

CHARACTERISTICS OF HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

Human settlement and the emergence of nation states in the Carpathian (Pannonian, Central Danubian) Basin have shown exceeding intricacy over time: peoples, states and empires have both emerged and vanished. The Conquest starting in 895, rendered Hungarians the foremost political influence in the Carpathian Basin. There were frequent and considerable changes in the territory of the Hungarian state and also of that under Hungarian sovereignty. The de-

cisive events were in part triggered by internal affairs, but in most cases they were provoked by power struggles in both Hungary's immediate vicinity and the European space in general, and sometimes enforced upon the nation by greater powers. Continuity and change are manifest in a special way during the 1100 years of eventful history and a changing territorial configuration of the Hungarian state.

Major Periods in the Development of the Hungarian State

The region that is home to Hungary has historically been in a continuous state of change, following the macroregion's general trends in its development (*figures 11 and 12*). An essential thread that runs through all events is that

Hungary has always been located in the vicinity of significant, or even world powers, giving rise to circumstances that have caused frequent changes in the location of its national borders.

Changes in Territory from 895 to the Fall of the Independent Hungarian State (1526)

Following the Conquest starting in 895, Hungarian tribes, which had migrated from the eastern European steppes, found themselves in a new geographical locale and settlement environment with a differing ethnic make-up and subject to new political influences. The Hungarians gradually took possession of the basin, and exerted their control over most of its peripheries too. A system of tribal alliances ensured the unity of their territory vis-a-vis outsiders, yet allowed room for tribal individuality to flourish within their territory. The core area of the tribal alliance emerged in the Danube Bend region, which is located almost in the centre of the Carpathian Basin. The adoption of Christianity and the creation of a Christian kingdom at the turn of the millennium involved a conscious ef-

fort to integrate into the European and neighbouring environment.

Hungarian history academia traditionally divides the era up to 1526 into two phases: the period of the Árpád dynasty and the age of the elected kings.

During the rule of the Árpáds, the relative influence of the Hungarians changed repeatedly, for example achieving great power under Béla III in the late 12th century, followed by a crushing defeat during the Mongol invasion of 1241–1242. In the last year of the national monarchy (1301), the feudal title of the Hungarian ruler (King of Hungary, Dalmatia, Croatia, Rama, Serbia, Galych, Volhynia, Cumania and Bulgaria) referred to previous conquests, but the title and the territory controlled had become disconnect-

Fig. 11

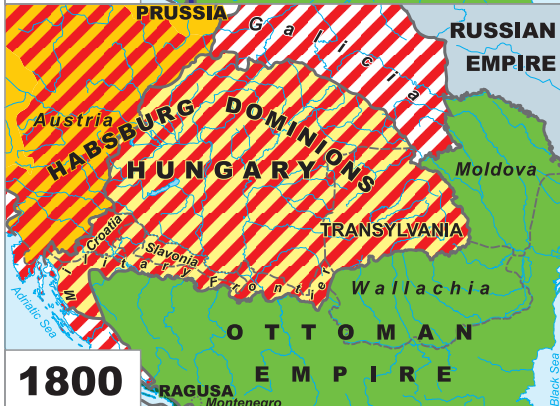
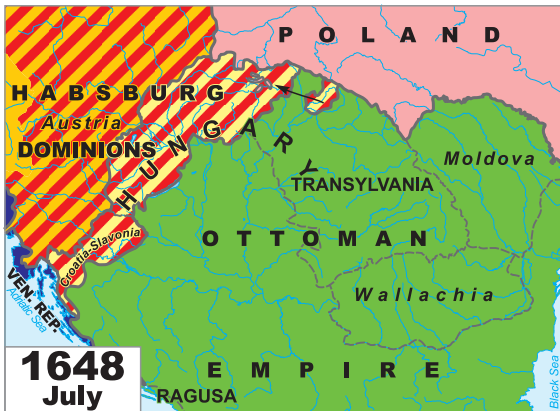
STATES IN THE AREA OF THE CARPATHIAN BASIN (1000–1600)



Author: Bereznay, A., Kocsis, K. Cartography: Kaiser, L.
 © Bereznay, A. (www.historyonmaps.com), Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Geographical Research Institute Budapest, 2009

Fig. 12

STATES IN THE AREA OF THE CARPATHIAN BASIN (1648–2009)



Author: Bereznavy A., Kocsis, K. Cartography: Kaiser, L.
 © Bereznavy, A. (www.historyonmaps.com), Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Geographical Research Institute Budapest, 2009

ed. The contemporary attitude to power treated the mother country and the empire separately.

