

Bereznay, András, 2021. *Historical Atlas of Transylvania*. N.A.: Méry Ratio Kiadó & Kisebbségékért-Pro Minoritate Alapítvány; Bereznay, András, 2021. *Historical Atlas of the Gypsies: Romani History in Maps*. N.A.: Méry Ratio Kiadó & Kisebbségékért-Pro Minoritate Alapítvány.

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The two volumes discussed in this review, *Historical Atlas of Transylvania* and *Historical Atlas of the Gypsies: Romani History in Maps*, could be described as the atlases of the forgotten or neglected Europeans. Together, the two atlases offer an overview of how time has shaped the reality of Transylvania and that of different Gypsy groups (also called *Roma* in some countries) around the world. These atlases are not simply two collections of maps, as many may assume from their schooldays, but rather the result of excellent historical and cultural research, in which written and graphic renditions meet to show the reality of each highlighted period and topic. It is also important to mention the extremely good quality of each map, including a variety of soft colors and clear legends that make them all easy to interpret. The two atlases were created by Hungarian cartographer and historian András Bereznay, who has worked and published extensively in Britain, Hungary and other countries. Both volumes are introduced by Zsolt Németh in his role as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Hungarian Assembly, and he has also previously served as president of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, Minorities and Religion.

The name Transylvania (Hungarian *Erdély*, Romanian: *Ardeal* or *Transilvania*) may be familiar to English speakers as the imaginary land of Dracula. However, Transylvania, a real region situated in Central Europe, has an even more fascinating history than the one invented by British novelist Bran Stoker in the late nineteenth century. *Historical Atlas of Transylvania*, the English version of *Erdély történetének atlasza* (2011), is a key work offering a step-by-step history of this region. The 109 maps of this work are structured chronologically, from the first known facts about and peoples of the region to the present. Each map is far from only a review of borders and main cities or towns in Transylvania throughout history. Rather, the author also presents and analyzes other aspects of the region, such as its distribution of ethnic groups, languages, and educational institutions.

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Throughout time, Transylvania has known multiple invasions and dominations by different peoples and kingdoms, as shown in a simple yet useful appendix entitled Timeline and found on page 233 of the atlas. Having introduced the geography of Transylvania in Maps 1a and 1b, in Map 2, entitled "The first known peoples," the author presents the initial phases of the region. On this backdrop, the arrival of the main two modern nations presently inhabiting the region, namely Hungarians and Romanians, is depicted in Maps 14 and 34. Related to these two nations, Map 27 is of special interest. Bereznay discusses a series of historical facts such as the brevity of the Roman control over the land that is now Romania, including Transylvania, and states that "everything indicates that the birthplace of Romania – as can be identified in the sixth and ninth centuries – was within the sheltered interior of the Balkans" (66). This assertion and the facts referred to in its explanation are all illustrated in the map appearing on the next and opposite page, which shows the limits of the Roman Empire, the duration of its domination of Transylvania, and the documented distribution of Neo-Latin languages in the region during the Early Middle Ages. Reinforcing the author's claim, Map 28 shows that only a small number of the Transylvanian rivers have Romanian (Latin) names, while the majority have names with Hungarian origins, which can be seen as a proof of the earlier arrival of Hungarian-speaking people or groups in the region compared to Romanian-speaking ones. However, changes in the ethnic composition of Transylvania are not new, and Map 57 shows the ethnic distribution in the sixteenth century (Figure 1), while Maps 106 and 107 illustrate several instances of how settlements have changed from having a Hungarian majority in 1250 to having a Romanian one in our days.

