Combating the Hydra

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OUT OF THE PAST
The End of Gypsy Slavery in Bukovina

Since the late Middle Ages, in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, two of the predecessor states of Romania, Gypsy slavery was common. Western Europe first became aware of this situation during the Enlightenment era, when Heinrich Moritz Gottlieb Grellmann wrote about it in his influential study on the history and manners of Gypsies. In the mid-nineteenth century, the topic left the sphere of learned discourse and became an ardent political issue, as both Moldavia and Wallachia started top-down abolition movements. Bringing an end to slavery turned out to be a protracted matter that was finalized in 1855 in Moldavia and 1856 in Wallachia. The prominent Moldavian/Romanian politician and historian Mihail Kogălniceanu (1817–1891) supported, commented, and shaped this process.

During the first half of the twentieth century, topics related to Gypsy slavery and its abolition only rarely piqued non-Romanian scholarly interest. Romanian researchers worked on the topic, especially from the late 1920s, until the Communist period more or less set an end to such investigations. In the wake of Romani studies, researchers indicated renewed interest, first in the United States and, after 1990, also in Romania. In 2007, the French journal Études Tsiganes devoted one of its issues exclusively to Gypsy slavery. And recently, a research group from the Nicolae Iorga Institute of History in Bucharest started multifaceted research concerning slavery, abolitionism, and emancipation in Moldavia and Wallachia between approximately 1830 and 1860.
An earlier but interrelated abolition movement in the northern parts of Moldavia went unrecognized by most historians of Eastern Europe. This region was seized by Habsburg troops in 1774, and from then on went under the name of Bukovina. There—seventy years before the epoch-making abolition in Moldavia and Wallachia!—a similar process of Gypsy emancipation began. Although it is remarkable because of both its early date and its effectiveness, not a single standard history of the Habsburg empire remembers it; no textbooks mention it and no case study has been devoted to it so far. This is all the more astonishing in light of official Austrian habitual (and often misled or naive) nostalgia for the “multicultural” atmosphere in the Habsburg empire as its predecessor.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, scholars like the librarian Johann Polek (1843–1920), the economist Karl (Carl) Grünberg (1861–1940) or the historians Ferdinand Ziegler (1829–1906) and Raimund Friedrich Kaindl (1866–1930) excavated some important source material regarding Gypsy emancipation from the archives and included it in their essays. Nevertheless, their focus was on the relationship between regional manorial owners and their subjects in general and not so much on Gypsies in particular. World War II and the Cold War period made any follow-up studies for “Westerners” almost impossible. The archive of Chernivtsi/Czernowitz, which holds the most relevant material, remained inaccessible to them for decades. It was only some thirty years ago that the system change in the former Soviet Union opened up the (eventually Ukrainian) archives to anyone interested in pursuing this work and with the ability to overcome bureaucratic obstacles to access it.

However, historians of the Habsburg empire take research trips to Ukraine only very reluctantly. Maybe due to the language barrier or the ex-Soviet archiving system, which quite substantially differs from its Western counterparts, Habsburg scholars only rarely make use of Bukovinian sources. Normally, historians of the Habsburg empire circumvent traveling to the archives in the “peripheries” by consulting the central archives of Vienna, which also preserve great parts of the official correspondence with their “provinces.” But they can not do this in the case of Bukovina because a large proportion of the respective Viennese documents were lost during the 1927 July revolt (Justizpalastbrand).

Based on extensive archival research, this chapter presents the first in-depth investigation of the abolition of Gypsy slavery in Bukovina. The starting point was a survey of the Chernivtsi sources, which was strengthened quite substantially by documents from the Archiwum Narodowe in Cracow (Poland). As Cracow only became
part of the Habsburg empire in 1795, its archives would normally not provide documents on the period in question, but in this particular case, it is different, as it holds the enormous collection of Anton Schneider (Tęki Antoniego Schneidera). Schneider (1825–1880) worked on an encompassing history of the crown land Galicia (of which Bukovina was a precursor). Toward the end of his life, he handed over huge parts of his collection to the Akademia Umiejętności in Cracow, from where it made its way into the holdings of the Archiwum Narodowe. For unknown reasons, Schneider acquired original administrative documents that list information about individual Gypsy families and provide rich demographic data as well as deep insights into the (self-) administration of Gypsies in Bukovina.

### THE HABSBURG TAKEOVER IN 1774

The Russo-Ottoman War (1768–1774) ended in a “major military and diplomatic disaster for the Ottoman Empire.” Poland was divided in 1772 and disappeared from the map of European states. The Peace Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca of 1774 further reshaped borders, mainly in the Black Sea region, but also between the Habsburg and the Ottoman spheres of interest.

The principality of Moldavia had been a vassal of the Ottoman Empire, to which it was tributary. But apart from its financial dependence, the principality was more or less a self-governed buffer state. For nearly a century, it also functioned as a cordon sanitaire that was welcomed by the Habsburg empire. But after the Ottoman defeat in 1774, strategies changed, and the Habsburg rulers asked for “a reward for having aided in the achievement of peace.” In close coordination with victorious Russia, Habsburg troops started an invasion into the principality of Moldavia. On August 31, 1774, they crossed the border to Moldavia’s northwestern parts, which were soon to be called Bukovina. In a rush, the territory was occupied and a military administration was established. The commander-in-chief, General Gabriel Splény von Miháldy (1734–1818), chose Chernivtsi/Czernowitz as his headquarters and the district capital of the newborn Bukovina.