The age of the elected kings from various dynasties (1301–1526) is important due to the common possessing of (e.g. Hungarian, Polish, Czech) crowns that had already borne dynastic and modern empire-building aspirations. The rule of the Angevins (1301–1395, e.g. Charles I; Louis I the Great) had turned Hungary into one of the decisive powers in Central Europe with respect to its economic, political and military power. The Hungarian-Polish personal union (1370–1382) did not lead to the unification of the two nations' resources, rather it served merely as a union tailored to suit the life events of Louis the Great.

The hallmark of the entire 15th century was the struggle of the Hungarian state against the Ottomans (Turks), with varying degrees of success, resulting in neither a strategic victory, nor a defeat. Sigismund of Luxembourg's impressive international prominence and achievements (not least as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire) did not yield immediate results in the conflict.

The reign of Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490) bought notable conquests in the west, but his activities were not as enthusiastic or effective in the south (against the Ottomans). Matthias's Hungarian Empire was short-lived, and did not become an organic political-sovereign space.

The problems of Divided Territory (1526–1686)

With the advance of the Ottomans in the Balkans, Hungary gradually lost its sphere of influence in the north of the peninsula. By taking Belgrade and its environs (1521), the Turks entered the Carpathian Basin. The chain of events that began after the 1526 Mohács defeat (the emergence of a bipartite and later tripartite country) resulted in internal divisions and external (Ottoman and Habsburg) aspirations. The Habsburg Kingdom of Hungary, the Ottoman vassal East Hungarian state (since 1570 known as the Principality of Transylvania) and the areas under direct

Ottoman rule showed striking differences in many aspects of their development.

In the wars between Christendom and Islam, the Habsburgs and the Ottomans, the central and southern areas of the Carpathian Basin, it was the core area of Hungarian ethnic territory that suffered the heaviest human and material losses. For the period of the struggle that continued for approximately 150 years, political, economic, social and religious structures were put under stress.

The Integrated Hungarian State During the Habsburg Period (1686–1918)

The liberation of the country began after the unsuccessful Ottoman attack on Vienna (1683). Habsburg forces retook Buda in 1686 and the rest of the country's territory gradually succumbed thereafter. Following the liberation war, the Habsburgs did not however reinstate Hungary's historical pre-Ottoman structure; the Viennese Court exercised its will over the country in economic, population-related, ethnic-religious and spatial matters, pursuant to its own interests, and treated

the liberated Hungarian territories as new acquisitions.

The real question was whether it would be possible to integrate Hungary into the united Habsburg Empire, or a semi-independent structure was to be established. The Hungarian nobility was adamant about the country's constitutional and territorial unity, but it could only achieve these ends in part.

Integration had led to conflicts, culminating in the war of freedom led by Prince Ferenc

Rákóczi II (1703–1711). This attempt to create an independent Hungarian statehood (through the dethronement of the Habsburg dynasty, 1707) did not find favour with the balance of power in contemporary Europe, thus it had turned out to be unsuccessful.

The Pragmatica Sanctio, i.e. the matrilineal succession of rulers in the Habsburg Empire, was adopted in Hungary and Transylvania (1722–1723) and allowed for the preservation of the empire's unity by public law, and also paved the way for semi-autonomous internal governance in Hungary.

The emergence of the enlightenment, and movements that fostered a national awakening, promoting the idea of a republic, resulted in substantial shifts in Hungary. Enlightened absolutism – especially under Joseph II – initiated significant reforms towards rationalising the empire and preserving its unity, but in many ways it turned against the mainstream.

From 1825 onwards, an age of reform posed simultaneous questions as regards the economy, society, politics, nationality, use of language, transport, and even river regulation. Parliament attempted to foster progress from the top down.

In line with similar European events, the March 1848 revolution raised the question of national independence and also the issue of the ethnic minorities. The medieval Hungarian province, Transylvania declared a reunion with Hungary, while the Ban (Governor) of Croatia took to arms against the 'central Hungarian government', whilst some other minorities (Serbs, Romanians and some Slovaks) held national assemblies and demanded territorial autonomy. In the unfolding struggle for independence (resulting in the dethronement of the Habsburgs and a declaration of independence in 1849), the country was not prepared to respond to the dual challenge without conflict.

After the suppression of the Hungarian War of Independence with the armed assistance of the Russians, Habsburg absolutism disrupted the country's territorial and public administration structure.

The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 turned the Habsburg Empire into the

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the bi-product of which was a constitutionally and politically complicated structure. The Monarchy became involved in European politics as a legitimate, major power, internally operating as a macro-regional framework for modernisation.

The Hungaro-Croatian Compromise of 1868 settled the constitutional and public administration questions posed between Hungary and Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia. Hungarian territory was reunited with Transylvania, whilst its relationship with the associate country (Croatia-Slavonia, with its developed territorial autonomy) acquired an administrative character.

