

Bukovina and Its Poets: A Country Where Men and Books Lived

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Abstract: Bucovina was snatched from oblivion in the consciousness of the educated world of Europe when it was realized that Paul Celan (Czernowitz 1920 - Paris 1970) had spoken of his homeland, the city of Czernowitz, as a country “where men and books lived”. Since then other poets from Bukovina have received recognition, such as Rose Ausländer (Czernowitz 1901 - Düsseldorf 1988), Immanuel Weissglas (Czernowitz 1920 - Bucharest 1979), Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger (Czernowitz 1924 - Mikhailovka 1942) among others. All the accounts of Czernowitz in the inter-war period speak of the city’s abundance of cultural life, with intense poetic circles and literary activity that was while remote from the major intellectual centers not at all “provincial”, but rather a hotbed that gave birth to some of the greatest names in German-language poetry of the 20th century. Paradoxically, it was Germany that destroyed the foundations of its own high culture in Eastern Europe between 1941 and 1944. This essay presents the main currents of this still little-known poetry, placing it in the context of what was until 1919 the former Austro-Hungarian province of Bucovina, and then between the two wars Romanian province. In this period German-language poetry flowered, with Alfred Margul Sperber (Storozhinets, Bucovina 1898 - Bucharest 1967) and Alfred Kittner (Czernowitz 1906 - Düsseldorf 1991), until the dispersal into exile and subsequent disappearance of this poetry after the war and the Shoah. But before disappearing completely, it experienced a “final blossoming”, like a firework, posthumous and delocalized, dislocated from the land where it was born. Among the texts cited, we shall present some poems by the very young Selma Meerbaum, who died during deportation to Mikhailovka, and an unpublished poem taken from Paul Celan’s *Tabarest Notebook*, written in 1943 in a compulsory labor camp in Romania during the war.

Keywords: Poetry, Bukovina, Czernowitz, Austria-Hungary, Celan, Rose Ausländer, Alfred Kittner, Shoah

1. Introduction

Bukovina really came into the intellectual geography of the Western European and American cultured world when it became clear that Paul Celan, a native of Czernowitz, spoke of his native land as a country “where men and books lived” (“eine Gegend, in der Menschen und Bücher lebten”) [1].

Then we discovered Rose Ausländer, who made herself known rather late, publishing when she was already old and leaving some of her work posthumously. Thus we discover in turn two great German-language poets, two stars at the top of twentieth-century poetry, both from the same town of Czernowitz, from the same old “crown country” (Kronland), Bucovina, that “land of beeches” (deriving its name from the Slavic word Buk, beech, this province sometimes bore the German name Buchenland, which is its translation), one of

the most remote lands in Europe, long totally hidden from our consciousness. But before looking at these exceptional authors, it is important to understand that such a literary explosion could not have happened by itself, that a real poetic substratum existed in Bucovina long before Paul Celan and Rose Ausländer. The study of the poets who made the appearance of these authors possible is therefore part of an “archaeological” research. It is a work as singular as that of Paul Celan for the understanding of our aesthetic modernity that has drawn our attention to the poetry of Bukovina, from which he came. In a remarkable book, Alfred Kittner’s *Life’s Work*, edited and completed after his death by Amy Colin, the poetry of Bukovina has been rescued from oblivion, under the evocative title *Versunkene Dichtung der Bukowina* [Sunken Poetry of Bukovina] [2]. If this poetry is indeed a sunken literature, its resurfacing is akin to a form of

underwater archaeology. Let us also mention the excellent anthology, in German and in Ukrainian translation, by Petro Rychlo: *Die verlorene Harfe* [The Lost Harp] [3].

