Naukovoho Tovarystva im. Shevchenka, 201), p. 128.

his work, he followed the general trends of the Hutsul discourse in Czechoslovakia, yet both his coloring of the images and the slideshows make his contributions extraordinary in the regional context as well as in comparison to all the other photographers discussed in this paper.

Early reports and guidebooks had already emphasized the beauty of the landscapes, particularly as a result of the absence of modern industry, and the province in general, and the Hutsul region in particular started to be seen as a potential tourist destination. As with the Habsburg narrative, Hutsuls were advertised as the most healthy, resourceful, and generally interesting part of the Ruthenian highland population. Tourists in search of authentic folk culture were advised to focus their trips to Podkarpatská Rus on the Hutsul region.<sup>63</sup> Types were mingled with landscape photographs in such contexts, <sup>64</sup> presenting Hutsuls not as three-dimensional people, but as sights to visit. In sum, the Czechoslovak discourse followed the Habsburg paradigm of a province to be civilized, and Hutsuls as a resource of curiosity and inner exoticism. However, the depictions did not result in the narratives of ethnic kinship as an argument for political domination that were emphasized in the Polish, Romanian and Ukrainian cases.<sup>65</sup> Even though the means and approaches of photography changed, the impetus behind its use did not differ much from the Habsburg approach, which was applied in order to "discover" the new province.

### Poland

In 1919, the Polish army occupied the territory of the former Eastern Galicia and later formally annexed it to the new state. As discussed before, the Polish appropriation of this part of the Hutsul region had begun during the Habsburg period. Since the dominant Polish discourse built on previously acquired knowledge, the new state and its representatives were in a different situation than in Czechoslovakia. The area was not a blind spot for them, and therefore they were not reliant on Ukrainian knowledge. The Polish guidebooks covering the Hutsul region, which will be discussed in the following section, can be roughly divided into two groups with particular ideological features. The first are travel guides to the whole country, which tend to put Hutsuls in the foreground as an element of inner exoticism. The second are guides to the region, which started to appear in growing numbers from the beginning of the 1930s and inscribed the region into the new state doctrine of Polish regionalism.

<sup>63</sup> HOLUBEC, p. 542.

JIŘÍ KRÁL, ANTONÍN SVOBODA: Turistický průvodce Podkarpatskou Rusí a Slovenskem východně od Košic [Tourist Guide through Podkarpatská Rus and Eastern Slovakia from Košice], Mukačevo 1923, pp. 59–72; IVA NĚMEJCOVA-MĚKKÁ: Podkarpatská Rus: Průvodce a stručny nástin zeměpisný [Podkarpatská Rus: Guide and Brief Geographical Outline], Praha 1932.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. the following chapter.

In the last years of the Habsburg Empire, Polish elites had attempted to intensify tourism in Galicia for both economic and cultural purposes. <sup>66</sup> A leading figure behind this project was Mieczysław Orłowicz, the secretary of the Union of Spas and Health Resorts in Lemberg before World War I, and an important ministerial advisor for tourism in interwar Poland. He authored an extensive travel guide to Galicia, published both in German and Polish. The guide established ethnic hierarchies through selected photographs. Types depicting Polish national costumes were prominently placed amongst the pages of a short Polish travel dictionary in the introductory part, clearly asserting the culturally dominant group in the crownland.<sup>67</sup> Images representing high culture were mostly restricted to Polish institutions, while Jewish and Ukrainian spaces in cities were exclusively represented in the form of religious institutions. Or lowicz presented Polish peasants as an ethnographic type, but also the Polish nobility as a social type. Ruthenians, however, appeared exclusively as ethnographic types, captioned as peasants from Eastern Galicia. The diversity of Ruthenians was exclusively presented in terms of Hutsuls, omitting other highlanders. Hutsuls, however, were presented prominently through types both in the introductory part and the regional section.<sup>68</sup>