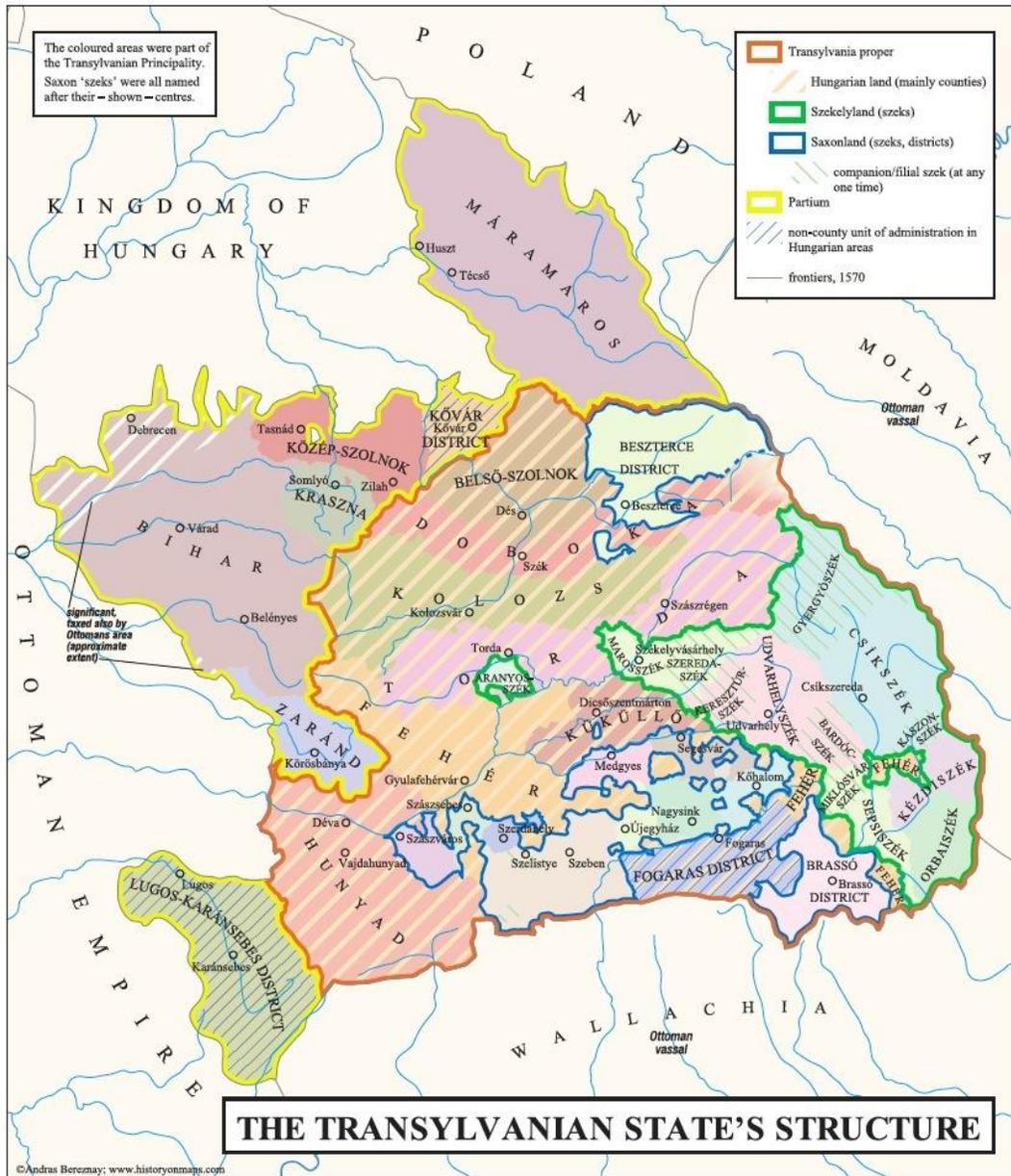


Figure 1. Ethnic and administrative divisions of Transylvania during the sixteenth century. Courtesy András Bereznay