We will only mention here German-language literature and poetry, although we are aware that there was also an important Romanian-language literature with Mihai Eminescu (who studied in Czernowitz) and Ukrainian-language literature with Olga Kobylanska [4]. The German language was the cement for the integration of all the communities living in Czernowitz and Bucovina, and at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germanisation was carried out in a gentle manner, without any strong constraint, and German was therefore accepted as a language of culture and a crucible of civilization by all the populations. Only later, during the Second World War, German became the “language of the murderers” [5], which destroyed its own basis of civilization, transforming, in Walter Benjamin’s words, the testimony of culture into a document of barbarism.

It is worth recalling here that most of the German-speaking writers in Bukovina, especially in the second and third periods, were of Jewish origin, as the Jewish community in Czernowitz formed not only the intellectual elite but also the major part of the German-speaking population. It is also important to point out that the majority of these German-speaking writers were primarily poets, as if poetry, the most abstract and highest form of literary expression, was the best way of condensing what these generations of intellectuals had to say and transmit. It was also in the form of poetry that these writers thought they were reaching the universal to which all true literature tends, since poetry made it possible to abstain from any narrative, which ran the risk, in this remote province, of becoming provincial.

Finally, there is another, seemingly paradoxical, characteristic of this Bukovina German poetry: in the Austrian period, until 1918, the generation of founders did not produce any great works, with the exception of a prose writer, Karl-Emil Franzos. It was during the Romanian period, between 1918 and 1940, after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that the poetry of Czernowitz and Bucovina developed in a first explosion, probably precisely because German was no longer an official language and intellectuals took refuge in writing. It was during this Romanian period that the personality of Alfred Margul-Sperber dominated and that Alfred Kittner, Rose Ausländer, Paul Celan and Immanuel Weissglas made their debut.

But the real explosion of Czernowitz poetry will be posthumous, so to speak, after the Second World War and the Shoah, that is, after the destruction of everything that formed the crucible of this literature, everything that could have made possible the blossoming of a great German culture in Bucovina, when the survivors of the extermination fled, traumatised by what they had experienced. The two poets representative of this poetry of exile are Paul Celan and Rose Ausländer. We must add the truly posthumous name of a young and talented poetess exterminated in Transnistria, Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger. Let us return to the history of this literature according to the periodization we have indicated.

2. The Austrian Era, the Founders

It was in 1775 that Bukovina was attached to Austria-Hungary, offered by the Sublime Porte in gratitude for discreet help provided by Vienna during the Russo-Turkish war. Very soon, this sparsely populated region, where mainly Moldovans and Ruthenians lived, but also Armenians, Jews, Greeks and Huzulans, was colonized by German populations, who were generally called Swabians even though they did not originate from this region, and Jews settled in Bukovina, protected by the Austrian power, where they became bearers of German culture and thus mediators. Karl-Emil Franzos was one of them, whose fate is quite characteristic, as he considered himself a “German of the Jewish faith” all his life. Born in 1848 in Eastern Galicia, in Czortkow, on the border of Podolia, the Russian Empire, and Bukovina, Franzos studied in Czernowitz, where he spent 8 years of his life, and can therefore be considered in part as a Bukovina writer. A great prose writer, he never ceased to describe the life of the different peoples who inhabited this region, with equal sympathy for each nationality, depicting in particular the world of the ghettos of Galicia, Podolia and Bukovina. He describes the arrival in Czernowitz in a short story entitled “From Vienna to Czernowitz”:

“The city lies magnificently on a towering height. Anyone who enters it feels strange: he is suddenly back in the West, where education, morals and white tableware are to be found. And if he wants to know who has achieved this miracle, he should listen to the language of the inhabitants: it is German” [6].

He can be compared to another Austrian storyteller of this period, Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, born in 1836 in Lemberg (Lvov), who wrote not only the stories in the style of the *Venus in Fur* that made him famous, but also numerous *Galician Histories* and *Jewish Histories of Galicia* [7], in which he tells of his meeting with Rabbi Friedmann of Sadagora, the miracle-working tzaddik who maintained a court near Czernowitz. At the end of the 19th century, the philosopher Martin Buber also witnessed as a child the meetings of worshippers that took place in the court of the Sadagora tzaddik, and these experiences in his youth left their mark on him later, not only when he collected *Hasidic stories* but also when he developed his philosophy of dialogue.