Initially, the central authorities in Vienna were primarily interested in Bukovina for strategic reasons. This newly won territory served as a perfect corridor, which linked Galicia—the Habsburg’s winnings from the Polish division—to Transylvania on the southeastern fringe of the empire. Military considerations shaped the first decade of Habsburg rule in the region, and a military administration held office in Bukovina. In 1786 a civil administration followed. Bukovina was merged into the Kingdom of Galicia and thus lost its sovereignty, but not its character as a distinct region. Bukovina was
made a district (Kreis), a subsidiary role that lasted up to 1849, when Bukovina was upgraded to the status of a “crownland.”

Immediately after the 1774 takeover, General Splény proved himself a determined reformer who searched for ways to “change the previously despotic to a monarchic system, without totally reversing conventional practices.” Finding a wise but effective (and, at the same time, radical) way of reconstruction was vital for the military administration. Introducing new governmental policies without damaging the established infrastructure and jeopardizing the loyalty of the newly acquired subjects turned out to be a challenging mission.

GYPSY SLAVERY IN MOLDAVIA

Of the many unexpected and unfamiliar phenomena the military administration faced in Bukovina, by far the most disturbing was Gypsy slavery. Unlike serfdom or the wide variety of manorial restrictions, slavery transformed the status of the subjected individuals to that of objects. Buying, selling, or bartering slaves was as normal as donating them as presents or handing them down from one owner to the next. Harsh restrictions regulated reproduction: usually, only in-group marriages were allowed; if any free person married an enslaved Gypsy, they also changed to the status of a slave. Illegitimate children of a Gypsy mother were also, without exception, considered slaves.

Most European societies had largely abandoned slavery within their homeland boundaries—but, of course, not in their colonies—by the late Middle Ages, but Moldavia (as well as Wallachia) retained this practice until the middle of the nineteenth century. Thus, the situation in this region is only comparable to the overseas practices of the colonial powers: “Not only did slavery in the Romanian principalities continue to exist well into the early modern period, but it proved to be the most long-lasting, overlapping chronologically with its more well-known counterpart in the Americas. By the first half of the nineteenth century, the [W]estern public indeed equated slavery in Wallachia and Moldavia with that of the Atlantic world.”

In Moldavia, Gypsies constituted the overwhelming majority of slaves. Their status as such dates back to the Middle Ages, but its origin is unclear. Theories suggesting that Gypsies arrived already enslaved to the invading Tatars or Mongols contradict the timeline established for Gypsy arrivals in the region. In 1428, Gypsies are mentioned in Moldavia for the first time, although they probably had lived in the region long before. The first document regarding Gypsy slavery is also from this time. From the early modern period through the mid-nineteenth century, Gypsy slavery was a part of the Moldavian society. In early modern Europe, this slaveholding society was unique and
quite remarkable. For centuries the slave status of Gypsies in Moldavia was fixed: their inferior position in society was seen as a given and perceived as unchangeable. Freeing an individual Gypsy in an act of benevolence would have made no difference, as any passerby would then have been entitled to immediately reenslave them. Also, for a long while the state felt no obligation to intervene in any master/slave relations, a situation rooted in medieval, but still legally binding, documents. Thus, slaves had no recourse concerning the treatment they received from their masters. The state only intervened by prohibiting masters from arbitrarily killing any of their slaves.

Although the principality of Moldavia in the eighteenth century took some steps toward governmental and societal reforms, the scope and impact of these changes are disputed in the historiography. The Phanariot rulers, among them especially prince Constantine Mavrocordatos (1711–1769), substantially improved the legal status of peasants, but the benefits of their reforms in the lives of Gypsy slaves remained very limited. It took until the Habsburg takeover for slavery to be recognized as a legal and societal problem. In addition, the Habsburg empire also questioned the economic value of coerced Gypsy labor, an aspect of enslavement that has also been stressed by one thread of scholarly research.

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION VS. CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

Although the individual rights of Habsburg subjects were far from unrestricted during the eighteenth century, slavery as the ultimate form of personal bondage was entirely unfamiliar to the social and legal system of the empire. It was even seen as morally dubious: contemporary documents from the Habsburg side call the slave system in Moldavia “indecent to Christians.” It seems as if Pietas Austriaca vs. Barbarity was the slogan, and barbarity was no longer restricted to the “Turkish archenemy” but also associated with its (by the way, predominantly Christian) Moldavian suzerain.

Although the case of Gypsy slavery demanded a quick and complete legal revision by the new Bukovinian government, the process of its abolition took years and was marked by multiple failed attempts and setbacks. In general, the spirit of the time favored the emancipation of all those subjects whose lives were marked by personal unfreedom. In 1781 and 1782, Emperor Joseph II abrogated serfdom, first in Bohemia and Hungary and then in the Austrian hereditary lands. In 1783, following an on-site inspection of the emperor, this reform was also implemented in Bukovina, in the hope that this could also be a model for solving the slavery problem. Despite expecting the resistance of slave owners, General Karl von Enzenberg (1725–1810), the administrator of
Bukovina between 1778 and 1786, was convinced of the necessity of pressing ahead with abolitionism. It is unclear if, out of a misjudgement or conviction, he approached Gypsy slavery as if it were serfdom and radically intended to extirpate both. In August 1783, he published a declaration announcing the abolition of slavery and equality among subjects. One crucial item on his nine-point implementation plan was the right of Gypsies to remain on lands they had tilled before; those without land would be granted some by the administration. Gypsy craftsmen were allowed to continue their professions. Unrestricted reunion of children with their parents was conceded. Any orders by former landowners which commanded Gypsies to move to Moldavia and thus back into slavery, were null and void. As a special “welcoming gesture” the administration for the year 1783 exempted the newly freed Gypsies from paying taxes.