Orłowicz furthermore excluded the nobility *gente rutheni*, *natione poloni*, <sup>69</sup> the growing Ruthenian-Ukrainian middle-class, Ukrainian architecture and other Ukrainian cultural products, as well as modern Ukrainian cultural institutions from both the visual and the textual overview. <sup>70</sup> In this way his guide attempted to reinforce the long-standing idea that Ukrainians (Ruthenians) were an ethnic part of the Polish nation, a people with a specific folk culture, but not a distinct political nation with historical roots and a distinct high culture. The guide thus contributed to the naturalization of a socio-cultural order in the region that was not seen as the result of complex and difficult historical processes, but as the logical outcome of the different civilizational levels of the presented ethnic groups. <sup>71</sup> The clear omission of both recent Ukrainian cultural developments and the national identification of figures such as metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts'kyi as the leading religious and an important cultural, national

<sup>66</sup> CHRISTOPH MICK: Reisen nach "Halb-Asien": Galizien als binnenexotisches Reiseziel, in: PETER STACHEL, MARTINA THOMSEN (eds.): Zwischen Exotik und Vertrautem: Zum Tourismus in der Habsburgermonarchie und ihren Nachfolgestaaten, Bielefeld 2014, pp. 95–112.

<sup>67</sup> MIECZYSŁAW ORŁOWICZ, ROMAN KORDYS: Illustrierter Führer durch Galizien: Mit einem Anhang: Ost-Schlesien, Wien—Leipzig 1914, p. xv.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., pp. 270–285.

<sup>69</sup> On this socio-cultural phenomenon, cf.: ADAM ŚWIĄTEK: Gente Rutheni, Natione Poloni: The Ruthenians of Polish Nationality in Habsburg Galicia, Toronto et al. 2019.

Out of a broad survey on guidebooks authored by Poles, only: JOSEF PIOTROWSKI: Lemberg und Umgebung (Żółkiew, Podhorce, Brzeżany u. a.): Handbuch für Kunstliebhaber und Reisende, Lemberg 1916, briefly covers Ukrainian cultural institutions, cf. pp. 190–192.

<sup>71</sup> On a similar argumentation, cf.: DAVIS.

and religious figure further aggravated this tendency on the non-visual level. The resulting guide therefore presented a Polish province with elements of inner exoticism, i.e. the Hutsuls, considered as "sights" or "attractions." In Orłowicz's interwar guides to Poland which covered the region, Hutsuls became both quantitatively and qualitatively an integral part of representing the multicultural character of interwar Poland under the banner of inner exoticism. In a French travel guide to Poland, Orłowicz prominently placed a Hutsul type at the beginning of his book as the first of many illustrations, in a section not devoted to the region. In his guide, addressing an international audience, he thereby built on the pre-war narratives, presenting Hutsuls as the most representative part of the state's inner exoticism and Poland thereby de facto as a multicultural empire.<sup>72</sup>

During the 1930s, intensified attempts to integrate the Hutsul region into Poland culturally and economically were brought by the state doctrine of regionalism, which was supposed to rebrand the region so as to develop stronger ties to the state and simultaneously weaken the influence of the Ukrainian movement. Professional ethnographer Jan Falkowski facilitated the process with his attempts to delineate the Hutsul region from the adjacent Boyko region, also using type photographs to underline his assumptions through variations in local costumes.<sup>73</sup> The marketing of the region included ethnographic products such as textiles<sup>74</sup> and postcards, particularly those depicting landscapes and types. 75 An attempt to depict regional sights and attractions, mostly landscapes and architecture, can be found in the project "Poland in Landscapes and Monuments," which produced books of photos with accompanying texts on selected cities and the voivodeships of the state. The Hutsul region was covered in an album on the voivodeships Tarnopol and Stanisławów. It featured 125 photographs, out of which a disproportionate amount presented the Hutsul region. Out of 20 photographs that could be classified as ethnographic, 19 depicted Hutsuls in both ethnographic scenes (Fig. 8) and types (Fig. 9). <sup>76</sup> They

MIECZYSŁAW ORŁOWICZ: Guide illustré des chemins de fer polonaise. Vol. 1: Sud-ouest de la Pologne, Warszawa 1927, p. 3. An abbreviated German version of this guide omitted folk type altogether but displayed the painting of a Polish highlander on the High Tatra on its cover. MIECZYSŁAW ORŁOWICZ: Rundreisen in Polen auf Grund von Reiseschecks: Kurzer Führer für Touristen, Warschau 1930.

