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Particularities of the current geographical area of Suceava county in the period preceding the imperial occupation

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The situation of the geographical map of Europe in the time interval precursor of the imperial occupation in Bukovina, was fueled by the change of the balance of forces. Territorial entities with unstable administration, depending on an imperial structure, have constituted a currency of exchange due to agreements independent of the will of the indigenous population. The upper country of Moldova did not benefit from a consistent geographical research, the first territorial representations stopped at the Carpathian mountains as a natural border of the Central European world. The first maps of Moldova are studied with a focus towards the north of the territory, identifying settlements with economic importance in the future region of Bukovina. Cutting some geographical elements represents an interest for the territorial entity in which the cartographic projection is edited.

The objectives of the paper are: 1) geographical analysis of northern Moldova during the period preceding the occupation of the Habsburg Empire, 2) identifying the degree of geodemographic and economic homogeneity of northern Moldova, and 3) research of natural geographical factors in determining the reasons of Bukovina's annexation.

The paper highlights the period prior to the occupation, identifying geographical data about the Upper Country of Moldova, cartographic transpositions, geodemographic characteristics, economic aspects, travel impressions. These combined elements identify the degree of territorial homogeneity between the future region of Bukovina and the geographical area remaining as the principality of Moldova. The natural potential of the northwestern region of Moldova is identified in comparison with the rest of the territory. The geographical causes of the annexation of the north of Moldova are analyzed, identifying aspects other than those of spatial continuity with Galicia, geopolitical and administrative elements. The natural setting can be an element of harmony with the imperial center as a motivation for the occupation of colonization and harmonious integration of ethnic minorities.

The Carpathian Mountains have been a long-standing eastern border for the expansion of Central-European powers. Looking at an imperial map it is found that Bukovina is in the eastern extremity that cuts the territory of Moldova in the northwest. The natural geographical area of Bukovina is identified as a miniature Austria, a mountainous area in the west with wide depressions and boreal landscape, and in the east a flat plateau favorable to agricultural crops. The temperate-continental climate with Scandinavian-Baltic shades may play a role of interest for

an Anglo-Saxon people adapted to this type of climate. „The country of beeches", reflects a geographical landscape being predominantly identifiable in western and central Europe. Natural resources are more important in terms of value and quantity compared to other regions of Moldova that have not entered the imperial sphere.

The conclusions also involve a research of the degree of natural attractiveness in the motivation of occupying the northwestern part of Moldova. The research methodology involves the transposition of historical information into geographic data, comparative analysis and cartographic method.

Keywords: Bukovina, Moldova, geography, contrast.