Education played a key role in Transylvania after the eleventh century, following the era after the Hungarian King Ladislaus I had founded the Benedictine Kolozsmonostor (Monastery) Abbey (presently in Cluj-Napoca, Romania). Maps 37 and 62 illustrate all the religious and educational institutions in the region between this moment and the seventeenth century. It turns out that not all the students seeking higher education remained in the region. Rather, Maps 64 and 71 show how, between 1521 and 1848, thousands of Transylvanians completed their studies in German universities, and some even in farther prestigious universities in England and Italy, including Oxford, Cambridge, Bologna and Padua. Another interesting map belonging to the category of places and levels of education is Map 88, which details the state of literacy and the location of secondary and tertiary educational institutions in the region since the end of the nineteenth century and up to 1914. In this period, Transylvanian schools were already divided by language, namely Hungarian, Romanian and German. Bereznay points out that 13.2 percent of the schools of the Kingdom of Hungary, mostly in Transylvania, were Romanian medium-schools, a percentage that almost equals that of Romanian speakers in the country in that period, namely 16.1 percent. Transylvania was also a home for a number of higher-education institutions, including military academies, theological schools, law academies and one university. Higher education at that time was mostly in Hungarian, but there were at least three centers where teaching was conducted in Romanian, and one in German.

The second volume reviewed here, *Historical Atlas of the Gypsies: Romani History in Maps*, focuses not only on the migrations of this ethnic group but also on the evolution of their life conditions in Europe and around the planet. It is interesting to note how in some Western countries the concept of race as an objectionable category and accusations of racism turned so common that anti-racist ideology has become part of their educational, work, and other systems. Unfortunately, not all groups and denominations are defended in the same way and with equal fervor. The Gypsies or Roma are one of those groups that never ceased experiencing a high level of discrimination in the Western world, while much fewer people and organizations are working to end this curse, compared to those defending other groups. The present volume is one of the few valuable tools that can be used to show scientifically how this ethnic group is much more than the few (oftentimes negative) clichés that are firmly attached to them in Western popular culture. The work contains fifty-two clear and highly informative maps that are structured chronologically, moving from the geographical origin of the ancestors of the Gypsy or Roma people to their present places of living all over the world.

The walk through the history of Gypsy/Roma people in mainly Hungary and Romania actually starts with, or in, the Indian Subcontinent. Map 2 shows that most researchers consider the origin of the proto-Gypsies in the area that is today the north of India and eastern Pakistan. Equally interesting are Maps 3 and 4, which depict the migration of this people from India starting from the ninth century to their arrival in Europe sometime during the eleventh century. Maps 5 to 18 illustrate in a very detailed way their expansion all over Europe during the Middle Ages (Figure 2). Roughly from Map 20, we find the first signs of discrimination against Gypsy/Roma people in different regions and countries such as the British Islands (Map 20), the Iberian Peninsula (Map 21), France (Map 22), Germany (Map 23) and Italy (Map 24). Unfortunately, discrimination did not end there, or anywhere. Map 32 provides data about how Gypsies were sold as slaves in Wallachia and Moldavia as late as the 1850s. Maps 45 and 46

show the forced transfers and mass murder they suffered in the 1930s and 1940s, and Maps 48, 49 and 50 show how discrimination and anti-Gypsy ethnic clashes have continued well into the twenty-first century.