<sup>73</sup> JAN FALKOWSKI: Zachodnie pogranicze Huculszczyzny: Dolinami Prutu, Bystrzycy Nadwórniańskiej, Bystrzycy Sołotwińskiej i Łomnicy [The Western Borderland of the Hutsul Region: Through the Valleys of the Prut, Bystrzyca Nadwórniańska, Bystrzyca Sołotwińska, and Łomnica], Lwów 1937.

<sup>74</sup> DABROWSKI, Hutsul Art.

<sup>75</sup> Cf., e.g.: L. HELLER, M. HELLER: Huculi: Ich życie i stroje w obrazach. 10 zdjęć fotograficznych [Huculs: Their Life and Clothing in Pictures. 10 Photographs], s. l. 1929.

Polska w krajobrazie i zabytkach [Poland in Landscape and Monuments], vol. 2, Warszawa 1930, pp. 145–192 [photographic section], https://delibra.bg.polsl.pl/dlibra/publication/65399/edition/58595 (2023-07-20). For an evaluation of the landscape photographs of the volume and a broader overview on illustrated guidebooks through the Eastern Carpathians in general and the Hutsul region in particular throughout the

were taken by Mykola Sen'kovs'kyi, a photographer born in Russian-ruled Ukraine, who settled down in the Hutsul town of Żabie after World War I and became the most prominent photographer of the Hutsul region in Poland during the interwar period. Therefore, not only was the voivodeship of Tarnopol underrepresented in contrast to the voivodeship of Stanisławów to which the Hutsul region administratively belonged, but also Jews, local Poles and Ukrainians were excluded from being considered representative or "typical" of the voivodeships. Hutsuls were objectified and presented as an ethnographic attraction, thus characterizing the voivodeships in a way that stood in strange contradiction to the texts accompanying the volume, which had barely any ethnographic content.

Among the first representations of the Hutsul region to come from the local level within this new framework of central state-oriented regionalism is a 1932 brochure on the district of Kosów (Ukr. Kosiv). It presents this center of Hutsul culture through the lens of ethnography, handcrafts, "unspoiled" nature, and

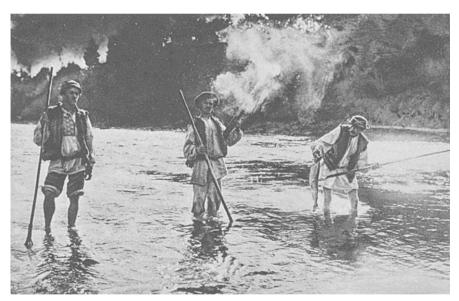


Fig. 8: Mykola Sen'kovs'kyi: Fishing in the Czeremosz by the light of sarmets<sup>79</sup>

<sup>1930</sup>s, cf.: JAGODA WIERZEJSKA: A Domestic Space: The Central and Eastern Carpathians in the Polish Tourist and Local Lore Discourse, 1918–1939, in: Prace filologiczne: Literaturoznawstwo 12 (2019), 9, part 1, pp. 33–62.

<sup>77</sup> ANDRZEJ WIELOCHA: Mikołaj Seńkowski, fotograf Huculszczyzny [Mikołaj Seńkowski, Photographer of the Hutsul Region], in: Płaj: Almanach karpacki 52 (2016), pp. 22–46

<sup>78</sup> H. GĄSIOROWSKI: Województwo Stanisławowskie [Woiwodschaft Stanisławów], in: Polska w krajobrazie i zabytkach, pp. 61–78 [text section].

