

FROM SMASH TO THE HUNDIDAC PRIZE STORY OF A HISTORICAL ATLAS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Gábor HIDAS¹ – Zsuzsa TURCSÁN²

cartographers

¹ Cartographia Schoolbook Publishing Ltd., Budapest

Hidas.Gabor@cartographia.org

² Cartographia Ltd., Budapest



A BEZÚZÁSTÓL A HUNDIDAC DÍJIG EGY KÖZÉPISKOLAI TÖRTÉNELMI ATALASZ TÖRTÉNETE

Összefoglalás

A II. világháború után a Kartográfiai Vállalat gondozásában, 1959-ben jelent meg Magyarországon az első Középszintű történelmi atlasz. A korszak neves történészei és kartográfusai által szerkesztett mű a kor technikai lehetőségeinek és a magyar térképészet hagyományainak megfelelően, magas színvonalon szolgálta a korabeli oktatás igényeit. Az atlasz első kiadását ennek ellenére a politikai vezetés bezúzatta, mivel térképei olyan tényeket is ábrázoltak, amelyek ellen a környező országok tiltakoztak. A következő, módosított kiadás két és fél évtizeden keresztül csekély változtatásokkal jelent meg évről évre. Ez a változatlanág jól jellemezte az 1960-as és 1970-es évek megingathatatlanak tűnő állandóságát, míg az atlasz életének utolsó két évtizede a környezet rohamos átalakulását tükrözte. A változás első jeleként a kiadvány 1984-ben jelentősen kibővült és átalakult. Több olyan térkép került bele, amely a korszakot jellemző puha diktatúra további lazulását jelezte. Az igazi fordulat a rendszerváltozás után következett be, amikor egy tematikus művelődéstörténeti atlással összeépítve a térképmű számtalan tematikus térképpel gazdagodott, kiszélesítve ezáltal az atlasz történelmi szemléletét. A bővítések folyamán a kiadvány a folytonosságot megőrizve átörököltette az alapmű értékeit, de technológiája elavult, ezért szükség volt a teljes megújításra. A 2003-ban megjelent, digitálisan feldolgozott, kibővített változat az oktatás szakmai képviselőitől HunDidac Nagydíjat kapott, amely az átdolgozás eredményességét jelzi. A kétszintű érettségien is használható atlasz sikere abban rejlik, hogy több évtized tapasztalata és fejlesztése révén nem csak a történelmi események térképeken történő ábrázolására korlátozódik, hanem komplexitása következtében új ismereteket nyújt, és alkalmas a történelmi összefüggések bemutatására.

Summary

The first Historical Atlas for Secondary Schools was published in Hungary after World War II in 1959 by 'Kartográfiai Vállalat' (predecessor of Cartographia Ltd.). This publication, edited by famous historians and cartographers of that period of age, served educational requirements at high level due to the Hungarian cartographical conventions and technical background.

In spite of this, the first edition was sentenced to smash by political leaders, because its maps described facts unacceptably and refused by the neighbouring countries. The following editions were published for two and half decades with only few alterations year by year. This constancy was typical of the 1960's and 1970's, while the last two decades reflected the rapid transformation of the political environment.

As the first sign of change, the atlas expanded significantly in 1984. It included more maps from those of which were dedicated to show further softening of the light dictatorship. The real turn happened after the political transformation, when the publication combined thematic pages from a culture historical atlas. This way the atlas got several thematic maps also widening its historical aspects. Completing process was keeping continuity meanwhile inherited the values of the basic work, but the production technology got old-fashioned, therefore a total improvement became necessary. The new, digitally reworked, expanded version was launched in 2003, and won the prize of HunDidac, given by respectable heads of education, acknowledging the success of rework. The atlas is allowed to use at the two-level final exam in secondary schools. Based on the experiences of former decades its complexity comes not only from simply describing historical events on maps, but provides new knowledge and is able to present historical context.

Prologue

More than a half century has passed since a three-volume book on cartographic history written by Ferenc Fodor was published in 1953. This masterpiece is the most comprehensive story of Hungarian mapping till World War II, but no more significant publication has come out of the past 50 years of cartographic history.

This period of the 20th century history was rather significant considering the two World wars, and during these 50 years mankind entered from the age of gaslamps to the atomic age. Scientists recently consider the past 5-10 years' events as history. Fodor's book analyses the Hungarian cartographers' activity also in details from the appearance of Mano Kogutowitz to the post-war period considered as one of the golden ages in Hungarian cartography.