In spite of aspirations of territorial autonomy borne by minorities living within the country's territory (predominantly Serbs, Romanians and Slovaks) they were unable to achieve this. The concept of the political nation (per the French model) became dominant in Hungary, which incorporated ethnic minorities in its vision, but the majority of them rejected this as unsatisfactory.

Following the 1878 Berlin Congress, the Monarchy invaded and pacified Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1908, the two provinces were annexed and in 1910 became an Austro-Hungarian common, autonomous province (condominium).

The period of Dualism is particularly notable from the viewpoint of the history of statehood in the Carpathian Basin, in the sense that economic and infrastructural development (and modernisation in general) was being undertaken in a region not just limited to the basin itself, rather on the whole territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and historical Hungary was a scene of a semi-integration during the period of modernisation.

World War I (1914–1918) started following the Monarchy declaring war on Serbia, and warfare brought to light the Monarchy's structural weaknesses.

After the 1916 military victory over Romania, there was an important 'correction' to the Carpathian border, during which 3,772 km² of territory (encompassing 42 villages with 22,915 inhabitants) was incorporated into Hungary.

The Partitioned Historic State and its Changing Environs

The Uncertainty of Disintegration (1918–1920)

By autumn 1918, it had become clear to all actors that the Central Powers had lost the war. The Monarchy was unable to break-away from Germany, and the military defeat led to the disintegration of the former. The peoples under the Monarchy proclaimed their sovereignty one after the other; and in October 1918 Hungary also emerged as a sovereign state. On 16 November 1918, an ‘independent and autonomous people’s republic’ was proclaimed.

Neither the civil democratic revolution nor the proletarian dictatorship that was briefly in power from March–July 1919 (Hungarian Soviet Republic) was able to defend the nation’s territorial integrity. Whilst the Hungarian Soviet Republic was able to achieve military and political success in the historical territories of Upper Hungary (today mostly Slovakia), the superior might of the Allied powers and their politics ultimately prevailed after this briefly uncertain period.

Internationally Approved Territory and Territorial Revisionist Politics (1920–1938)

The Treaty of Trianon (4 June 1920) codified and legally guaranteed the new borders of the partitioned Hungary. The territory of much of the former Kingdom of Hungary, including areas inhabited predominantly by ethnic Hungarians, were divided up among neighbouring states (tables 4 and 5).

These neighbouring countries having extended into part of the Carpathian Basin, their primary aim was to legitimise these newly acquired territories through international organisations (such as the League of Nations) and multilateral agreements (Little Entente).

The defining goal of Hungarian internal and foreign policy was to achieve territorial revision, which enjoyed almost complete support from the population within the country, as well as that of Hungarians living abroad (who comprised one third of all ethnic Hungarians).

The goal of territorial revision had set Hungarian foreign policy on a forced trajectory, since it could only rely on the assistance of, and cooperation with countries that questioned the Paris treaties. Hungary was therefore becoming gradually but increasingly integrated into the alliance system of the Axis powers.

Table 4. Territorial and administrative changes of the Hungarian state (1900–1947)

Area	Year	Area (km ²)	Population number	Number of counties	Number of districts
Hungarian Empire (<i>Hungary and Croatia-Slavonia</i>)	1900	325,411	19,254,559	71	484
	1910	325,411	20,886,487	71	513
“Trianon Hungary”	1920	92,952	7,990,202	34	163
	1930	93,073	8,688,319	25	154
“Enlarged Hungary”	1938	105,000	10,382,014	31	172
	1939	117,061	11,076,036	34	184
	1940	160,165	13,653,296	44	246
	1941	171,640	14,683,323	44	264
Republic of Hungary	1947	93,011	9,316,613	25	150

Source: HAJDÚ, Z. 2005.

Table 5. Partition of the Hungarian state among the neighbour states according to the Treaty of Trianon (1920)

Country	Area		Population	
	km ²	%	number	%
	By 1910 census			
Romania	102,813	31.6	5,237,911	25.1
Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes	63,370	19.5	4,149,840	19.9
Czechoslovakia	61,646	18.9	3,516,815	16.8
Austria	4,020	1.2	292,631	1.4
Poland	589	0.2	24,880	0.1
Fiume (since 1924 Italy)	21	0.0	49,806	0.2
<i>All disannexed</i>	232,459	71.4	13,271,353	63.5
<i>Left to Hungary</i>	92,952	28.6	7,615,134	36.5
Hungarian Empire	325,411	100.0	20,886,487	100.0

Source: 1920 census, Part VI. Summary of outcomes, Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office, Budapest, 1929.

Partial Territorial Revisions (1938–1944)

In March 1938, Germany annexed Austria (known as the Anschluss), immediately becoming, (particularly through its possession of Burgenland, formerly western Hungary), a great power in the Carpathian Basin. From this moment on, it essentially controlled regional economic, political and military decision making within the region.

