

## BOOK REVIEW SECTION

**Kocsis, K., Kovács, Z., Nemerkenyi, Zs., Gercsák, G., Kincses, Á. and Tóth, G. (eds.): National Atlas of Hungary Vol. 3: Society.** Budapest, Research Centre for Astronomy and Earth Sciences, Geographical Institute, 2021. 191 p.

It seems that cartography as a science and cartographic practice (map making) have exceeded their climax of the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. Map use and the ability to compile maps methodologically correctly have obviously been in decline in recent decades, although better technical means than ever are at hands and map-making is open to a much wider range of people than ever before. That is exactly what this atlas volume reminds us, not because it is an example of the decline, but exactly for it is an example for just the opposite: the power of maps, the communicative value of cartographic representation, which can convey at one glance what would have to be explained by a text of innumerable pages. And the question arises, why today only such a small number of geographers utilizes this potential.

This Volume 3 “Society” of the English version of the new four-volume National Atlas of Hungary is a jewel of cartography, and particularly atlas

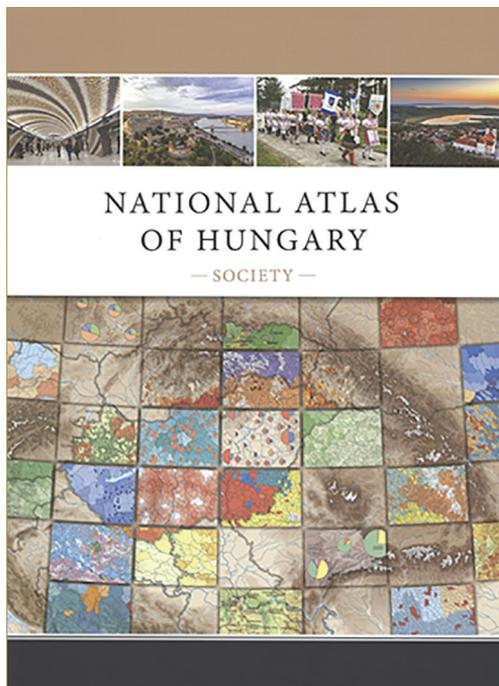
cartography. It would take too much space to repeat here what was already said on the atlas series and its editors and authors in my review of its Volume 2 “Natural Environment” in the Hungarian Geographical Bulletin, Volume 68, Number 1, 2019, pp. 93–96, and readers are kindly asked to consult that review for information on the whole atlas series. In the following, just some essential aspects of the recently published volume are to be highlighted.

Like the previous atlas volume, this volume is divided into chapters easily traceable by colours. Their number is 12. An appendix with names of authors, bibliography and sources completes the volume.

Chapter I (Hungary at a glance, 3 pages) comprises a map of Hungary’s administrative division into counties and districts, also representing the eight statistical regions. As in this English version in general, foreign countries and their places are named by their English exonyms (in case they exist), with their Hungarian names in the second position, when the share of the Hungarian minority exceeds 10 percent. A geographical map of the Carpatho-Pannonian area in the 1:1.8 million scale embracing the Croatian coast of the Adriatic in the Southwest, Cracow in the North and Bucharest in the Southeast impresses by its relief representation. The English exonym principle rules, but endonyms are – except in minor cases like *Königsboden* or *Burzenland* in Transylvania – only presented in their national language and in an official minority language version when the minority has a share of more than 10 percent.

Chapter II (History of population, 6 pages) starts with the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin but recognizes that a Slavic population was already present and more or less assimilated like other groups arriving together with the Hungarians and later. Very obvious are the effects of the Austrian colonization policy of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the south-eastern Carpathian Basin.

Chapter III (Population number, population density, 10 pages) has also a diachronic perspective looking partly back to 1869 and shows that the whole Carpathian Basin has suffered from population decline since 1990 at the latest and depopulation of non-touristic rural areas is significant. Most interesting and innovative is the map of the Carpathian Basin on components of population change between 2001 and 2018 (natural increase/decrease, migration gain/loss), where apart from metropolitan areas southern



Transylvania, Transcarpathia, Ukrainian Bukovina and western parts of eastern Slovakia stand out by migration gain (and natural increase) – very likely due to their Roma population. All these maps show that it is very well possible to combine thematic representation by areal colours with relief representation by hill shading – so important for an adequate interpretation of all these demographic issues.