This age, based on the activity of the predecessors, continued. Remember the establishment of the high-level education in cartographic studies, the reorganization of civil cartography, its achievements after the political transformation, the technological development, the international appreciation.

Think of the numberless mapworks awarded with prize in 'The Beautiful Hungarian Map Competition' from year by year. So this is a period worth studying, and this paper is just a tiny slice in addition to this study.

The short story of the atlas in figures

Kartográfiai Vállalat, established in 1954, the legal predecessor of Cartographia Ltd. (1993) has been publishing school atlases since the early beginning. The old volumes of geographical and historical atlas series are good examples to express the idea of „looking forward but be conventional”. The Historical Atlas for Secondary Schools issued in 1959 had an exciting career and a typical work for expressing the mixture of old and new, the heritage of values involved into the changes and additions demanded by the new era.

The short story of the atlas is a history itself. It has been published 43 times in different editions, at last succeeded by the new one issued in 2003. The technology and appearance is up-to-date but still one can recognize the basic elements of the original work.

There were 5 managing directors leading the company while the total 46 editions were published. Students of 3 generations have been learning from these atlases but also cartographic experts of 3 generations have been taking part in their production. More than 5 million copies have been launched under 7 different kinds of covers. Its volume has been grown 4 times from the original 32 pages to 148 pages and from 87 maps to 251 maps. Its price changed from 18.70 Ft to 1900 Ft.

The original maps were drawn on paper and technology developed step by step from astralon intermediate copying process to the finally achieved digitation; meanwhile the 12 original colours were reduced to 4 colours because of economical reasons. Once it happened to be printed in 250 000 copies per year, the lowest number of copies were 70 000 copies per year.

The above mentioned data have been typical of different periods of age. The atlas was undisturbed for 24 years (volume: 32 pages, price: 18.70 Ft) related to the periods of 1960's and 1970's and seemed to be absolutely constant while the last two decades reflected the rapid transformation in the political environment.

The maps of the original atlas were edited by the most famous historians of that age.

In due course the compilations have been made by cartographers graduated also from history and an editorial board was set up where professional teachers and historians controlled the process. Recently 38 maps can be recognized from the original work representing continuity in spite of the changes in content and format in the past decades.

The smashed first edition (1959)

The editorial works of the atlas had started in 1954–55 for the order of the Ministry of Culture. The company residence had been in Perczel Mór Street at that time than moved to Guszev Street (now Sas Street) at the end of 1956.

In the lack of proper technological background a significant number of activities operated outside the company. For compensation a highly qualified editorial group stood at disposal for making maps. István Barta, György Györffy, István Hahn, László Makkai, Ferenc Maksai, László Márkus, Ervin Pamlényi, József Perényi, Gyula Rázsó, György Székely, Péter Váczy and Ágnes Várkonyi historians are still famous names not only for specialists.

President Sándor Radó, head of the editorial board chose respectable members in the cartographic branch, too. József Takács as editor-in-chief, György Érdi-Krausz as head of the editorial section, Gábor Bognár as head of the lithography section, Ferenc Tallián as chief engineer of Offset Printing House took part in the work of the board. Márton Pécsi controlled the geographical basis; László Irmédi Molnár supported the team with his respectable position as the head of the Department of Cartography at Eötvös Loránd University.

The basic materials for the base maps were selected by the firm. These were produced in the Military Cartographic Institute, which enlarged its size by 1.8–2 on blueprint. Ready fair drawings were reduced to the original scale of the atlas. For this reason the coastlines and linear elements of water representation had especially fine contour. The names were made by filmsetting also in the Institute on one-sided sticker special paper.

The atlas had 32 pages, contained 87 maps, bound and stitched in cartoon, French-sized (trim size: 23 cm × 28 cm), which is nowadays unusual. It had 12 colours: composed from black, violet, green; a darker and a lighter tone of red, blue, yellow, brown and the grey for hill-shading. It is interesting that the cover design was prepared by Gyula Szörényi, the father of the famous contemporary musicians.

The lithographic work was completed in February 1958. The first edition was published in 1959. The print run was planned in 150 000 copies but after 70 000 copies the printing process was stopped. Even from schools the ready copies had to be withdrawn and all copies were smashed, because the Soviet Union, Romania and Slovakia protested and pushed the government to act.