<sup>79</sup> Polska w krajobrazie i zabytkach, p. 164.



Fig. 9: Mykola Sen'kovs'kyi: Married Hutsul woman; A farmer's boy<sup>80</sup>

Polish tourist and recreational facilities in the district.<sup>81</sup> The 33 photographs made up a sizeable part of the publication and were taken by Sen'kovs'kyi as well, with several overlapping with the ones used in the aforementioned volume. The narrative of the brochure, however, had little in common with Ukrainian national ideology. It adopted the dominant Polish discourse on the Hutsuls, emphasizing their difference from "Ruthenians" (Ukrainians) through the manifold cultural influences on them:

"Hutsuls, despite their national belonging, differ from the rest of the Ruthenian population in their racial characteristics, appearance, speech and customs. It should be presumed that they are an immigrant element. In the names of villages and their dialects, one can see the influences of neighboring Romania. There are also traces of Polish culture, especially in Kuty, Kosów, and Żabie, and they probably date back to the times of the struggle between Poland and Walachia. [...] [I]n the whole of Kosów region, there are many noble surnames, such as Janiszewski, Smigielski, and Kraszewski."82

While the attributes ascribed to Hutsuls and their land were not new, they now served as evidence for their cultural center of Żabie to be considered "a great, strong bastion of regionalism." While Poles were not represented by separate folk types, Polishness was assigned to the region by an emphasis on Poles'

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>81</sup> Powiat Kosów: Huculszczyzna [District Kosów: Hutsul Region], Kraków 1932.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 9–10.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

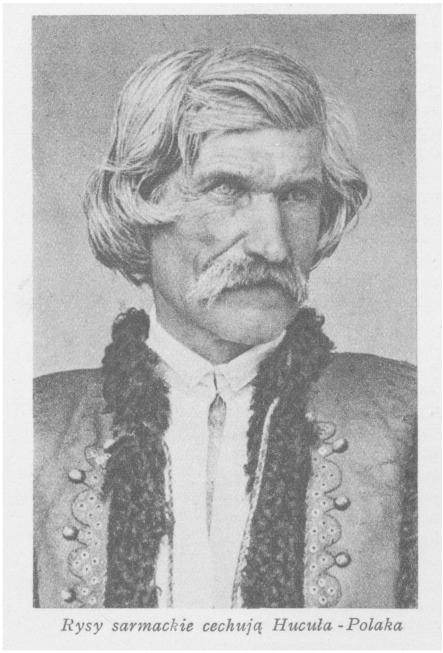


Fig. 10: "Sarmathian features characterizing the Hutsul-Pole"84

<sup>84</sup> ANTONI F. OSSENDOWSKI: Huculszczyzna: Gorgany i Czarnohora [The Hutsul Region: Gorgany and Chornohora], Poznań 1936, p. 44. Illustration taken from https://polona.

relevance for local culture and for Hutsul ethnogenesis. Ossendowski argued the latter with reference to (former) noblemen in the countryside. He put forward a type, supposedly depicting a "Hutsul-Pole [Hucuta-Polaka]," which he claimed featured certain "Sarmatian traits" (Fig. 10). Type photographs—even those without strictly anthropometric intent—were frequently used to present "typical" physical features and declare people as belonging to a certain race. The enigmatic question of the Hutsuls' ethnogenesis had stimulated an abundance of hypotheses since the nineteenth century. A very telling example is the Bukovinian historian Raimund Friedrich Kaindl, who in his early works argued vehemently that Hutsuls were of Scythian origin, but only a few years later barely considered the idea. 85 Ukrainian anthropologist Fedir Vovk argued that Hutsuls must be the most original Ukrainians, because they were protected from foreign influences by their secluded lifestyle in the mountains. Without denying manifold other influences on Hutsuls, Ossendowski's efforts popularized the idea of a significant Polish biological impact on the Hutsul ethnos. This assumption that the group was partially Polish in origin served as a justification for the assimilatory Polish nationality policies in the region.<sup>86</sup> This strategy found a counterpart in speculations about the (partially) Romanian origin of Hutsuls. However, this idea was ultimately rejected by Romanian national historians.<sup>87</sup> The two nationalizing states made similar efforts to argue that Hutsuls shared a common ethnic origin with the titular nation to justify their nationalizing efforts in the Hutsul region.