Alongside these prose writers, we find the beginnings of Bukovine poetry, strongly influenced by German Romanticism, Novalis and above all Eichendorff. This poetry is not yet very rich and is often content with magnifying Bukovine, the beauty of its landscapes, its forests, its rolling mountains, but it will form the basis of the poetry of the 20th century. For example, Moritz Amster exclaims:

Bucovina, my homeland!

You are so lovely and beautiful in the morning

With the lush green meadows,

With the forest-bordered hills. [2]

Ludwig Adolf Staufe-Simiginowitz (1832-1897), the so-called ‘love poet’, also sings of his homeland in an even more

lyrical tone:

Bukovina! Bukovina! Land of blessings, land of happiness!

When will I enjoy the blissful moment in your sight? [...] [2]

This period was marked by the appropriation of German by most of the country's nationalities. Staufe-Simiginowitz, whose father was Ruthenian and whose mother was German, wrote in German, but also in Ukrainian and Romanian. Juri Fedkowicz (1834-1888), of Ruthenian nationality, one of the fathers of Ukrainian literature in the region, whose name the University of Chernivtsy bears today, did not hesitate to write in German:

Where in the silky soft moss
Black firs bloom crimson,
Where the kingdom of the wild rose
And the land of evergreens,
There, there I will go,
To the wild Cheremosh beach,
To the blue mountain heights,
To my beautiful homeland. [2]

Janko Lupul, a Romanian poet, also wrote poems in German, as did his brother Theodor [2].

From this first period, we can still mention the names of Moritz Paschkis, as well as Jonel Kalinczuk (1856-1934), of Ruthenian origin, who wrote a poem, "On the banks of the black river", which probably evokes the Cheremosh, but which also resembles a river of the underworld, in which he had a vision of a woman who escaped from him in a boat that could be that of Charon, and which announces themes that we will find in the 20th century, notably in Immanuel Weissglas (see his poem "Charon at the Bug river"[16]).

On the black river
[...]

Was it human cargo that now presses to the barge?
Only shadows still seem so hollow and pale,
From life long ago redeemed, from death scorched,
Before them only the way into the dark realm, [2]

From the same Austrian period, Benjamin Fuchs (1887-1929) wrote a cycle of poems about landscapes in Bukovina, but also a poem addressed to the dead, "Alcian strophe":

In coffins moldering, dusting ashes,
your name sounds to a few who know,
Almost forgotten by them too,
Lost in the stream of time. [2]

Bukovina is sung of as a dreamland, a kind of land of milk and honey by all the nationalities living there and in all languages. Karl-Emil Franzos remarked that Bukovina was the only region on the borders of Austria-Hungary and the Russian Empire where there was true understanding between the peoples:

"All around, and especially in the neighbouring countries to the north and west, there is the bitterest, wildest rage of one people against another; here there is peace and harmony." [6]

This was also the experience of Rose Ausländer, in the poem "Bukowina III"

Four languages

Four languages songs

People who understand each other. [8]

In his *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite*, Gregor von Rezzori recalls his childhood in Bukovina:

"Like a sudden pain, I felt homesick for home, for Bukovina, where I had loved those hours just before darkness fell so much that I had always run out of the house and into the countryside, into that abstract lilac light, whose bat-like ground was already smoky from the dust of darkness, night wind already with the scent of hay from distant meadows in my face, and in front of me, where towards Galicia the flat land fanned out into cosmic expanse to merge there with the sky, the monstrous origin of the night." [9]

3. The Romanian Period (1918-1940)

After the First World War and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Bukovina became entirely Romanian, Czernowitz became Cernăuți and the official language was Romanian, although German was still allowed until 1924 and was actually spoken throughout the city as a language of communication.

Paul Celan was born in 1920 and during his youth he experienced this Romanian period, when the entire intelligentsia was still oriented towards Vienna.

