

LITERATURE

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Károly Kocsis–Zsolt Bottlik: Ethnic map of the present territory of Hungary, 1941. Ethnic map of Hungary, 2001. Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Geographical Research Institute. Budapest, 2009.

The geographical workshop of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (GRI HAS) launched a series of maps in the mid-1990s, which show the present ethnic structure of the regions in the Carpathian Basin with sizeable Hungarian population and the change of this pattern during the past five hundred years. This publication series is a milestone in the history of Hungarian ethnic geographical research and now the latest (eighth and ninth) pieces of this series are available for those interested in the ethnic situation within the Carpathian Basin.

Author of the series is Károly Kocsis who has a quarter century long academic experience, and who revived the ethnic geographical studies having flourished between the world wars but vanished afterwards. Reports on the lot of ethnic minorities in the region and on changes in their socio-economic position and demography pattern were held back during the years of communism but today they are back in the focus of the general interest again. Representatives of social sciences and geography, together with the politicians and the public are equally concerned about the issue. Károly Kocsis has analysed the ethnic situation of the Carpatho-Balkan region in several of his previous works. These writings laid the foundations of a reviving discipline at the turn of the millennium. His present co-author Zsolt BOTTLIK (Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Geography) also is an expert in the spatial pattern of the ethnicities in the region.

The layout of the previous map sheets which showed the area of the Carpathian Basin beyond the Hungarian state borders were similar to that of the actual work representing the ethnic situation of our country. The series deploys a multitemporal approach: it successfully presents the dynamics in changes of ethnic structure during the last five hundred years despite the constraints imposed by cartographic representation.

The recent publication is different from the previous ones in a way that it consists of two sheets of double pages. This innovation accounts for the shape of the country and claims to prepare maps at a scale which are suitable to depict the ethnic pattern by settlements. On the front pages there are maps of Hungary (1:500 000) showing the composition of the settlements' population at the moment of the censuses held in 1941 (by mother tongue) and 2001 (by ethnicity).

The supplementary maps on the reverse show the changing spatial ethnic structure since the late 15th century. The cartographic representation is complemented with a table and a detailed explanation in Hungarian and English. The sources of data which comprise the basis of these maps are the official censuses from 1880 only, as the reconstruction of ethnic structures for the previous periods is rather ambiguous. The emerging distortions are reduced by the application of varied sources for the estimations (mainly historical monographs and gazetteers).

The maps on the front pages are adjusted to recent administrative divisions while the supplementary maps on the back side show the ethnicities ever lived within the contemporary administrative area of the settlements. The settlement names indicated on the front page cover the territory of the country completely therefore inscriptions of all settlements figure in the maps those having been official at the two time slices.. In case the number of inhabitants qualifies for it, the names can be read in the language of ethnic minorities as well. Because of size limits, only the name of major settlements appear in maps of the reverse side. For these supplementary maps, the reference periods are indicated.

In the maps on the front, due to the detailed data of censuses, the ethnic composition by settlements was represented with pie charts. The size of diagrams of settlements are proportional to the numbers of inhabitants having importance, especially in case of the 2001 census where the map provides information in an almost entirely homogeneous space.

The maps of Hungary showing the spatial pattern of ethnic minorities during the previous centuries are made through areal representation. Owing to the uncertain sources of data and smaller scale, however, in this case only the (absolute or relative) ethnic majority of settlements were indicated with patches of different colours. These supplementary maps are aimed to introduce the macro-level changes which are feasible to be shown by this method of mapping. The distortion caused by the areal representation is partly counterbalanced by the delineation of uninhabited territories.

The table is also a clear introduction into the dynamics of multitemporal changes as the comparison of national data sets makes possible research aimed at the analysis of the changes in the number of people that belong to ethnic groups and their proportions compared to the entire population.

The explanatory notes furnishing the map user with comments to the figures explore the social processes behind the changes in ethnic structure in detail, supported by a rich bibliography. The periods described are not derived from periods defined by the represented dates; they are confined to the distinct eras of Hungarian history instead. Thus the interpretation of processes is made much more easier. The maps support the message of this summary which is based on the crucial turning points of the history of ethnic groups in the Carpathian Basin, hence the changing ethnic aspect is also introduced and it is not only the maps which get an in-depth analysis.

The publication is a correct piece of work in mapping performed by the cartographers of the Geographical Research Institute. This is the reason why the graphical representation is so attractive: the colours, symbols and methods make aesthetic experience and illustrate correctly the ethnic structure of our country and the changes that have occurred in it.

The ethnic maps of Hungary stands its ground alone without the other maps of the series. The presentation of the spatial aspects of processes of historical scale is the real value of this long awaited publication. It is one of the essential bases for a research of social processes in the field of various social sciences. It can be used as an auxiliary material in public education and in higher education equally, and also may serve as a source of information for the interested layman.

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