Enzenberg’s document was impressive but short-lived. All its promises were withdrawn soon after. Pressured by the boyars (members of high nobility) and other landowners intransigent to reform, the Court War Council (Hofkriegsrat) in Vienna called off Enzenberg’s premature fervor. Less than one year after the declaration, the status quo ante was by and large reestablished. Formerly enslaved Gypsies were returned to their prior status if their former owners could prove “rightful ownership.” The only relief was that they could no longer be bought or sold.

Enzenberger felt personally offended and publically humiliated by this backlash, but acquiesced. In May 1784, he performed a volte-face by compelling 567 (already freed) Gypsies “to the same allegiance to their masters as had been in effect before.”

While officially the central authorities in Vienna claimed economic reasons for this reactionary intervention, they in fact only showed deference to the acute political situation: as a new war with the Ottoman Empire was pending, the Court War Council did not want to risk any serious discord with the Bukovinian elites.

**CATEGORIES OF GYPSY SLAVES**

For synoptical reasons, I have thus far treated Gypsy slaves in Moldavia (țigani robi) as a single entity, which is true only from a bird’s-eye perspective. On closer examination, they were divided into three distinct groups: princely slaves, monastery slaves (țigani/robi mănăstirești), and boyars’ slaves. Further complicating the situation, one group of nomadic Gypsies remained free.

With the takeover, the Habsburg administration inherited all three categories of slaves from their predecessors, and they soon realized that any abolition efforts had to pay attention to these traditional categories. Freeing slaves in the the princely and monastery categories turned out to be easier to manage than in the case of the boyars.
As there were no Moldavian princes in Bukovina anymore, a state order sufficed to free this group of slaves. In addition, the end of slavery in connection with monasteries was only a matter of time: the secularization process brought the monasteries under heavy pressure, and their slave-owning privileges were doomed to vanish with their own declining status in society. But the boyars were reluctant to free their slaves and used their potential emigration as leverage. As a regional elite, their arguments had to be heard, and the government could not simply overrule them.

**ABOLITION OF MONASTERY SLAVES**

The big monasteries were among the most important beneficiaries of the slave system. Although there is no data on the overall number of Gypsy slaves in eighteenth-century Moldavia, the monasterial must have been the most numerous of the three types; monasteries may have even constituted the majority of Bukovina slaves. Before and after the takeover, some of the monasteries could rely on an immense coerced workforce: Putna monastery, for instance, in 1764 had 109 Gypsy families with a total of 313 people at its disposal, the Moldovița monastery in 1775 commanded over eighty slave households with 294 members, and the Humor monastery, even at the time of its closure in 1785, was still the owner of twenty-three Gypsy families.

Before the abolition of slavery, the Gypsies served the monasteries by—according to an official report—working as “cooks, blacksmiths, gardeners, coachmen, and servants, for nothing more than food and garment.” Nevertheless, some contemporaries pointed out that this life should not be pictured as all too miserable, but sometimes as quite preferable to a normal peasant’s existence. General Enzenberg, for instance, wrote, “[I saw] Gypsies that have quite good houses, which they keep neat and clean. They are better dressed than the peasantry and possess good draught cattle and those instruments that they need for their work.” Enzenberg’s report, of course, has to be taken with a grain of salt, as he was eager to depict “his Gypsies” as far “advanced” compared to those in neighboring Hungary or Transylvania. Such positive reports of these Gypsies’ habits could also serve to alleviate any concerns about his abolitionist efforts.

The abolition of slavery for monastery Gypsies was closely linked to the enormous changes in the state’s general new approach toward monastic life. In the 1780s, Emperor Joseph II initiated a wave of secularization that swept through the whole Habsburg empire. One of the most controversial reforms was the closure of such cloisters or monasteries that were considered exclusively contemplative and therefore without any use for the general public. The state confiscated their properties and transferred them to a “Religious Fund” (Religionsfond), which provided the (only recently “regulated”)
parishes of the Habsburg empire with money. These reforms were also carried out in Bukovina, where only three monasteries survived. The Bukovinian “Religious Fund” was established in 1783 and, as the only orthodox one, was unique on Habsburg soil. One of the major goals of the “Religious Fund” was to establish a radically new form of church organization, which cut ecclesiastical autonomy and replaced it with a strong affiliation to the state and the regional authorities. In the further course of events, the Religious Fund (Fondul Bisericesc) became the biggest landowner in Bukovina and played an important role in Romania until 1949, when the Communist authorities annulled it.

The key date for the abolition of this type of slavery was May 1, 1785. Former monastic Gypsies—now assigned to the Religious Fund—were recognized as citizens, equal to any others in the Habsburg empire. This emancipation freed hundreds of Gypsies and ended centuries of Gypsies holding an inferior status, but it also meant that they were now obliged to pay ordinary taxes and fulfill unpaid corvée (Robot) for the territorial prince (Landesfürst). Further plans to deploy large groups of Gypsies for gold washing turned out to be ephemeral.

For almost three years after the emancipation of Gypsies, it remained unclear whether the Religious Fund—as successor to monastic claims—should be compensated for the financial losses connected to the end of compulsory labor. These losses were estimated at 1,506 guilders per year, and as the state did not intend to burden the only recently freed Gypsies with these obligations, the district treasury had to take responsibility for it. In October 1787, the imperial court put an end to money flows of this kind by simply stopping them, and thus wiped out this last strong reminder of a vanquished slave economy.