The interwar period can be considered as a period of real effervescence of German-language literature and poetry in Czernowitz, with in particular the appearance of an expressionist journal, *Der Nerv*, inspired in part by Gottfried Benn, but also by Franz Werfel or Carl Sternheim, and even more so by Karl Kraus' *Fackel* in Vienna.

However, from this time on, Bukovina's literature was created in the crossroads between native land and exile. Most of the poets who were to leave their mark on Czernowitz literature spent part of their time abroad, and it was often thanks to these longer or shorter exiles that they succeeded in lifting Bucovina's poetry out of its provincialism and giving it a European level that would later spring up in Celan's poetry.

One of the best representatives of this interwar poetry is Victor Wittner (1896-1948), who left Czernowitz for Germany at the end of the 1920s, but who left his mark on the future poetry of this city. In 1914, at the age of 18, he published his first collection, *Klüfte, Klagen, Klärungen* ("Abysses, Complaints, Clarifications"), the title of which refers to the famous three Ks (*Kirche, Küche, Kinder*) but perhaps also to the two Ks (*kaiserlich und königlich*) of Austria-Hungary. This collection was appreciated by Thomas Mann. Close to the "Neue Sachlichkeit", Victor Wittner was very struck by the forms of modernity, the poetry of the big city, he wrote in the continuation of Baudelaire, Verhaeren, Trakl. It is not uncommon for him to pass a tram or a fast train through his poems, which are usually written in the classical form of the sonnet, as Baudelaire did. One example is "Sonntags über die Stadt" (Sunday on the city):

Two tramcars crawl below, little

brothers and sisters, playing tramway: one
(the larger one) leads the other by the hand
and fumblingly holds on to the line. [2]

One could also mention "Ein Heuwagen fährt durch die Stadt" (A hay cart drives through the city) [2], where we see a hay wagon passing by, trembling, intoxicated by the smell of petrol, but dominating the traffic, rising above the mass of cars, or "Der Schnellzug" (The express train) [2], in which a fast train leaves the station in the big city and rushes through the countryside, cutting its way through the landscape to reach the next station, exhausted and suffocating.

Kamillo Lauer (1887-1966), who spent only his youth in Czernowitz before studying in Vienna and then emigrating to London, is also of this generation. In a poem entitled "Heim-Weh" (Nostalgia), he recalls his homeland.

[...]

As gaslight eavesdrops on his sleep,
the floors of the night weigh down his breast,
By day the little body gymnastics
Between car and lift. [2]

Also worth mentioning are the poet Uriel Birnbaum (1894-1956), who was born in Vienna but spent three years in Czernowitz, which he considered to be the most important years of his life, and the poetess Ninon Hesse (1895-1966), born Ausländer, who wrote a letter of admiration to Hermann Hesse at the age of 14 and later became his wife and muse.

One of her poems, "An eine gläserne Kugel" ("To a glass sphere"), already evokes a metaphysical poetry that has some affinities with Hesse's *Glass Bead Game*:

Glass ball you - be my world.
enclose like a shell, shell me,
enclose me in you! [2]

Another interesting case is that of Klara Blum (1904-1971), who emigrated in 1934 to Moscow, where she published collections of poems, often of political content, in German, *Die Antwort* [The Answer] (1939), *Erst recht!* [All the more reason] (Kiev 1939), *Wir entscheiden alles* [We Decide Everything] (Moscow 1941), *Donauballaden* [Danube Ballads] (1942), *Schlachtfeld und Erdwall* [Battlefield and Earth Wall] (1944). She married a Chinese man and settled in China after the war. One of her first poems describes the Czernowitz ghetto where she spent her childhood:

The old alleyways are narrow.
The ground limps and bumps in zigzags.
Small flames twitch from heavy chandeliers.
Wit plays tricks with misfortune. [2, 4]