In the brochure's photographs, Polish influence is represented only through buildings, which are presented as the most modern elements in the region. The brochure has several photographs depicting mountainous landscapes, rivers and forests. Whether presenting a church, a summer resort, a guesthouse, the famous sanatorium of Dr. Apollinari Tarnawski, a view of the town Kosów, Hutsul musicians or groups of fishermen, the photographs make sure to depict their main content against a background of a well-visible natural environment. The brochure thereby confirms a trend identified by Jagoda Wierzejska. She demonstrates that interwar Polish guidebooks through the Hutsul region de-

pl/preview/9f66d5bc-1737-4b64-b1eb-d658a89d14d9?fbclid=IwAR2WOayBN9Y6Y xa kYNUVOuPPKz9jr58dGMVbqliMOydpycWU5V8-91ld60 (2023-07-20).

<sup>85</sup> RAIMUND FRIEDRICH KAINDL: Die Huzulen sind Skythen: Ein Beitrag zur Heimatkunde, Czernowitz 1887; RAIMUND FRIEDRICH KAINDL: Die Huzulen: Ihr Leben, ihre Sitten und ihre Volksüberlieferung, Wien 1894, p. 2.

MACIEJ GÓRNY: Exotische Sommerfrische: Das Huzulenland im unabhängigen Polen und die Karpatoukraine im tschechoslowakischen Staat, in: PETER OLIVER LOEW, CHRISTIAN PLETZING et al. (eds.): Wiedergewonnene Geschichte: Zur Aneignung von Vergangenheit in den Zwischenräumen Mitteleuropas, Wiesbaden 2006, pp. 187–204, here pp. 194–195.

<sup>87</sup> ION NISTOR: Der nationale Kampf in der Bukowina mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rumänen und Ruthenen, Bucureşti 1919.

picted "the south-eastern corner of Poland as an extraordinary wilderness," a discourse which was not just illustrated, but co-constructed by photographs. <sup>88</sup> Finding both "wilderness" and Polishness in the contested periphery of the state was a way of justifying the appropriation of the region. This approach was reflected in the Polish photographic discourse. According to photographer Henryk Poddębski, photographs that aimed to preserve "traditional" images of the village, supposedly threatened by modernity, should have the following features:

"In order to have a touristic and cognitive value, such pictures must be taken according to certain rules. We have to photograph people in the natural surroundings of their everyday life. If we want to picture types or groups we should avoid the background of walls, sheets or similar items, which make our models look like museum mannequins. The pose must be natural [...]."

This decided shift away from the visual techniques employed by Dutkiewicz was made possible through new developments in camera technology in previous decades, but nonetheless demonstrates the ideological impetus to embed the landscape in town and type photographs. Ultimately, this approach served to underline that Hutsuls were the "natural" inhabitants of the landscape, but it presented this idea in a more "natural" looking way on the visual level.

While this approach served the preservation of distinct local particularities of the Hutsuls through Polish elites, <sup>90</sup> Poles aimed to modernize selected features of the region in their attempts to develop it both economically and ideologically. Not only the popularization of Hutsul ethnography, but also the promotion of skiing in the region and World War I memorials were considered crucial resources for tourism. <sup>91</sup> The appropriation of the region was therefore built on the juxtaposition of cultural conservation and an economic civilizing mission. On the visual level, this idea was propagated with the depiction of Polish skiers, winter landscapes in the Hutsul region, and the participation of Hutsuls in the ski marches. <sup>92</sup> In a photograph used by Ossendowski it would be impossible to identify the "young Hutsuls" as such if it were not for the captions. <sup>93</sup> The Hutsul boy photographed by Poddębski (Fig. 11) is depicted in traditional clothing, clearly presenting him as a traditional Hutsul, and yet he

<sup>88</sup> WIERZEJSKA, p. 39. On the Polish discourse seamlessly combining the "cultural" and "natural" landscape of the region, cf. also her paper in this issue.