DYNAMICS OF EMANCIPATION

Although monastic Gypsy slavery disappeared, other sections of the church continued to own slaves, at least for a while. In 1787, the bishop of Rădăuți/Radautz still owned 422 Gypsies and, apart from a few investigations, the state authorities did not step in. It took two more years and the death of the bishop until the Gypsies were freed.

Gypsy emancipation in Bukovina was not only fueled by humanitarian concerns and implemented as a tribute to the principles of the Enlightenment, but was also—maybe even more so—driven by mundane considerations concerning taxation. In contrast to nomadic Gypsies, who always had paid taxes, Gypsy slaves were entirely exempt from such obligations. Therefore, their owners were profiting twice from them: firstly, they had a (more or less) cheap and reliable workforce at their disposal, for which they,
secondly, did not have to pay a single coin as a tribute to the state. Habsburg authorities even suspected the elites of Bukovina, be they clerical or secular, of replacing their non-slave subjects with Gypsies, who, due to their tax-exemption, increased the profits. These financial circumstances of slavery and freedom had unintended consequences.

The liberation movement was thwarted by unforeseeable dynamics. The following report of the Kreisamt, which might be biased in its judgments but is clearly based on observations, touches upon an irritating and unexpected phenomenon:

However good the intentions concerning these miserable people were, a lot of the new freedmen emigrated. Most possibly they followed those monks, who after the resculdment of the cloisters went over the cordon, and took up their obligations towards them again, because they are used to it and because this way of life suits them. The duties asked of them are tolerable and most of the time even perfect for lazing around. If they are missing out on livelihood, their master has to take care of them. This is why some of them in the recent expensive years complained about their former liberty because they [...] received their livelihood from the cloisters. Not all are thinking this way, especially not those, who are sedentarized and tilling the land. But this is a minority and it is to be feared that, if these people get their liberty and will be equal to all the others, they will disperse and maybe also with the tacit consent of their masters adjourn over the cordon.\textsuperscript{63}

One reason for the Gypsies to follow their old masters and thus remain in the status of slaves could have been economical. Especially if Gypsies were untrained in crafts or trade, it seems logical that if they had no other means of survival to stick with what they knew.

In addition to such developments on the Habsburg side, Gypsies from the principality of Moldavia also crossed the border, some of them probably with the intention to switch sides and profit from the new free status of Gypsies in Bukovina.\textsuperscript{64} Unfortunately, these hopes turned out to be in vain. The Habsburg authorities unyieldingly stuck to a prior convention from June 30, 1776, that had been negotiated with an Ottoman commissioner on the occasion of drawing the borders anew.\textsuperscript{65} According to this agreement, runaway Moldavian Gypsies should categorically (and violently if necessary) be extradited in return for Habsburg deserters caught in Moldavia.\textsuperscript{66} And indeed, until the 1790s documents mention Gypsies who were handed over to the Moldavian administration.\textsuperscript{67} To make this regulation even more efficient, the local authorities were punishable with a severe fine of one ducat per capita, in case they allowed Gypsies to “sneak in” and “ramble around.”\textsuperscript{68} In addition, it seems that on occasion, even though a breach of law, free domestic nomadic Gypsies who (illegally) had crossed the border to
Hungary, were sometimes relegated to Moldavia. In 1785 such relegations were strictly forbidden by the emperor.69

BANNING THE G-WORD

The ban of the various terms for Gypsies and their replacement with neologisms has a long tradition. In the seventeenth century, Spain was a forerunner, when legislation of a new type made its way “into a rather poorly drafted royal ordinance issued in Madrid by Philip IV on 8 May 1633. This once again sought ‘to rid the language once and for all of the word gitanos.’ Henceforth, no one might refer to these people as Gypsies. The ordinance asserted that those calling themselves gitanos ‘are not so, either by origin or by nature […]’”70 Following this order, the term gitanos was increasingly replaced by the term castellanos nuevos (new Castilians), until this expression, too, became stigmatizing and was thus forbidden in 1782.71

Empress Maria Theresa probably resorted to this idea of reshaping by renaming. In the course of her settlement policies, she ordered Hungarian Gypsies (cigány) to be addressed as ujparasztok (new peasants) or equivalents of a similar character (new citizens, new Hungarians, new settlers).72 First implemented in 1761,73 this idea was still alive when Habsburg bureaucrats pondered the status of Gypsies in Bukovina. From that point on, the term Zigeuner (Gypsy) was to be replaced with Neubauer (new peasant). Like many other measures inspired by the Enlightenment, such a renaming was Janus-faced: on the one side, it intended to eradicate stigmatization, but on the other, it was—anachronistically speaking, but factual—genocidal, as the authorities were hoping for total dissolution of this segment of the population over the course of just one or two generations. As one Austrian historian put it euphemistically, Gypsies should be transformed from Hordenzigeuner (horde Gypsies) to Herdzigeuner (hearth Gypsies).74

Already in his bold and untimely move toward emancipation in 1783, General Enzenberg prohibited the use of the term Zigeuner, as this appellation was seen as “opposed to humanity.”75 In March 1784, the Bukovinian authorities were again ordered to “intercept” the use of the seemingly pejorative expression,76 and it is amazing that even after the Vienna-ordered rollback, the ban of the appellation Zigeuner remained in effect.77 Under these circumstances, it suited the authorities well that there still was the categorial term robi (slave), which they had inherited from the Moldavian regime, in use for Gypsies. This term enabled some officials to address the biggest group of Gypsies without using the “G-word.” But as often with prescribed appellations, a significant part of the bureaucracy simply ignored the new naming system and continued to refer to “Gypsies” in their documents.
DEMOGRAPHIC ASPECTS OF THE ABOLITION