One of the most important poets of the generation that marked the interwar years is Alfred Margul-Sperber, born in 1898 in Starożinetz, died in 1967 in Bucharest. He too spent some years abroad, first in Vienna, where he passed his baccalaureate (it was not yet abroad, but the capital), then in Paris, where he met Ivan Goll and Guillaume Apollinaire, whose *Calligrams* he translated, then in New York, where he met his compatriot Rose Ausländer, before returning to Czernowitz in 1924, where he became editor of the *Czernowitzer Morgenblatt*. He began as a follower of a

certain expressionism in his first collection entitled *Gleichnisse der Landschaft* [Parables of the Landscape] (1934) and then returned to a more traditional form of writing from the collection *Geheimnis und Verzicht* [Secret and Renunciation] (1939), of which one poem, "Brunnen", is an example:

Under stars like runes
The autumn wind murmurs.
The night is a black well,
Into which we have fallen. [2]

Today, Margul-Sperber's main merit is not so much in his poetic work itself, although it is considerable, as in his role as a talent scout. It was he who, before the war, compiled the first anthology of German-speaking Jewish poets from Bukovina under the title *Die Buche* (The Beech) [10], which he was never able to publish in his lifetime, and it was he who, among other things, discovered and helped the young Paul Celan, first in Czernowitz and then after the war in Bucharest.

In Margul-Sperber's circle was also Georg Drozdowski (1899-1987), a Christian poet of Polish and French descent but speaking German. During the war, Drozdowski played a role in the Catholic resistance and helped the Jews of Czernowitz. After the war he fled to Klagenfurt, Austria. At the beginning of his literary activity, he was influenced by Rilke and Hofmannsthal, but then followed a more traditional path. After Celan's death, he published a poem in his honour, "Gedenkblatt für Paul Celan" (Memorial leaf for Paul Celan):

Yet we know:
Who gave it to you,
the lyre he struck,
even if Eurydice
never returns,
nor Sulamith ashen hair
which thou didst
you caressed. [...] [2]

Mention should be made here of Alfred Kittner (1906-1991), who published his first collection *Der Wolkenreiter* (The Cloud Rider) in 1938 [11]. During the war he was deported to Transnistria, survived, and in 1946 moved to Bucharest and in 1980 to the Federal Republic of Germany. He spent much of his spare time after the war reconstructing this "sunken poetry of Bukovina" and is responsible for the most important anthology of these poets. From his own poetic production, let us quote an extract from *Wolkenreiter*, the poem "Cloud Rider" which gave its title to the collection, a beautiful poetic metaphor, almost Chagallian:

The clouds lay like rough skins
On my bed heavy,
And I am their prey.
[...]
I cannot force my mount to stand;
Now I ride on
On evil wings. [2, 12]

During his deportation to Transnistria, he wrote poems which he collected after the war under the title *Hungermarsch und Stacheldraht* (Hunger March and Barbed

Wire) [12] Here we quote the one he wrote on his return from the camp, "Heimkehr aus dem Lager":

Only the deepest can mirror you,
Where so many dead are silent,
The living are left to shudder
To descend into the tomb,
Mourning for his people. [...] [2]

He will take up the same issue in "Requiem 1944" [2].

Rose Ausländer is worth mentioning here, because it was in this atmosphere that she spent her childhood and the years that marked her most. Rose Scherzer was born in 1901 in Czernowitz, into an assimilated Jewish family, whose father had broken away from the Hasidic milieu of Sadagora. She was in Vienna during the war, but returned to Czernowitz in 1919 where she studied philosophy and enrolled in the ethical seminar "Platonica". She became interested in Plato, Spinoza, Constantin Brunner, married Ignaz Ausländer and kept his name after their divorce. From 1921 to 1930, she lived in the United States, but returned to Czernowitz where she published, with the help and support of Alfred Margul-Sperber, her poems, collected in 1939 in her first collection, *Der Regenbogen* ("The rainbow"). Particularly noteworthy is the poem "Ins Leben" ("Into the life"), which contains the metaphor of "black milk" that was to have an impact on Paul Celan:

Only from motherly sorrow
the full measure of experience flows into me.
She feeds me for a long, cloudy time
With black milk and heavy wormwood wine. [4, 13]

Paul Celan will take up the metaphor of black milk at the very beginning of his poem "Fugue of Death", published just after the war, in 1947. Rose Ausländer would acknowledge that Celan's poem was able to transform this metaphor and give it great poetic force [14].

