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ETHNIC MAPS IN DIPLOMACY – TRIANON 1920

BOOK OF THESIS POINTS

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The purpose of my doctoral thesis is to find the maps used during the Trianon peace conference following the first world war, to analyse and compare the mapping methods used on these maps and to evaluate the role of the maps made with different intentions and interests in determining the outcome of the peace conference.

1. My research methods.

1.1 I reviewed the maps made for the peace talks ending the First World War, both made by the victors as well as by Hungary. This work was done in both Hungarian and foreign map collections.

1.2 I examined the history of those Hungarian maps that were found in collections of the victor countries and determined when a particular map arrived in the country and if it was taken to the peace talks by that country. I examined the literature of the time and also read the letter written by the Hungarian cartographers to their foreign colleagues.

1.3 I examined the picture these maps painted of the ethnic structure of the territory and evaluated how and to

what extent this picture varied on the different maps made by the cartographers from the different countries.

1.4 I examined the different mapping methods used on the maps and determined to what extent this altered the picture conveyed by them. Furthermore, I also examined if a particular mapping method made it possible to read the map in a short time.

1.5 I examined what effect the scale required by the different mapping methods has on the time needed to read the map.

1.6 I examined the possible data sources on the maps that did not define the data source used. I examined if the differing picture shown by the map is caused solely by the different mapping method used, or if it is caused by using a different data source. If no data source could be identified, I excluded the known data sources from the map.

1.7 I examined the personal contacts of Count Paul Teleki, and how he used them to send the maps made for the Hungarian government to the victors. I present the great work made by Teleki on how he managed to make contact with the representatives of the victors.

2. My results

2.1 I uncovered maps in Hungarian and foreign archives and established what maps the various delegations had at their disposal and the picture these maps gave them of the ethnic structure of Hungary.

In order to obtain a broader picture, I considered it important to study the maps the various delegations had at their disposal, their contents, and how these maps got to them. These maps were taken home by the respective countries and can be found in their libraries hence these are available for research. I show that many maps were not only in possession of delegates of the country originating these, but in many instances also in possession of delegates from hostile countries. I examined the picture each map presented to the map user and what view this conveyed to the delegates of a particular country of the ethnic structure of Hungary.

2.2 I tentatively showed how serious political decisions made by the diplomats, were influenced depending on

which ethnic structure shown on the maps they accepted as true.

Maps of the historical territory of Hungary did not only convey a different picture due to differing subjective views of the map makers, but also due to the mapping methods used on the maps. It was impossible for a political decision maker – even if he tried to be unbiased – to make an objective and fair decision if he saw only the maps that depicted the geographical population composition inaccurately or in a misleading manner.

2.3 I showed that grave political decisions were greatly influenced by the errors which were were presumably made on the maps in order to justify the ultimate outcome of the decision in Trianon.

a) The large scale maps printed on several sheets which were presented to the decision makers did not allow a rapid overview of the ethnic composition of a region.

The large scale maps which showed the region on several sheets were difficult to oversee because an entire area could not be viewed at once. I am convinced that the

optimum scale for showing historical Hungary is 1:1 000 000.

b) The maps prepared by the countries of the Little Entente were, taking their dimensions into account, were over-generalised and gave a heavily distorted picture.

There were maps where the thematic content was more strongly generalised than the background picture. This confused rather than helped with gaining a clear picture. Overgeneralisation was mostly present on the Czech and Romanian maps.

c) The sources used on the maps made by the victors were outdated, while the source used on the Hungarian maps were the latest datasets available. The victors generally rejected the results of the census of 1910.

The Hungarian cartographers made precise maps and clearly stated that they used the data from the census of 1910, which was the latest data source available. On the

other hand, the maps made by the victors did not use this data source. Those maps made by the victors which did use the census of 1910 as their basis, used a version that was corrected according to the needs dictated by the victors. The details of the methods used to do these corrections are not known.

d) The victors did not use available data on their maps whereas the Hungarian maps contained this.

Without the presentation of the density of population, the densely populated cities are underrepresented, whereas the sparsely populated rural areas are overrepresented. The Hungarians of Transylvania live in cities in proportionally greater numbers than Romanians, hence the illchosen method increased the dominance of the Romanians. The uninhabited regions were sometimes indicated with the same colour as the ethnicity of the adjacent population thus overrepresenting this group, misleading the evaluators. There were maps prepared of Transylvania, where only the uninhabited regions adjacent to Hungarian populated areas were shown as uninhabited, whereas uninhabited regions adjacent to Romanian populated areas were indicated as being

inhabited by Romanians. As this key appeared on their map, the total picture gave erroneous impression that all uninhabited areas were correctly shown. Similar occurrences can be observed on the maps made by the Czechs. The Serb maps, while being manipulative, show a much more sophisticated mapping method. Furthermore, the areas formerly part of Hungary that were claimed by the Serbs had a very different terrain to those claimed by the Czechs and the Romanians, meaning that the question of density of the population was by far not as important as in the areas claimed by the Czechs and the Romanians.

3. Summary

- a) I showed what maps can be found in Hungarian and foreign map collections and the pictures these convey of the ethnic structure of the country.
- b) I have shown how the decision in Trianon was influenced by showing the delegates maps that presented a biased of the ethnic structure which did not correspond to reality.
- c) I show that the maps used to justify the presumably pre-written decision contain cartographic errors. These

are over-generalisation, unknown or obsolete data sources and the incorrect and misleading depiction of densely populated and uninhabited areas. In some cases, the legend was used in a biased and inconsistent manner.

d) I showed why large-scale maps are too complicated and unsuitable for use at conferences.

e) I showed that the American delegation have seen the maps made by the Hungarians before the final decision was made. This suggests the assumption that the delegations of the other victorious countries also saw the maps.

Selection of publications published on the topic of the doctoral thesis (latest first)

1. Jeney János: Magyarországról készített térképek az Amerikai Földrajzi Társaságnál. In: Horváth-Lugossy Gábor – Vizi László Tamás (szerk.): A Magyarországtudományok Intézet évkönyve 2020 Budapest: Magyarországtudományok Intézet (2021) pp. 259–284.
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186–199.
3. János Jeney: Ethnic maps made by István Györffy. In:
Cristina Resende, A. – Jeney, J. (eds.): Symposium on
Atlases, Toponymy and the History of Cartography.
Proceedings of the ICC 2015 Pre-Conference, Rio de
Janeiro, Brazil, 20–21 August 2015. Zürich:
International Cartographic Association (ICA) (2017)
pp. 84–90.
4. Jeney, János: The Role of Ethnographical Maps of
Hungary and Romania at the Peace Talks After the
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Proceedings of the 27th International Cartographic
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de Janeiro, Brazília: International Cartographic Association (ICA) (2015) Paper: 611.html, 1 p.

6. Jeney János: Magyar vonatkozású néprajzi térképek Németországban. Geodézia és Kartográfia 65: pp. 22–25. (2013)
7. Jeney János: Thematische Karten- und Datenbank. Magazin der Hochschule Karlsruhe p. 54 (2010).