What was the reason? Nowadays it sounds ridiculous but typical of that age, a scientifically based atlas was able to cause international protesting.

- Romanians demanded to appear the national names of the romanized population (p. 5), the Vlachs (pp. 6, 7, 8) and Romanians (pp. 9, 10) on the Balkan, Carpathian and Transylvanian regions.
- Similar demand was the Slavic names appearance (p. 8) and using national name forms of Romanians, Ruthenians, Slovaks on the Map of Hungary in the 19th century (p. 26).
- The names of Slavonia and Croatia had to be deleted from those maps where these appeared as parts of the former territory of Historical Hungary (pp. 22, 26).
- Maps showing the period after 1526 (pp. 16, 17, 18, 20, 21), the borderline of the Habsburg Empire had to be presented with band, demonstrating the loss of Hungarian independence.
- The map, showing Europe in the period of 1815–1849 (p. 21) had to show the borderline of Transylvania as a



Cover of the first edition

part of the Habsburg Empire and not Hungary.

- The Map of Europe in the 15th century (p. 11) used the expression „No-one’s land”, and it had to be deleted because of the Russian claim for this territory.
- The Map of Reformation (p. 15) did not show enough difference between the territory of the German-Roman Empire and Hungary, so bands had to be deleted.
- The Map on World War II, first part, (p. 29) the border of the Soviet Union in 1941 had to be signed with red band, at the same time the representation of Poland had to be reduced only to the areas occupied by Germany. Some other signs and markings had to be executed on the maps due to the actual conquest of the empires.

Moreover to the above mentioned corrections two further modifications were done considering the number of maps. The Map of World War I in Europe (p. 27) being one-sided, reduced to half page, the second half showed a new map of Europe after the war. On a new, one-sided map (p. 32) one could follow the fall of the colonial empire, formerly this page had shown the historical development of Budapest city, displaced to the inner back cover of the atlas.

The appearance of the atlas was conventional. The neat line (size 20 cm × 25 cm) was framed by double blue line (size 21 cm × 26 cm), the grid figures were placed between them. It had a nice fine contour for the linear elements, as a result of the double reduction of the original drawing. The linear borderline was dark blue. Also a classical way of depiction was to use each country’s colour surface for the border band.

The tiny, narrow letter-type was hard to read. This problem referred mainly place names. The text harmony was lost when using the normal and narrow letter-types at the same time in block capitals. The 12 colours, nowadays used rarely, gave sophisticated general impression. The linear elements and the bands could be easily separated and let the application of colours used in many ways on the maps. The descent grey hill-shading reflected the plastic image of relief, improved the graphical effect, but in some cases the names were illegible behind.

The way of name description was basically the same as in practice now. It operated with exonyms and phonetical transcriptions. There was some inconsistency with Greek names. The ancient Greek names were not phonetically written while the names of following ages were written in mixed way. (E.g. Larissa, Larissza, Lárissza).

The projection was supposed to be Van den Grinten arbitrary projection, this way a significant area distortion resulted in the unfortunate image of the Earth.

The stitched atlas was printed on good quality offset paper with high resolution printing technology. The content of the maps were rich, most of them would be acceptable even today. The atlas due to the editorial tradition of classical historical atlases just showed the events of political history, did not contain thematic maps, and restricted only to describing the historical textbooks’ facts on maps.

The period of constancy (1961–1983)

Two years after the smash and improvements the second edition was published in 1961. Due to the imprint page the compilation of maps was finished in August, 1960.

There were not too many changes in the next 23 years in its career. The firm established its own printing house in 1961, so the atlas was not printed in Offset Printing House any more but in the company’s. The number of colours was reduced from 12 to 10 in 1967. The dark brown and the grey were dropped, this way the hill-shading turned to light brown. Further two colours (green and violet) were left and the atlas became 8 coloured in 1971. Instead of light brown the dark brown returned, from this point the hill-shading got dark again till 1990. The frequent reduction of colours and hill-shading was not successful considering the neat graphic image.

The year of transformation (1984)

This year was the first with significant transformation. The number of pages increased from 32 to 48, the number of maps from 87 to 116. Parallel with it the maps were reworked due to the technology of that age. The complete re-drawn fair draft was kept on astralon sheets. The number of colours did not change but got stronger, forced tones. Instead of orange, green colour returned. The new letter-types (Univers, Times) helped legibility mainly in the case of place names, although their character was simple, rough contoured. The placing and curving of spread names were better in the former atlas. The narrow, half-bold block letters used in the titles were not nice but homogeneous. The narrow, tiny explanatory text of the legend was illegible. As a summary, the content improved but the external appearance changed to its disadvantage, it became a bit strong and rough.