<sup>89</sup> HENRYK PODDĘBSKI: Trochę o fotografii krajoznawczej: Nasza wieś [A Little Bit about Landscape Photography: Our Village], in: Fotograf Polski (1930), pp. 115–116. Quoted after: MANIKOWSKA, p. 137.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Jagoda Wierzejska's paper in this issue on the Polish discourse regarding the protection of local peculiarities and the categorization as an anti-civilizing mission as highlighted in the following.

<sup>91</sup> Szlakiem II brygady legionów Polskich w karpatach wschodnich [On the Trail of the II Brigade of the Polish Legions in the Eastern Carpathians], Warszawa 1937.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.; OSSENDOWSKI, pp. 179–195; Album "Huculskie typy ludowe,", in: Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, Archiwum fotograficzne Henryka Poddębskiego, 3/131/0/-/455.

<sup>93</sup> OSSENDOWSKI, p. 188.

is taking part in modern winter sports. Therefore, I still consider the image a type, but with a selected modernized feature, serving to promote tourism to the region while preserving its ethnographic particularities.

The Hutsul region served as an "experimental realm" for Polish regionalist projects, continued through a series of mountain festivals celebrating different highlanders' diversity under the banner of (civic) Polishness. <sup>94</sup> Simultaneously, photographic documentations of the colorful celebrations, which remain outside of the scope of this paper, were conducted and circulated to spread the idea of Poland's multicultural borderlands, their loyal inhabitants and their belonging to the state. Photographs played an instrumental part in creating and disseminating these imperial visions in their cultural, economic and political dimensions.



Fig. 11: Hutsul from the village of Żabie-Ilcia on skis, 193895

<sup>94</sup> DABROWSKI, The Carpathians, pp. 121–136, quote p. 123.

<sup>95</sup> Narodowe Archivum Cyfrowe, Archivum fotograficzne Henryka Poddębskiego, 3/131/0/-/455, no. 111, https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/skan/-/skan/4873b011 70a8c1d4f91fe277ae9e185baf6a1cc9aae901922822363507cf4b6a (2023-07-20).

## **Ukrainian Perspectives**

The belonging of Hutsuls—just like Boykos and Lemkos—to the Ukrainian nation was not contested in Ukrainian discourse, but considered a fact already proven by numerous studies from the pre-war period, in particular the prominent works by Fedir Vovk in physical anthropology and Volodymyr Shukhevych in ethnography, richly illustrated with type photographs produced by the authors, <sup>96</sup> as well as works on folklore by Volodymyr Hnatiuk. While acknowledging that Hutsuls differed from Ukrainians both in their culture and physical appearance, this did not lead Ukrainian scholars to consider Hutsuls a distinct nation but rather a "tribe" of the Ukrainian one. Protected by the highlands and their geographically-induced isolated way of life, Hutsuls were considered particularly "archaic" and "original" Ukrainians, who had been less "harmed" by modernization and mingling with other groups than lowlanders. Therefore, Hutsuls were appreciated not only as extraordinarily resourceful and fascinating, but as a living testimony to the Ukrainian national past and an inextricable part of the Ukrainian self-image as it was constructed in the western Ukrainian lands.