Although, in general, the last decades of the eighteenth century coincided with the emergence of reasonably reliable statistical data, the documents concerning the demographic situation in Bukovina during the military administration are far from self-explanatory. Sources on the numbers of slaves (and hence Gypsies) frequently contradict each other, more often than not due to confusion or vagueness concerning basic categorization. Nomadic and sedentary Gypsies are either mixed up or not specified at all. In addition, the seemingly logical chain of associations is at times misleading. Being owned by a monastery, for instance, evokes the idea that these Gypsies were also settled on monastery ground—which does not always hold up to scrutiny.78 Contemporaries already saw the difficulties of migration patterns: “One can never give the exact numbers of Gypsies living in Bukovina, because they have no constant houses and wander around in the country, therefore it is their laudable custom to disappear across the borders and come back after a while.”79

Taking such blurriness into account, there are nevertheless some benchmarks that the early demographical data support. In 1774, right before the Habsburg takeover, a Russian census of the population of Moldavia (68,700 people)80 informs about the approximate number of Gypsies that lived in that part of the territory that later became Bukovina.81 An analysis of listed names suggests some 420 families, equaling probably 2,100 individuals, representing about 3 percent of the population.82

In 1775, General Splény mentioned 294 nomadic Gypsy families (vagirende Zigeuner),83 and in 1780 another 534 sedentary Gypsy families were counted.84 Regarding the year 1791, the figures are even more precise: the authorities counted 316 sedentary Gypsies, whereas 146 were listed as nomadic.85

According to these numbers, during the first few years of the military administration, a total of approximately eight hundred Gypsy families (nomadic and sedentary) can be estimated, which means a rather surprising doubling of the figures from 1774. However debatable the accuracy of such numbers is (especially due to the unclear multiplication factor from families to individuals), they would nevertheless fit into a general trend. Between 1774 and 1785, due to massive immigration from Galicia, Moldavia, and Transylvania, the total population, not just the Gypsy population, almost doubled as well.86

In the following period up to 1800, as Bukovina changed from an autonomous territory to a district (Kreis) of Galicia, demographic data concerning the regional Gypsy population countered the general population trend. As can be seen from the following data, the number of Gypsies rose from year to year, while the authorities were now confronted with a general population decline due to emigration on a larger scale.87
The demographic data concerning Bukovinian Gypsies from the 1790s is very informative, and the previously mentioned Schneider collection in Cracow provides especially fascinating insights. Firstly, it is striking that, according to these lists, the number of Gypsy families grew steadily year by year to double in one decade from 305 in 1790 to 627 in 1800. Both numbers most obviously hold a secret: Where did the approximately five hundred Gypsy families go that are the cause for the significant difference between the 1780 and 1790 numbers? And why did this segment of the population grow so quickly between 1790 and 1800? The current state of research prevents answers to either question. Probably, significant border fluctuations (between Galicia/Bukovina and Moldavia or else Hungary/Transylvania) could solve the riddle.

Howsoever, the extremely elaborate list concerning the year 1800 is an especially rich source of demographic data on Bukovinian Gypsies approximately one generation after the abolition of slavery. A complete list of professions, for instance, allows a glance into the opportunities and restrictions the Gypsy status posed. We find the stratification shown in table 10.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Number of craftsmen</th>
<th>German terminology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woodworkers</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>Holzarbeiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiths without specialization</td>
<td>189</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoon makers</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>Löffelmacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicians</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sieve makers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Siebmacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemakers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Schuhmacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoe repairers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Schuster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locksmiths</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Schlosser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobblers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Schuhflicker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettle smiths</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coppersmiths</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelwrights</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rädermacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day laborer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housefathers listed without professions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widows as head of the household</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>627</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One of them a female locksmith.
Some of the mentioned categories need further explanation. By far the biggest group of skilled craftsmen was addressed as woodworkers (Holzarbeiter), which does not refer to forest work but the production of wooden household items; spoon makers (Löffelmacher) and (at least partly) sieve makers (Siebmacher) also worked with wood as raw material. All in all, they represented almost 60 percent of the professions. Smiths of various types followed with 30 percent and a significant minority of 5 percent were full- or part-time musicians. The remaining 5 percent were distributed among shoemakers, shoe repairers, and two wheelwrights. Remarkably, there is only one day laborer mentioned, which means that Gypsies remained incorporated into traditional professional categories. The process of declassing, so typical for the nineteenth century, had apparently not yet begun.

Ethnography usually operates with a set of categories applied to Gypsies of different trades (e.g., Ursari for bear trainers, Aurari for gold washers, Fierari for blacksmiths). Woodworkers and smiths commonly belong to different categories, but in our case, the documents do not differentiate—both are listed as Lingurari. They were described as itinerant craftsmen (which otherwise go under the category of lăeşi), who were “left to themselves and resided, wherever they found some income.”

The aforementioned list from 1800 not only provides the number of housefathers (and, in very few cases, of widowed housemothers) but also a complete list of people living in each respective household. An arguable extrapolation rate of five (including one housemother plus four children on average) can in this case be confronted with exact data and turns out to be quite close to reality. The 622 housefathers and 5 housemothers accompany another 2,440 family members on the list (most of them wives and children, only a few extended family members), which in 1800 represented an overall Gypsy population of 3,067 individuals in Bukovina. These sedentary Gypsies constituted almost exactly 1.5 percent of the total population (197,375 inhabitants) in this year.