The world projection changed. The grid network of János Baranyi's projection II with its shape and area distortion was favourable compared to the former one. There were changes in transcription of ancient Greek names: these were written phonetically. New maps were added to the atlas and the map contents have been modified in many cases.

The real improvement concerned the structure of the atlas. Beside European history sheets there appeared maps depicting the New World (Indian culture in Central and South America), the United States in the 19th century, Latin America in the 19th century.

There were some maps out-looking to the complete world in different ages (The World in the 9th century, The World in the 15th century, The Countries of the World nowadays). Significant crisis areas appeared on maps (Palestine 1920–1948, Jewish and Palestinian demography 1948–1978, Arab–Israeli Conflicts 1948–1982, Korean War 1950–1953, Indo-Chinese Liberation Movements 1945–1979, Cuban Revolution 1953–1959, Central America 1950–1987).

Brand-new maps dealing with the prehistoric period of mankind summarized the results of new research findings. With these sheets the description of historical ages got complete.

Due to the transformation process comparisons in place and time became possible. Some maps were considered extraordinary in that time. Thousands of students met the image of the Árpád dynasty (medieval) hydrography of the Carpathian Basin before the river regulations. The base map for this sheet was drawn after the original copy dated from 1938 and owned by the Hungarian Royal Ministry of Agriculture. Two maps: the Territory of Historical Hungary before the Trianon Treaty (1920) and the nationality division in the Carpathian Basin became available for students for the first time after World War II. The Map of Hungary in 1886 coloured by counties and the Nationalities in Hungary sheets were placed directly on facing pages. Two maps: Battles of the Hungarian Soviet Republic and The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were dedicated – prior to the separation of the country – to represent the results of the Trianon Treaty. The Map of Hungary after the two Vienna Awards was also the first description of the country published after World War II.

It was very helpful to invite historians with high quality practice skills in teaching. Ottó Szabolcs, Mátyás Unger, Aladár Urbán, Ervin Vladár significantly supported the up-dating and improving works and its rule in education.

The period of improvements (1991–2002)

There was no significant change in the content of the atlas up to 1993, because of economical reasons the number of pages could not be expanded. After the political transformation, the ideological restrictions came to an end, so some sheets reflecting the success of socialism and labour movement got out from the atlas. Important periods in Hungarian history could

appear on maps: the age of dualism or Hungary and Europe between the two World Wars and the consequence after World War II. It is a tiny thing, but reflects the political changes, that the expressions „Before Christ (B. C.)” and „Anno Domini (A. D.)” got accepted in the terminology at that time.

Integrating the new Atlas of Social and Cultural History – being published in 1991–1993 separately – into Secondary School Atlas resulted in important improvement in quality. There was no technical difficulty to combine them because the new atlas was prepared also in French-size (23 cm × 28 cm) and with 8 colours, supposing the possibility of future combination. The only task was to integrate their structure without problems.

Atlas of Social and Cultural History was created by secondary schools’ demand. By the time of 1980’s teachers realized that simple political history mapping has lost its interest. Most of the thematic maps of the new atlas succeeded to fill the gap in culture, religion, science, art and economy but many of the demographic maps should have been placed into a demographic atlas, too special for secondary school studies. The pages around the maps were depicted by hand-made authentic pen-drawings, more than hundred tiny graphics showing objects, buildings, artworks with names, date and place of their exhibition.

The 40-page atlas consisted of 103 maps and 61 maps were replaced to the expanded version. Luckily the a.m. special demographical maps spread out.

As a consequence of increasing extension it was possible to work out some new themes. There was an old debt in edition to represent Transylvania in the 17th century, or the maps on reformation / counter-reformation, or the rise of Japan in the 19th century. The combined atlas with its 80 pages did not show homogenous image because its 183 maps were edited in different periods of time but the external appearance was significantly improved by the graphic elements, the paper quality turned better from offset paper to art-print paper and to mention at last but not least: to the coloured cover.

Due to the expanded volume the orientation became difficult while using the atlas. For this reason an index, consisted of approx. 10 000 names, was added in 1997. These additional 25 pages resulted in a too thick booklet for simple stitching bound so an extra hard covered bound was prepared, designed by a professional graphical studio. This way, finally the external appearance matched to the rich, worthy content.