While such narratives about rural populations were common in Volkskunde, the discourse on pre-Christian rites amongst Hutsuls placed them on a different. earlier temporal level from other Ukrainian peasants. This argument was certainly taken to its extremes by architectural historian Volodymyr Sichyns'kyi in his comparison of Hutsul and Etruscan farmsteads. 97 In Czechoslovakia, the aforementioned Ivan Pan'kevych built on this argument to argue for adopting the Galician standard of Ukrainian language as "official" in the new province of Podkarpatská Rus. In both interwar Poland and Czechoslovakia, Ukrainians contributed to the photographic projects and surveys mentioned above. Pan'kevych was involved in the production of official knowledge in Czechoslovakia, and Czech scholars also profited from pre-war Ukrainian publications to build their ideas about the region. The most prominent photographer for Polish albums was the above-mentioned Sen'kovs'kvi. In contrast to the Czechoslovak discourse, Polish discourse built upon the Polish pre-war knowledge regarding the Hutsul regions. These anti-Ukrainian approaches were elevated to the level of official knowledge while marginalizing Ukrainian knowledge altogether.

<sup>96</sup> VOVK; SHUKHEVYCH; on Vovk's collections, cf.: MARTIN ROHDE: "Bekommen wir auch Photographien?" Die Expedition ins Bojkenland 1904, ihre Fotosammlung und warum nur acht Positive ihren Weg nach Wien fanden, in: Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde 125 (2022), 1, pp. 63–84.

<sup>97</sup> MARTIN ROHDE: Ukrainian "National Science" from a Spatial Perspective: How the Hutsul Lands Were Mapped, in: Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 23 (2022), 4, pp. 773–801.



Fig. 12: Mykola Sen'kovs'kyj: Old Hutsul woman, 110 years old, in regional clothing with a pipe, 1927<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, Koncern Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny—Archiwum Ilustracji, 3/1/0/12/340, no. 1, https://www.szukajwarchiwach.gov.pl/jednostka/-/jednostka/5934266/obiekty/256858#opis\_obiektu (2025-10-20).

When Ukrainian photographers came together to form the Ukrainian Photographic Association (UFOTO) in Lwów, a new nuance was added to this discourse. After a series of exhibitions in search of a genuinely Ukrainian artistic photography, the photographer Ia. Bereza argued it should "free itself from foreign influences," and that an important way to do that was Ukrainian ethnographic motifs. 99 Sen'kovs'kyi added to this idea through his photograph "Old Hutsul Woman," Fig. 12) his most prominent type, which gained international recognition after winning an award at a Paris exhibition. He presented the photo at the first of a series of exhibitions prepared by UFOTO but did not contribute to the later ones. 100 In the biggest exhibition organized by UFOTO, "Nasha bat'kivshchyna v svitlyni" (Our Fatherland in the Photograph) from 1935, photographs of Hutsuls were the most prominent of the motifs. In particular, the catalogue called for paying "special attention to the life of our highlanders, particularly Hutsuls and Boykos."101 In comparison to the Hutsul region, Boykos were underrepresented. The absence of Lemko motifs is symptomatic of the neglect of the Lemko region by the Ukrainian movement. Iiulian Tarnovych's "Illustrated History of the Lemko Region" acknowledged this fact and attempted to promote the Lemko region amongst the Ukrainian intelligentsia, particularly with the aid of photographs he collected with the help of local clerics. 102 However, these efforts did not seem to impact UFOTO.

With Hutsuls being the most popular ethnographic "tribe" to be appropriated by rival nation- and state-building projects in the interwar period, it might be assumed that the Ukrainian efforts to counter these discourses were primarily responsible for the increased attention given to Hutsuls. Such a hypothesis does not, however, hold up to critical scrutiny. The Ukrainian fascination with Hutsuls dated back to the nineteenth century and stimulated artistic production as well as personal involvement with the region early on. Hutsuls were considered an important cultural resource for the Ukrainian movement on different levels, and therefore not only stimulated activists and scholars, but also artists. This led not only to their personal involvement with the region, but also to Ukrainian audiences in the cities becoming interested in material on the Hutsuls, which was specifically produced for them. As the issue of Lemko photography shows, the contestation of a region alone was not enough to stimulate photographers. This attitude remained influential throughout the interwar period, objectifying Hutsuls on a different level. The Ukrainian movement tried to exert influence in all parts of the Hutsul regions, but in terms of photography, the former Eastern Galicia stands out as the richest. The reason should be

<sup>99</sup> IA. M. BEREZA: Z nashykh zavdan' [From our Tasks], in: Svitlo i tin' 5 (1937), 6, pp. 860–862, here p. 862.