Another aspect of the data provided in the lists from Cracow touches upon questions of mobility by providing data on fluctuations within the Gypsy population. An extra column in the lists tells whether the householders were born in the Bukovina territory or had only lately moved there (see table 10.2). According to this data, 467 householders living in Bukovina in 1800 were “Bukovinians” by birth (or, in many cases, more correctly “ex-northwest Moldavians”); another 160 had moved to the territory between 1770 and 1800. Concerning the latter, the exact figures are shown in table 10.2. This list only illuminates the influx into Bukovina and does not provide any data about the outflow of people in the same time span, which would be necessary to paint an overall picture of events. Nevertheless, it is very likely that the significant peak in 1785–1786 (fifty new households) correlates with the abolition of slavery and its immediate impact.

In the three decades covered, a greater number of Gypsies than before might have been tempted to move into Bukovina because they were seeking the newly declared
Table 10.2 Movements into Bukovina territory, 1770–1800

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Householders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1798</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

status as citizens. At the current stage of research, the last significant peak in 1800 is inexplicable.

GYPSY LEADERS AND OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF GYPSIES

After the abolition of slavery, the Habsburg administration retained a system of intermediary rule over Gypsies, which they inherited from the old Moldavian system. In it, starting at the scale of individual families of Gypsies (sălaşe, sing. sălaş), organisational structures […] were created by the State for fiscal reasons or in order to exert a more efficient control over the Gypsies. In Wallachia and Moldavia, several Gypsy bands living within a certain region and sharing the same occupation
were placed under the authority of a Gypsy sheriff (vătaf). Together, the bands composed a Gypsy shire (vătăşie). The Gypsy sheriff was himself a Gypsy. From the eighteenth century he began to become known as the bulubaşă or bulibaşă. The sheriff or bulibaşă was the head of a number of leaders from a particular region who also belonged to the same clan.⁹⁶

Habsburg officials transformed the term into Bulubascha and kept his function. The same was the case with the so-called judges (sing. jude/pl. juzi in Romanian; Germanized as Schude/Schuden), whom the various groups of Gypsies elected.⁹⁷ In the Habsburg sources, these Bulubaschas and Schuden are not always clearly separated.⁹⁸ Their total number was sixteen in 1790 and grew to twenty-one in 1799.⁹⁹ Documents also mention another element of Gypsy self-administration: the so-called panţiri (or panţâri; Panczire or Panzire in German). Five or six of them assisted with official acts, most probably as a small unit of armed ushers.

But there was also a new top functionary installed by the Habsburg administration who was not a Gypsy: the principal or captain (Zigeunervorsteher, Zigeunerkapitän). He was chosen from the boyars or the mazili (noblemen of a second rank) and not from the Gypsies.¹⁰² These principals were bureaucratically untrained people who had three major obligations: (1) to settle minor conflicts in the Gypsy communities; (2) to keep a record of the Gypsies; and (3) to collect taxes from Gypsy families and transfer them to the treasury.¹⁰³ In 1803, the principal was remunerated with 200 guilders by the treasury.¹⁰⁴ Mazil Joan Sawa (Szaba)¹⁰⁵ is the first official Bukovinian “Gypsy principal” who is known by name. A prosperous nobleman, he was probably also the first in this function under Habsburg rule. He held this position from 1778 until he died in 1794.¹⁰⁶ He was followed by Nicoleu Botucze (Batutsche) from Siret/Sereth, who was in office until he died in 1799.¹⁰⁷ After a short interim period, in which a certain Kozan was principal,¹⁰⁸ the position was advertised anew. What followed was an extremely careful selection process, documented in a record from 1800, which shows how important and profitable the rank of a principal was. The successful candidate was chosen from a list of no less than fourteen applicants, most of them wealthy and merited noblemen.¹⁰⁹

Discussions related to these applications were painstakingly recorded. Selectors evaluated special qualifications such as reading and writings skills, and the knowledge of languages like Moldavian, Russian, Polish, German, and Latin. They also noted an extraordinary commitment to the state (for instance, during riots in Poland or a plague catastrophe). At the same time, the Gypsy communities made themselves heard over the course of the selection process. In once instance, forty Gypsies put their names on a petition, in which they suggested three alternative candidates for the post. The authorities registered their claims as they would have the claims of any others, but, in addition, written on the petition are remarks that document the anti-Ziganism of an unknown writer. Maybe it was a person from the Kreisamt, but it could also have been
some other opponent of the Gypsies’ request. These remarks were as dehumanizing as they could be; they read: “No sympathetic ear and no deference do these misled suppliants deserve, and their application should be totally discarded. These petitioners are a horde\textsuperscript{108} of straying Gypsies, who only outwardly look like humans.”\textsuperscript{109} In the same vein, others saw their suggestions as irrelevant or even criminal. One of the favored candidates of the Gypsy petitioners, Alexander Iwanowitz, was denounced to be “of the same kind as they are.” This former tax collector was accused of having spent seven years in prison because of malversation.\textsuperscript{110} Iwanowitz sharply rejected this allegation. In his view of things, he, after five successful years as a tax commissioner, had been falsely accused, but “over the course of a most rigorous criminal investigation had been found fully innocent.”\textsuperscript{111} Interestingly, it was exactly this candidate who finally won the race; whether the favor of the Gypsies played any significant role in this decision is hard to discern.\textsuperscript{112}

Scholars have thus far considered Alexander Iwanowitz the last Gypsy principal; his post was not replaced when he supposedly changed positions in 1806.\textsuperscript{113} But a document from 1814 states that he was still in charge in that year.\textsuperscript{114} The position of Gypsy principal must therefore have lasted at least until then.