The atlas had to be reworked again in 1998 to 4 colours because of economical reasons. The already rastered intermediates had to be re-rastered, so the quality of mapping got a bit worse.

The year of reform (2003)

After 40 years counted from the first publishing, for the Millennium the atlas had been expanded by 2.5 × volume, its content improved and increased. The external appearance got worse, the intermediate materials got old, its technology got old-fashioned. There was a strong necessity to rework it. The only way to proceed was the application of digital technology. From year to year the re-compilation was not necessary but the application of digital technology made the further expansion and up-dating possible.

The atlas had been improved with not only the former two-three decades’ events but the ancient ages, too. Some themes appeared on separated sheets, some others were shown on bigger maps.

Maps formerly neglected, missing from political or technological reasons, returned to the atlas. Its content was improved with the following topics: Carpathian Basin before the Hungarian conquest, Trianon, Revolution of 1956, Fall of the socialist world system, South-Slavish war, Parliamentary elections in Hungary, Hungarian population outside the borders. There was more emphasis put on the events outside Europe: US, China, Self-Government of Palestine, and there were 33 thematic maps inserted to widen the variety

of the economical, demographical, religious, population maps and sketches of battles. The index was expanded with approx. 1000 names and an 18-page chronology was added with Hungarian historical data parallel to neighbouring countries' and continents' events in the same periods of time.

The total volume of the atlas consisted of 148 pages, with 251 maps on 96 pages. The trim size got smaller: 20 cm × 28 cm (A4 size) and considering its educational purpose the environmental aspects resulted in the use of chlorine-free art-matt paper.

There was a complete change in style. The inherited elements – recalling former German cartography, while the original descent image was lost as a result of the constant colour reduction – have disappeared. New outlook, up-to-date mapping skills and neat colouring characterized the artwork. The colour shades were tasty and let the content dominate. Differences caused by the integration of two atlases came to an end, it got a homogenous edition image. The descent grey hill-shading was applied only in the cases where the content needed or sometimes just as decoration.



Page from the first edition



Page from the edition 2003

The brown graphics in yellow background fit better to the new design. Their setting was in harmony with the maps, not separated, and provided a tranquil image. The new colouring, the new symbol design was made available by the digital technology.

The setting of maps reflected harmony, and the fine narrow frame was not disturbed by breaks. The neat size was smaller but compensated by smaller scales. The page lay-outs were not divided by framed titles, text blocks. The index figures, letters, grid numbers were placed at the edges within the frame, for this reason hard to notice.

The coastlines and water contours are not as precise as in the original atlas as a result of re-drawing. In some cases due to inattention, mistakes may occur. E.g. the Volga River is depicted in the ancient history sheets according to the present waterline unlike it was in the original atlas.

The symbol of the borderline has been changed, the band is applied only if it was necessary due to the content.

János Baranyi's projection IV has an optimal distortion, its shape fits to the pages. Maps on Earth, mainly the hill-shaded ones, show a better image.

The maps of each page are unified by a common title placed outside the frame. Within the frame the titles are lettered by thin, narrow legible minuscule or bold types, not disturbing the theme.

In general, the letter types and sizes have been successfully applied even on the maps and also in additional texts and explanations in the atlas which resulted in a clear, legible image



Coastline from the first edition



Coastline from the edition 2003

The atlas as source of new knowledge in education

The first and last edition seems to be two independent publications. But considering the transformations during the 46 years between the two editions, reflected with high resolution and the connection between the original and the descended work is easily recognized. Continuity is proved when 38 maps can be still recognized from the original atlas.



The same map from the first edition and from the edition 2003 of the atlas

The real value is hidden in the fact that from simply representing historical events the atlas became the source of new knowledge in education. Maps are generally considered to depict objects, or spatially describe phenomena, events. This atlas is a good example of the opposite. Representing different territories of the World, through the thematic pages, over the comparison in space and time, makes it possible to draw conclusions, recognize proceed in history. The rich map content is completed by graphics, data, and chronology that makes map comparisons easier. Along with an index the work itself is able to reflect a historical age. These advantages have been recognized and resulted to award this atlas with HunDidac Prize in 2003 and allowed to use it at the two-level final exam in secondary schools. The competent and skilled use by the students gives a way to improve their knowledge, systematically complete their experience in history.