<sup>100</sup> WIELOCHA. On the award, which is disputable due to a lack of evidence, but was prominent in the contemporary discourse, cf. ibid., p. 33.

<sup>101</sup> MYKHAILO ZVARYCH: Fotohrafiia i kraieznavstvo [Photography and Local Studies], in: Nasha bat'kivshchyna v svitlyni: Kataloh, L'viv 1935, pp. 3–5, here p. 5.

<sup>102</sup> IIULIAN TARNOVYCH: Iliustrovana istoriia Lemkivshchyny [An Illustrated History of the Lemko Region], L'viv 1936, pp. 6–7.

sought not in the region itself, but rather in the proximity of the region to activists and photographers.

## Conclusion

Photographic surveys were crucial tools for the appropriation and (re-)branding of peoples and regions. While the genre of visualizations in travel or ethnographic reports dates back earlier and can be observed in the Habsburg peripheries during the eighteenth century, the developments in the fields of photography and their reproductions coincided with the period of increased nationalization in the empire, World War I, and the re-making of East Central Europe in its aftermath, which took place not only on maps, but also in photographs. In the Habsburg empire, Hutsuls were already a contested group among different national movements. Yet they were imagined as a politically passive group, artistic and colorful, confined to their ethnic territory, until they were invited to present their work at exhibitions. World War I brought a major change to this, but did not decrease the desire to return to this constructed ideal as it would have served the appropriation of the contested borderland in the tri-border area. This influenced both the political and cultural discourses through which different actors attempted to appropriate the Hutsul region. As a result, it influenced the visual culture, which co-produced the Hutsul discourse.

The inner exoticism of the Habsburg Empire provided a cultural resource for the reappraisal of a neglected periphery, which was then continued by both follow-on states picked up. Types were an increasingly accessible way of (re-) producing and manipulating this othering, turning Hutsuls increasingly into "attractions," on which photographers built by producing more and more diverse sets of images, reflecting their own background. The actors involved were driven by state-sponsored missions, national ideologies, professional ambitions and ethno-cultural fascination, with these aspects not being mutually exclusive, but often influencing the photographs and their usage. These backgrounds also coined their approach to the Hutsul region and their attitude towards Ukrainian contributions.

As demonstrated by the work of both Kožmínová and Hůlka, Czech scholars were considerably more appreciative of Ukrainian-produced knowledge, adopting it as a part of their own imagination of Hutsuls, while still maintaining their general idea of the new province. Polish guides drew on different resources and focused on producing ignorance towards Ukrainian narratives. From the cases reviewed, it appears that apart from Ukrainians, only Hůlka as the closest enthusiast of the Ukrainian national project was interested in the Hutsul region as a whole. Otherwise, Polish and Czechoslovak scholars and travel writers did not consider the Hutsul region outside the borders of the provinces to which their work was dedicated; especially the respective national travel guides attempted to present a unified, cohesive and complete picture of the state and its regions. The position of the Ukrainian movement was more difficult, as its ideology meant that activists operated in a transregional fashion

while having no state apparatus or resources to provide them with the means to do so consistently. Polish scholars and travel guide authors opposed the Ukrainian project and largely discarded Ukrainian knowledge about the region as generally incompatible with the Polish vision of former Eastern Galicia in general and the Hutsul region in particular. While the Polish discourse—similar to the Romanian one—argued for a common origin of the titular nation and Hutsuls, this was not the case in Czechoslovakia. By building on the imperial tools for appropriating the region, the nationalizing states acted like miniature empires aiming to order, popularize and exploit their new peripheries. Photography and its further development in both technical and artistic understanding co-constituted these practices instead of simply illustrating them.

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