Between 1938 and 1941, each and every year brought territorial gains for Hungary. In 1938, the First Vienna Award returned the southern parts of Czechoslovakia, predominantly inhabited by ethnic Hungarians (essentially the majority of the northern Hungarian ethnic territory that was originally occupied by Czech troops in 1919). In 1939, following the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, Subcarpathia, mainly inhabited by Ruthenians (Rusyns) (today Transcarpathia in Ukraine) was occupied and annexed by Hungary, turning it once more into a multi-ethnic state. In

1940, the Second Vienna Award reapportioned North Transylvania, thus reintroducing another significant national minority (Romanians) within the new national territory. In 1941, after the German invasion and formal disintegration of Yugoslavia, some of the formerly southern Hungarian territories were returned to the country, involving another large influx of minorities (e.g. Serbs, Germans, Croats and Slovenes).

The territory, population and administrative structure of the Hungarian state changed year by year; borders within the Carpathian Basin had become almost 'fluctuant', moving mostly by German intervention. The territorial changes only benefited from partial Axis power guarantees; the respective affected states (e.g. Slovakia, Romania and Serbia) had only accepted them grudgingly. It was clear to everyone that the outcome of the war would settle the fate of the borders.

The Uncertainties of 'Floating' (1944–1947)

In October 1944, Hungary had attempted to exit from its world war alliance, proclaiming a preliminary peace with the Allied Powers, but the attempt had been unsuccessful. World War II ended with the country on the losing side. In fact, Hungary was not alone as among its neighbours, Romania and independent Slovakia and Croatia

were also on the side of the defeated (the latter two were again incorporated into victorious nations, the resurrected Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia). During the final year of the war Hungary was occupied by the Red Army of the USSR.

Following the 1945 democratic elections, a coalition government was formed, which made

considerable efforts aimed at the reconstruction of the devastated country. On 1 February 1946, the Republic of Hungary was declared. In the end, the Paris Peace Treaty (signed 10 February

1947), reinforced the Trianon borders and ceded an additional three Hungarian villages near Bratislava (Pozsony) to Czechoslovakia to 'defend' the Slovak capital.

Hungary in a Divided Europe

Between 1947 and 1991, national borders within the Carpathian Basin were frozen, but events within the Soviet occupation zone had taken place somewhat differently after 1947. The region had the 'ordinary socialist states' (the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, etc.), but Yugoslavia exercised independent politics and became non-aligned, whereas Austria, initially occupied by Allied forces subsequently regained independence and became neutral after 1955.

During the initial phases of the Cold War, divisions had almost resulted in hermetic isolation. In reality, two 'iron curtains' had descended on the Hungarian borders; one towards the west, and one towards the Soviet Union and other 'fraternal socialist states'. The latter was only an iron curtain regarding the movement of people, yet remained an 'open border' for the movement of ideological intellectual capital, raw materials and military forces.

Hungary was forced to integrate into the framework of the CMEA (or Comecon, 1949) and the Warsaw Pact (1955). During the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the interim government withdrew from the Warsaw Pact and announced the country's neutrality, initiating new internal political events.

From the beginning of the 1960s, the tensions gradually dissolved, but the normalisation of relations with the west were proceeding slowly. In its opening-up toward the west, Hungary's relatively balanced foreign policy played a significant role.

From the beginning of the 1980s, Hungary had become increasingly indebted financially, which, in a peculiar way, had forced it to join international financial organisations, while internal political consolidation was gradually ceasing after 1985.

Hungary and the Reorganisation of its Environs after Political Transformation

The collapse of Eastern Bloc socialist regimes (which in Hungary was termed 'regime change', and carried out between 1988–1990) led to fundamental social, economic and political structural changes. The disintegration of Yugoslavia accelerated from summer 1991; Croatia and Slovenia became independent, gradually gaining recognition by the international community. In place of the formerly united Yugoslavia, new neighbouring states were formed. During Christmas 1991, the Soviet Union itself formally broke-up; with unchanged borders, Ukraine had become Hungary's north-eastern neighbour. On 1 January 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and the latter became Hungary's new northern neighbour. In 1995, Austria became a full

member of the European Union. With this step a new, great sphere of integration had appeared in the Carpathian Basin. The Euro-Atlantic integration of this macroregion started with the NATO membership of Hungary (1999); and Slovakia, Slovenia and Romania (2004). This was followed by the EU-accession of Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia (2004), and later Romania (2007).

For the entire community of ethnic Hungarians, EU and NATO membership of Hungary and the neighbouring states with the largest Hungarian minorities is of historical significance, as it has finally brought the majority of Hungarians into the European community, allowing them to cherish the same economic, social and political ideas and values.