Lists exist for each year between 1795 and 1799 of Bulubaschas and Schuden, but it is unclear if they are complete.\textsuperscript{115} Each list includes between eleven and fifteen horizontal lines that each specify one or two names (of Bulubaschas and/or juzi) as well as the number of families assigned to them. The number of assigned families varies from single digits to more than one hundred, indicating that there was a range from relatively unimportant to very powerful Gypsy representatives.\textsuperscript{116} A closer inspection of the lists quite unexpectedly reveals that there was a fluctuation in persons and assigned number of families, which means that the positions of Bulubascha and jude were not, or at least not only, based on tradition or convention.\textsuperscript{117}

**Taxation Babel**

During the time span covered by the extent lists (1790 to 1799), Gypsies were annually taxed with three guilders and fifty-seven kreutzers per family; in times of war, an additional contribution of thirty kreutzers had to be paid. Gypsy families were also obliged to supply their principal with a corvée of two days or, with his consent, compensate him for the service with twenty kreutzers. Ushers (Amtsdiener, panţiri) and “judges” (Richter, Bullabaschen) were annually subsidized with fifteen kreutzers respectively.\textsuperscript{118}

Instead of state officials directly collecting these taxes, the authorities assigned this function to the Gypsy principals and their subordinates. It is little wonder that such a system of intermediaries paved the road for all types of favoritism, mismanagement, and corruption. Among the principals’ privileges was the total exemption from taxation, which was also granted to their close relatives and servants. “Judges” were also
exempt from taxation. Furthermore, poor and/or disabled persons could count on reductions or exemptions. 119

Taxation babel started with nepotism, which was at work every time principals granted exemptions arbitrarily. The state lost considerable sums by this practice; in 1794 and 1795 the loss amounted to 175 guilders. 120 Acceptance of gifts (or rather the insistence on “gifts”) was another side of this type of corruption. The principals expected fox fur as a common bribe. Although a single piece of fur was of minor value, in toto the principal thereby received an equivalent of close to 400 guilders. 121

Another transgression of the law was the principal’s misuse of his authority as a judge in petty offenses: he, for instance, imposed serious monetary fines on the refusal to work, noncompliance to arranged marriages, or supposed or actual acts of fornication. All in all, the principal received 1,154 guilders each year from such arbitrary sentences. 122 All these enrichments as single acts can be classified as minor misdemeanors, but they paved the way for fraud on a grand scale as described in the next subchapter.

Taxation babel involved more than “just” corruption because it was also constantly accompanied by acts of excessive physical violence. According to a completely arbitrary sentence, one woman, for instance, had to spin in chains for nine months (!). Another Gypsy was bound by his feet and hung upside down from a tree for two hours. Investigations by the authorities documented many acts of physical violence. Because of Botucze’s excesses, sixty-two families left for Moldavia, choosing rather to stay in slavery than be exposed to such savagery. After Botucze’s death, the state and the overtaxed Gypsies confronted his widow and family with recourse claims. 123

TURNING POINT 1800

In March 1797, principal Nicoleu Botucze came to the Kreisamt and accused Gypsies from Mykhalcha/Mihalcze of refusing to make tax payments and intimidating judges. The authorities dutifully recorded this allegation but were totally unaware of any of the particulars. According to Botucze’s report, the Gypsies had physically attacked and incarcerated tax collectors, who were only performing their duty. After these events, one chief judge (Oberrichter) was so terrified that he refused to enter the village again in fear of being ambushed or even killed. At first view, this all looks like the “normal” misunderstandings, complaints, and acts of violence that the taxation process entailed. But the Gypsies did not submit to Botucze’s claims and instead defended themselves. They argued that they felt oppressed by their principal and wanted to replace him. 124

What followed was a veritable scandal leading to a thorough investigation, which opened in 1799 and ended in 1801. The protocols of the inquiries eventually filled hundreds of pages. After the events in Mihalcze, not only the local Gypsies but also those from across Bukovina stood up against Botucze. The authorities took their grievances
very seriously and set up a commission that reviewed the conduct of both Botucze and his predecessor Sawa. Sawa had died already and Botucze passed away while the investigation was still underway. Nevertheless, the authorities were determined to throw light upon the whole affair. In the commission’s minutes, one can sense the air of a righteous government that approached the case completely *sine ira et studio*. Gypsies, in accordance with the law, were treated with the same respect as other applicants.

The year 1800 became a turning point, as the authorities increasingly realized that the Gypsies’ protests against their former principals were completely justified. It turned out that Sawa had acted corruptly but Botucze had clearly crossed the line of committing elaborate fraud. From 1795 to 1799, he collected extremely exaggerated taxes, which earned him 2,107 guilders of illegal extra money. He also imposed an utterly disproportionate *corvée* on Gypsy families. While two days would have been the rightful claim, Botucze multiplied this duty, usually increasing it up to fivefold. By exploiting these Gypsies for their labor (or its substitution with money), he gained the equivalent of 1,639 guilders.