At that time, in Czernowitz, Rose Ausländer did not play a very important role, it is only much later, in her later work written after the Shoah, and partly under the influence of Celan, although 20 years her junior, that she found her style and became the great poetess we discover today.

In the interwar years, a young generation of three poets born in 1920 emerged who would give Czernowitz its true literary credentials: the young stars Paul Antschel (Celan, 1920-1970), Alfred Gong (1920-1982), Immanuel Weissglas (1920-1979), all three of whom were fellow students at the Czernowitz high school.

Alfred Gong (real name Liquornik) studied Romance languages and comparative literature in Czernowitz. His whole family (his parents and sister) were deported to Siberia when the Russians occupied Bukovina, but he himself managed to escape, just as he managed to escape deportation when the Germans occupied the city. During the war he escaped to Transylvania with "Aryan" papers, and after the war he found himself in Bucharest, emigrated to Vienna where he met Paul Celan again when the latter published his first collection *The Sand from the Urns*, and then went to the United States [15].

In a poem entitled "Bukowina", he describes Bukovina

with the Slavs and Swabians in the north, the Romanians in the south, and the Huzules in the Carpathians [2, 15].

He wrote an often-quoted poem about Czernowitz, "Topography", which describes, almost in prose, his "k. und k." city that became Romanian:

On the Ringplatz, since 1918
the stone aurochs crushed the imperial and royal double-headed eagle.

[...]

Not to forget the Volksgarten [...].

(Occasionally one could meet the pupil

Paul Celan with Trakl under his arm by the tulips). [2, 15]

Immanuel Weissglas was also a friend and sometimes a competitor of Celan in literature. During the occupation, he was deported to Transnistria, where he continued to write 'in the language of the murderers' poems in German, published after the war under the title *Kariera am Bug* ("Career on the Bug River"). The Shoah became the main theme that inspired the poet, even after the war, in *Nobiskrug* and later in the posthumous collection *Gottes Mühlen in Berlin*.

In the poem "Das Massengrab" ("The Mass Grave") we hear echoes reminiscent of Celan's „Es war Erde in ihnen und sie gruben...“ ("There was earth in them and they dug..."). Let us listen to Weissglas:

I gruffly dug the shovel into the earth
and I am sure that I will open it,
what more have I to do in this world
but to see where my dead rest? [16]

Let us also listen to the epitaph he inscribed on a mass grave, "Massengrabschrift":

Who lived here? Who suffered? Who will after years
Faithfully keep the name and the origin?
Those who were one are not divorced here,
Who suffered one sorrow, rest in one peace.
And our coffin is, death, your heavenly measure:
This whole wide field full of wind and grass. [16]

In the poem "Aschenzeit" ("Time of Ashes") he uses a more modern, poetically daring vocabulary, which is somewhat reminiscent of Celan:

World's mouth on merciful stink,
In ash time, I lend my ear
To the wise exercises of the toad -
My heart sank in the human bog. [...] [16]

In the 1944 poem "Er" ("He - The Death"), Immanuel Weissglas was the first to refer to death as a "master of Germany", and to a man playing with snakes, as well as to Marguerite's hair:

We raise graves into the air and settle
With wife and child in the required place.
We dig diligently, and the others play the fiddle,
One makes a grave and goes on dancing.
HE wills that over these bowels more brazen,
The bow strokes stern as his countenance:
Plays softly of death, he is a German master,
That creeps through the land as a mist.
And when the twilight bloody swells in the evening,
I open my puckered mouth in vengeance,

