

BUKOVINA – A COMPREHENSIVE LITERARY PORTRAIT

Andrei Corbea-Hoișie, Steffen Höhne, Oxana Matiychuk, and Markus Winkler
(eds.), *Handbuch der Literaturen aus Czernowitz und der Bukowina*.

Berlin: J.B. Metzler, 2023, 633 pp.,
ISBN 978-3-476-05972-7; 978-3-476-05973-4 (eBook)

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Published in December 2023, the German-language volume *Handbuch der Literaturen aus Czernowitz und der Bukowina* [Handbook of Literatures from Czernowitz and Bukovina] was edited under the stewardship of Andrei Corbea-Hoișie, Steffen Höhne, Oxana Matiychuk, and Markus Winkler, leading literary studies experts from Romania, Germany, and Ukraine. This handbook is an impressive undertaking, comprehensively demonstrating the manifold influences that the former Habsburg crownland and its capital have exerted *inter alia* on German, Romanian, Ukrainian, and Yiddish cultures via detailed analysis of the historical and contemporary situation. At 633 pages, the book contains almost 80 chapters by 44 international contributors from 10 countries, each profiling different facets of Bukovina's literature and culture with a principal focus on the late Habsburg and interwar periods.

The six chapters in the volume's opening section (*Literatur- und Forschungsgeschichte einer Region*) offer an overview of Bukovina's literary history, including the role of literary studies at Czernowitz's renowned university from its foundation in 1875 up until the present day. The book's second section (*Theorie*) zooms in on the theoretical underpinnings necessary to understand the famously multilingual



and multiethnic character of Bukovina, which even in the late Habsburg era drew attention for the diversity of languages spoken, as demonstrated by the crownland's three official languages of German, Romanian, and Ukrainian at that time.

The sixteen chapters in the third part of the volume (*Allgemeiner Kontext*) offer excursions into different areas of Bukovina's literary history, with these succinct studies ranging from portraits of specific events (such as the seminal 1908 Czernowitz Yiddish Language Conference) to surveys of the region's lively book trade and publishing industry. These are complemented by synoptic overviews of the German-, Romanian-, Hebrew-, Yiddish-, and Ukrainian-language press from the nineteenth century onwards, as well as incisive case studies of three selected newspapers.

In providing general summaries of Bukovina's literatures written in German, Yiddish, Polish, Romanian, and Ukrainian, the fourth part of the volume (*Literaturgeschichtliche Entwicklung und Akteure in der Bukowina*) contains nine contributions, six of which take the watershed year of 1918 (when the Habsburg province was incorporated into interwar Romania) as a caesura. Building on these, the volume's fifth section (*Literaturgeschichtliche Entwicklung und Akteure in der Bukowina*) contains 32 concise profiles of leading authors with strong links to Bukovina who represent these aforementioned literatures, ranging from the nineteenth century up to the twenty-first. In addition to offering the necessary biographical and bibliographical details of this multifaceted group of writers, the studies also illustrate how Bukovina – and its uniquely multilingual and multiethnic character – can be said to be present in their respective trajectories and literary oeuvres.

The twelve chapters in the handbook's final section (*Themen und Motive*) each centre on different thematic aspects of Bukovina and its legacy. These include studies examining the (self-)portrayal of Bukovina in German, Yiddish, Romanian, and Ukrainian literatures, as well as on the image and status of Czernowitz – and by extension, of Bukovina as a whole – as important landmarks of reflection and memory. The book is completed by useful appendices, including a list of the birth and death dates of selected authors from Bukovina, an alphabetical list of the personages mentioned in the volume, as well as a list of the places featured.

As this review has aimed to summarise, this handbook skilfully surveys a wide variety of material covering various historical epochs, languages, and literatures. Distinguished by its breadth and depth, the book offers detailed portraits and analyses of relevant aspects of the region's past, with the bibliography for each individual chapter serving as evidence not just of thorough research but also as a point of departure for further reading. In

short, the *Handbuch der Literaturen aus Czernowitz und der Bukowina* is an important and exhaustive resource for all who are interested in Bukovina and its rich history and culture, representing a valuable treasury for literary specialists and historians alike.

REFERENCES

CORBEA-HOIȘIE, A., HÖHNE, S., MATIYCHUK, O., & WINKLER, M. (eds.), 2023, *Handbuch der Literaturen aus Czernowitz und der Bukowina*. Berlin: J.B. Metzler. ISBN 978-3-476-05972-7, ISBN 978-3-476-05973-4 (eBook). DOI: 10.1007/978-3-476-05973-4.

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