If this was not enough, Botucze was also extremely creative in cheating the treasury. Since prior to 1800 the Bukovinian authorities had not conducted any individual censuses of the Gypsy population, they had to rely on the numbers Botucze forwarded to them. Unconscionably, he used his chance and year after year concealed between 20 and 40 percent of the taxpaying families from the authorities. The money that he thus worked into his own pockets amounted close to 5,000 guilders.

One contemporary made this long story short by stating, “As in Bukovina a lot of things are generally going wrong, these captains are cheating on their territorial princes in the same way in which they are sucking the blood out of the poor Gypsies.”

Because the investigating authorities were bureaucrats trained at the high point of the Enlightenment but were living into a new century of ever-increasing state control, they made suggestions for betterment by intensified disciplining. Concerning the future, they suggested differentiating between wanted and unwanted groups of Gypsies. Those of the first category were Gypsies enrolled on a list (*konskribiert*) and thus known to the state with all their benchmark data. Equipped with legitimation papers, they were expected to be proper taxpayers and prospective *citoyens*. Their counterparts were nonresident Gypsies, who were seen as intruders and unwanted “riffraff” (*einschleichendes Zigeunergesindel*).

To encourage the process of emancipation of the wanted group of Gypsies, the state authorities saw sedentarization as the proper means of improving their status, both for themselves and the state. This attitude of killing two birds with one stone was a standard argument for this type of top-down, paternalizing altruism. Sedentarization, which had already been ordered in 1788 but was never brought into effect, was now to be implemented. If the report of the investigating commission is to be trusted, then Gypsies also favored this option for how to integrate into the existing villages. The commissioners
emphasized their opinion that the expected higher taxes needed for sedentarization (the newly stipulated twelve corvée days and extra municipal taxes) would certainly outweigh the “oppression by their current principals and judges.”

Hand in hand with these intended improvements for resident Gypsies, the regional authorities wanted to see the influx of nonresident Gypsies reduced to zero. They suggested completely prohibiting their immigration, “as the state gains nothing else with these people than a horde of miserable men, who do not bring any fortunes with them and do not conduct industrial arts, and therefore their existence is dispensable.” If apprehended, these illegal foreigners should be subjected to expulsion. Exempted from such a scheme were Gypsy families coming from “Turkish provinces,” who were seen as “suitable” for sedentarization and who were able to show a letter of admittance by their new landlords.

The authorities saw a new regime of sedentarized Gypsies under the control of small villages as a chance to get rid of the old system of principals and judges. In pondering about what should become of the newly appointed principal Alexander Ivanowicz, the officials clarified that it was not the Gypsies who should serve the principals, but that it was supposed to be the other way around. Times had clearly changed in that these functionaries on behalf of the Gypsies were increasingly viewed as outdated. There was also fear that the Gypsies “would be instigated to emigration if they were left to the arbitrary treatment of their principals and got totally sucked by them.” And, indeed, Gypsies sometimes threatened their judges with a possible exodus.

However far emancipation went in Bukovina, at the beginning of the nineteenth century nomadic Gypsy life was still endangered by the slavery that existed on the Moldavian side of the border. As can be seen from a report from 1814, Gypsies were often captured and placed in chains as soon as they crossed the border. Torn off their belongings, they were immediately donated or bartered. The Habsburg authorities attacked the Moldavian prince for thus claiming a right that was “outrageous to humanity” and fostering the “hateable greediness of his officials.” Although the Bukovinian administration accused the border-crossing Gypsies of disloyalty, they nevertheless freed four families from slavery, intending to use their story both as a cautionary tale for the Gypsies and a statement against Moldavian despotism.

**INBORN RIGHTS, FORBIDDEN SLAVERY**

Abolition of slavery was never just an act of proclamation, but a long process of transforming norms into action. In the case of Bukovina, this process started with Enzenberg’s untimely advance in 1783 and, one could argue, ended with the introduction of individual censuses and the close examination of the principal’s role in 1800. But the
final triumph of abolition as both a practice and an idea came in 1812. In this year, the General Civil Code of Austria (ABGB, Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch) for the first time explicitly stipulated the relationship of the (now Austrian) empire to slavery. Paragraph 16 reads as follows: “Each being has inborn rights, apparent from reason, and is accordingly to be regarded as an individual. Slavery or bondage, and the exercise of power based thereon, is forbidden.” These regulations most obviously were directed against the overseas slave trade, and thus for a country without colonies it might have seemed rather abstract. Nevertheless, there was practical utility, as a commenting decree from 1826 clearly stated: “Each slave becomes free at the moment he enters the k.k. territory or even just an Austrian ship. In the same way, each slave, also in foreign countries, gains liberty in the very moment he, under which title ever, is ceded to a k.k. Austrian subject.” By this declaration, the Austrian empire made clear that it not only abstained from any kind of slavery in its territories but that it was also willing to intervene in the favor of slaves if occasion or need arose.

When these regulations became effective in the Habsburg empire, it would have been a perfect moment to pay tribute to the abolition process in Bukovina of fifty years prior. But collective memory lay dormant and was only activated around 1900. At this moment, not only scientific research but also a broader celebratory discourse set in. The superficial nature of the latter can be seen in the Kronprinzenwerk (Crown Prince’s Work), a twenty-four-volume popular description of all the Austrian crown lands. In its part on Bukovina just two sentences presented a fascinating hyper-simplified version of the abolition process: “Gypsies entered the territory of [Bukovina] around 1400, probably a bit earlier. Here they were declared slaves, a lot of them became such voluntarily and remained in this status up to 1783 when Emperor Joseph II magnanimously made them free people.”