A house for all in the air digging;
 Wide as the coffin, narrow as the hour of death.
 HE plays in the house with snakes, he broods and writes poetry,
 In Germany it dawns like Gretchen's hair.
 The grave in clouds is not straightened narrowly:
 Since far death was a German master. [17, 18]
 Of course, one can recognize themes that will reappear in Celan's "Death Fugue", but there is no doubt that Celan, taking up metaphors that were perhaps "in the air of the time", in conversations or simply in the reality of the time, and in classically constructed verses, transformed them and adapted them to a totally new, modern style of writing, which, in order to distinguish it from the German, has been called "Celianian" (Jean Bollack).

4. Post-War Poetry

The real explosion of Bukovina's German-language poetry will be posthumous and in exile, when most of the authors and readers of Czernowitz will have been exterminated and the surviving poets of the Shoah will continue to write, building an inner world for themselves. The most important representative, because his poetry already belongs to the heritage of universal literature, is Paul Celan.

Celan (Paul Antschel) was born in 1920 in Czernowitz, of parents assimilated to German culture. After graduating from high school, he went to Tours, France, to study medicine. He crossed Germany by train the day after Kristallnacht, on 10 November 1938. In Tours, he was influenced by the Surrealists and more generally by the poetry of modernity such as Baudelaire and Apollinaire. In 1939, he returned to Czernowitz where he remained throughout the war. His parents were both deported to Transnistria and did not return from the Mikhailovka camp on the Bug, where they were murdered, which caused a real trauma for the young Paul. He himself was not deported, but recruited for compulsory labor in a labor camp in Tabarești (or Tabarest). During this period he wrote poems on postcards which he sent to his girlfriend Ruth Kraft in Czernowitz and which he copied into the "Tabarest Notebook" [19].

We would like to quote here one of Tabarest's poems, the poem "Abendlied" (Evening song): it was not part of the selection we presented in 2021 in the review *Po&sie* in Paris [19]. As Celan reworked his poems during his furloughs in Czernowitz, in the library of Professor Horowitz, father of Edith Silbermann, it is one of his "Bukovinian poems". [20] It can easily be dated to April 1943, as it is copied into this notebook between a poem of 13 April and another of 15 April 1943.

Evening song
 The calls that persuade to stay,
 Do not stand before the hidden call.
 For my dreams lived on reseda.
 My white deer has a golden hoof.
 Now, who for thirty pieces of silver
 To the cross I have escaped?

I myself have stretched the wing of the foreign angel.
 (it will be a long way from you to there...)
 I will not stand my ground in the thorn bush?
 At my steps the nettle puzzled.
 Take from my gold, from the stolen...
 Does the eye close? And from me the fetter falls? [19]

After the war, Celan moved first to Bucharest, where he translated from Russian into Romanian for a publisher, and then fled in 1947 to Vienna, the former capital to which the Czernowitz intelligentsia had turned. There he published his first collection *The Sand of the Urns*, which includes the famous "Death Fugue" that made him famous:

Black milk of the morning we drink it at night
 We drink it at noon and in the morning We drink it at night
 We drink and drink [1]

After the publication of this collection, Paul Celan went to Paris in 1948 and from 1950 onwards obtained a position as a reader at the École Normale Supérieure.

He continued to write "in the language of the murderers" and published collections in Germany in which he radically transformed his writing to become more and more hermetic and metaphysical, but it was always, in the background, the experience of the Shoah that remained, in a more or less cryptic way, the foundation of his poetry, proving that it was possible to write a poetic work after Auschwitz, but also completely renewing the German language by creating a language of its own. As a distant consequence of the trauma of the Shoah, but also of the language and the world he had created alongside reality, Paul Celan took his own life in 1970.