With the table of main data of vital statistics in Chapter IV (Natural change of population, 12 pages) it is not immediately recognizable that it refers just to the territory of modern Hungary taking into account that the atlas embraces very frequently the entire Carpathian Basin. High fertility rates as well as infant mortality are obviously very indicative for the distribution of Roma population. Most striking is the exceptional rate of suicides in the Great Hungarian Plain and the historical stability of this fact. The text alludes at isolated farmsteads (*tanyas*) as an explanation.

Chapter V (Migration, 14 pages) shows that Hungary as well as the rest of the Carpathian Basin are much less affected than Austria or even Slovenia by immigration in recent decades. This can certainly be attributed to the socio-economic gradient, but also to migration policies. The vast majority of immigrants to Hungary appears to be ethnic Hungarians from parts of the former Hungarian Kingdom that remained outside Hungary after the 1920 Treaty of Paris, mainly from Romania with its still sizeable Hungarian minority. Hungarian emigration, on the other hand, is strong to Western Europe with Germany as a main destination. The chapter also reminds us of the exodus of Hungarians after the crackdown of the Hungarian uprising in 1956 as well as the influx of ethnic Hungarians from Yugoslavia and Romania towards the end of the Communist period, when national polarization culminated in Yugoslavia and a tough Communist dictatorship persisted in Romania up to the last moment. It also shows the growth of Chinese immigration in the 2010s. Internal migration – as in most other countries – goes in Hungary at the expense of rural and periphery areas and favours larger centres, although much less their cores (most of which have a negative migration balance) than their suburban zones. Budapest is the best example for this kind of development. If internal migration is taken as an indicator for attractivity in socio-economic terms, the Budapest agglomeration and Northern Transdanubia clearly rank highest. Commuting to abroad is most significant along the Austrian border, where better income in Austria and lower living costs in Hungary are the determining factors.

Chapter VI (Population structures, 44 pages) is the central section of the atlas not only by size, and it is subdivided into several subsections. Age structures are very much coinciding with socio-economic structures leaving older people behind in disadvantaged and peripheral areas. Hungary seems to be almost

an island of unmarried couples, in the wider region only comparable with Slovakia and eastern Slovenia, obviously due to many divorces.

The ethnic section extends (of course) over the entire Carpathian Basin including even city plans showing the concentration of Hungarians in the old urban cores of Cluj-Napoca and Târgu Mureş in Transylvania. For ethnic and language maps, it is always a question whether the areal method, usually preferred due to its visual impact, is the best choice, since it is insensitive of population density. But this atlas mitigates this negative aspect by excepting compact uninhabited areas from thematic representation. Anyway, instead of “ethnic map”, “map of ethnic consciousness” or “map of ethnic affiliation” would be terms better corresponding to current scientific approaches towards ethnicity. With the distribution of Roma an interesting comparison between self-affiliation and estimates by ‘objective criteria’ is drawn. The two methods result in rather the same spatial pattern, just in much lower shares according to subjective affiliation. The maps on religion in 1910 and 2011 of the entire Carpathian Basin demonstrate impressively the much higher persistence of reformation in the territories of the Hungarian Kingdom than in the Austrian parts of the Habsburg empire due to a significantly less successful Catholic counter-reformation. Very impressive is the progress of Orthodoxy in what became Romanian and Serbian territories after World War I. Other striking issues are the declining number of Lutherans due to the exodus of Saxons and Landler from Transylvania as well as the small share of religious population in modern Hungary compared to the lands that remained outside Hungary in 1920.

In the sections on educational structure and economic activity the map on literacy in 1910 reveals striking disparities inside the Hungarian Kingdom with mountain regions standing out by illiteracy. Within modern Hungary, the Budapest metropolitan area and Northern Transdanubia – the socio-economically best developed parts of the country – are obviously in the best position, also in educational terms. A very interesting topic is the comparison between the educational level of employees and unemployed population. It shows, first of all, the relative size of both population groups, and secondly, the importance of education for finding employment. A diagram demonstrates impressively the decline of the primary and the secondary sectors of the economy in favour of the tertiary sector by employment between 1920 and 2016. The Communist period favoured industrialization at the expense of primary employment but caused (compared to Western Europe) a delay in tertiarisation.