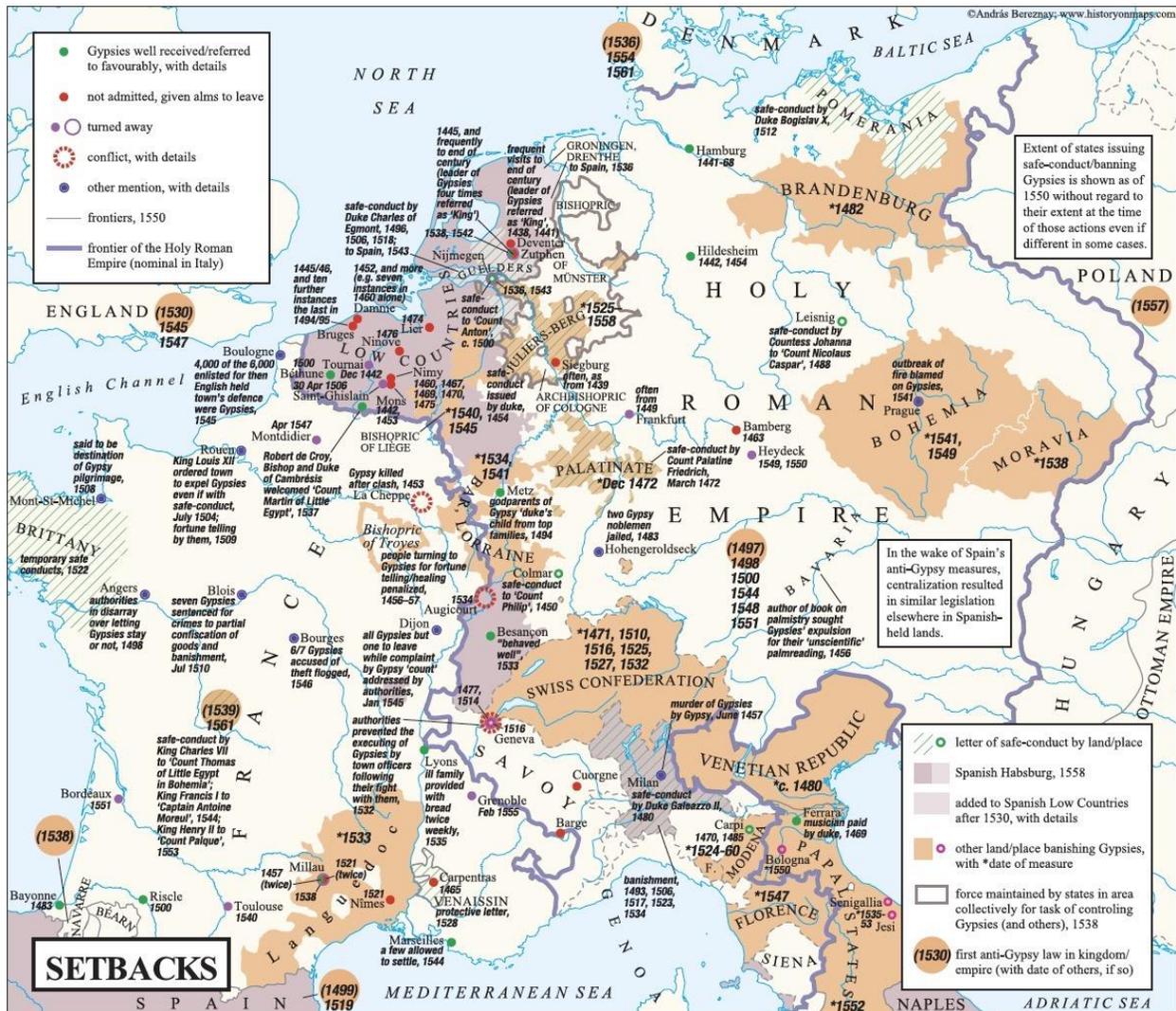


Figure 2. Arrival of the Gypsies to Western Europe. Courtesy András Bereznay

However, this Atlas focuses not only on bad experiences. Map 27, for example, reveals the interesting fact, which is probably unknown to most people, that Gypsies have been appreciated as brave and loyal soldiers in many countries, particularly in Portugal, Sweden, Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. While some of them succeeded in the military, Maps 28 and 29 detail how Gypsy musicians were much appreciated not only locally but also by almost all the rulers of Europe, including Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria, Queen Victoria of England, King Napoléon III of France and Tsar Alexander II of Russia. Bereznay not only lists those rulers who appreciated Gypsy musicians, but he also provides a long list of Gypsy artists, some

of whom have become part of the Hungarian aristocracy, such as János Orsolyás, Jancsi Rigó and Rudi Nyári. The last map, 52, provides an updated account of the current presence of Gypsy groups in the world, with their approximate numbers in each country, as well as a review of their central organizations such as the International Romani Union and other important institutions.

The two volumes reviewed here are not only beautiful books but also extremely useful tools. Very few things have not been included in them. The only additional feature that may have been advisable to include in the *Historical Atlas of the Gypsies* would be the current distribution of Gypsies or Roma people according to their ethnic subgroups, including Kalderash, Kale and others, and their languages, such as Lovari, Beash, etc. In every other respect, these two volumes are not books to simply be read. Each explanation in them has been conceived to be consulted and each map to be observed in detail. Thus, the two atlases enable the readers to deepen or refresh their knowledge based on tangible and quantitative information, rather than on age-old beliefs and widely accepted misconceptions