The other star of poetry of this period is Rose Ausländer, whose main, discreet work develops after the war, after the shock of the almost miraculous survival in the Czernowitz ghetto. Rose Ausländer emigrated to the United States where she lived from 1946 to 1965 and wrote poems in English, then she settled in Germany, in Düsseldorf, thanks to a pension paid to her as a victim of Nazism. Especially from this date, her work, centered on memory, develops, in which the city of Czernowitz, Bucovina, the happy and idealized childhood appear repeatedly.

Rose Ausländer met Paul Celan in Paris in 1957, when he was already well known, she was not. It is said that Celan was not enthusiastic about her first poems, which he found too traditional, but that he appreciated the ones she showed him at that time [14]. In fact, Ausländer's poetry evolved considerably, her poetics changed, she gave up rhyme, wrote shorter, purer, metaphorical poems, in which her very particular breath, the voice of the poetess, is written.

Rose Ausländer has written the most beautiful and powerful evocations of Bukovina and Czernowitz, in a language that has nothing traditional about it:

Bukovina II
 Landscape that
 Invented me
 water-poor
 forest-haired
 the blueberry hills

honey-black
 quadrilingual fraternised
 songs
 in divided time [8]

Finally, it is worth mentioning here a very endearing personality, a poetess who died at the age of 18 in deportation to Transnistria, in the Mikhailovka camp (the camp where Celan's parents also perished) and who was discovered late, her only collection (*Ich bin in Sehnsucht eingehüllt*, - "I am wrapped in longing") having been published in 1980: Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, a distant cousin of Celan. Her poems were miraculously saved by two of her childhood friends, Renée and Else, who escaped the extermination and took them with them to Israel, where they were published, long afterwards. In one of these poems, written a few days after the occupation began, Selma cries out for life:

I want to live and lift burdens
 and want to fight and love and hate
 and want to grasp the sky with my hands
 and want to be free and breathe and scream.
 I do not want to die. No!
 No
 Life is red,
 Life is mine.
 Mine and yours.
 Mine. [21]

We would like to mention two more of Selma Meerbaum's poems that are characteristic of her creation, one from December 1940 entitled "Trauer" ("mourning"), the other, the very last one she wrote, in December 1941, is entitled "Tragik":

Mourning
 Lights reflected in dirty wet puddles,
 yellow and greasy, dirty too and heavy.
 Bright house windows can be of no use at all.
 Gates echo high and empty. [21]
 And the last one, "Tragik":
 That is the hardest thing: to give oneself away
 and know that you are superfluous,
 to give oneself completely and to think
 that one vanishes like smoke into nothingness. [21]

Here Selma wrote by hand in red ink: "*Ich habe keine Zeit gehabt, zu Ende zu schreiben*" ("I had no time to finish"), a sentence often interpreted - wrongly, though it could be true - as a cry of despair in front of the gendarmes who came to arrest her. In reality, this sentence is addressed to her friend, Leiser Fishman, to whom she dedicates her collection, and to whom she reproaches him for having left her without a farewell when he went to forced labor in November 1941. She adds: „Schade, dass du dich nicht von mir empfehlen wolltest. Alles Gute, Selma" ("It's a pity you didn't want to say goodbye to me. Good luck. Selma") [22].

Leiser Fishman was in fact under the spell of Else Schächter (later Else Keren), Selma's friend, also a poet and author of the collection *Dann ging ich über den Pont des Arts* [23], in which she devotes poems to both, Leiser and Selma. One of these poems is about her dead friend, whose work she

has saved for posterity:

(*To the memory of the poet Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger*)
Selma was 18 when she perished
in an extermination camp
 Tear sheets
 fawn
 in the morning dew
 from your eye
 somewhere on the steppe
 With dead thread
 the wind spins
 Autumn in your hair
 You left in spring [3]

5. Conclusion

We could mention several other poets from Bukovina, including from this "posthumous" period, such as Ilana Shmueli (1924-2011), a friend of Celan's youth, who went to Israel after the war, as did Else Keren. But we prefer to stop on this note, which recalls the tragic end of German-language literature in Bukovina, destroyed by a "master from Germany".

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