Social stratification is significant in Hungary, and the Northeast as well as Southern Transdanubia on the one hand and the Budapest metropolitan area as well as Northern Transdanubia on the other are clearly the poles in this respect. Here, just like in other sec-

tions of the atlas, maps of the Carpathian Basin based on data attributed to administrative units are hardly comparable to Romania, because Romania is the only country represented by (small) municipalities, while all the others are shown by higher-ranking administrative units. This, however, is a problem that cannot be solved, since the next level of administrative units in Romania, i.e., counties ('județe'), is already much larger than Hungarian, Slovakian or Serbian districts.

Chapter VII (History of settlement, 6 pages) starts with a map of settlements, in fact, administrative, ecclesiastical and economic centres at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when the Hungarian Kingdom established its power over the Carpathian Basin. The chapter also reflects the Ottoman period, when central parts of the Carpathian Basin were under Ottoman rule and Transylvania (plus "Partes") was under Ottoman supremacy leaving in the former some remarkable architectural traces (e.g. in Pécs, Buda, Eger, Temesvár). An interesting map series demonstrates recolonization of the southern Pannonian Basin after the Ottoman wars by the example of Csanád County. The Great Hungarian Plain stands out by its low settlement density due to natural conditions and the 'tanya' system of isolated farmsteads already before the Ottoman period and not only due to destruction by Ottoman wars and the flight of inhabitants.

In Chapter VIII (Settlement system, 8 pages) a large-scale map of populated places in the Carpathian Basin according to their number of inhabitants and legal status in 2018 demonstrates again the exceptional concentration on larger populated places in the Great Hungarian Plain down to Belgrade.

In Chapter IX (Urban settlements, 12 pages) a most instructive map shows population change of urban settlements in the Carpathian Basin between 1990 and 2018, i.e., in the post-Communist period. It shows that just a few centres essentially grew, i.e., Budapest, but only its suburban zone, Vienna, Graz, suburban Bratislava, suburban Zagreb, Belgrade, Novi Sad, suburban Bucharest, while most others declined in population number. It is also interesting to see that the Hungarian system of regional centres has not become more accentuated in the era since World War II but has diversified towards polycentrism. Formerly less important centres, like Nyíregyháza, Kecskemét, Győr or Békéscsaba, have caught up, while the earlier 'stakeholders' Debrecen, Szeged and Pécs could not advance essentially.

Chapter X (Budapest and its region, 12 pages) on Hungary's dominant urban centre highlights the typical processes of metropolitan development like gentrification and suburbanization.

Chapter XI (Rural areas, 10 pages) addresses demographic developments, village and settlement types, functions and service facilities of villages as well as the significant reduction of small rural outskirts in the Communist period. Accompanying photos contribute

especially in this chapter to a better understanding. Exceptional is a map of Hungary's rural landscapes based on rural settlement systems. It shows a hierarchy of large units like Northern Transdanubia or Tiszántúl and their subdivision into smaller ones like Bihar or Csanád. It is a scientific landscape classification applying some traditional names of cultural landscapes in local use, but not necessarily sticking to them. A map representing traditional cultural landscapes and their names in local use would certainly look different in naming as well as in landscape outlines. It is nevertheless questionable, whether a subunit of Northern Transdanubia should bear the same name *Northern Transdanubia* and another subunit of Northern Transdanubia the name *Western Transdanubia* and not *West Northern Transdanubia*.

Chapter XII (Living conditions, quality of life, 26 pages) is a kind of a summary or conclusion of the entire volume, since what else than a 'good life' is the ultimate goal of all societal efforts. It shows that spatial socio-economic disparities in modern Hungary are at least not felt as dramatic but in fact, the Budapest agglomeration and Northern Transdanubia enjoy a privileged position.

Contrary to many other national atlases, this atlas profits from the view on a wider region, in this case the Carpathian Basin, which is of course due to Hungary's image of self as the successor of a much larger historical entity. It nevertheless deserves to be acknowledged that this means much additional work with finding comparable data and classifications for quite a number of countries. The atlas excels by an ideal mixture of cartographically splendid maps, tables, diagrams, concise texts and photos interrelated by a sophisticated numbering and colouring system. This highlight of modern atlas cartography nourishes great expectations to the remaining atlas volumes on "The Hungarian State and its Place in the World" and "Economy".

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