Including Historic Maps in School Atlases: Potential and Limitations

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Absztrakt

Amióta a nyomtatás lehetővé tette a dokumentumok tömeges terjesztését, rengeteg történelmi térképet halmoztunk fel. Ezek a térképek lehetővé teszik a térbeli folyamatok alapos elemzését, figyelembe véve a történelmi kontextus változásait. Ezek a források azonban ritkán kerülnek be az iskolai atlaszokba, így ezek elsősorban környezetünk mai állapotát mutatják be. E tanulmány célja, hogy feltárja a különbségeket és hasonlóságokat Magyarország atlaszszerkesztése között, ahol a történelmet és a földrajzot külön-külön tanítják; és összehasonlítsa Franciaországéval, ahol ezeket a tantárgyakat egy, szintetizáló tantárgyként tanítják. Elsősorban a történelmi térképek szerepeltetésére (vagy inkább elhagyására) kerül a fókusz ezekben a kiadványokban. Mindazonáltal a dokumentumelemzés során az atlaszok szerkezetének és kialakításának néhány más érdekes megközelítését is meg lehetett vizsgálni.

Abstract

Ever since printing allowed the mass distribution of documents, we have accumulated an abundance of historic maps. These maps allow for the thorough analysis of spatial processes, taking the changes of historical context into consideration. However, these resources are rarely included in school atlases, thus these mainly show the contemporary state of our environment. This study aims to explore the differences and similarities between the atlas design of Hungary, where history and geography are taught separately; and France, where these subjects are taught as one synthetizing subject. The primary focus is on the inclusion (or rather omission) of historic maps in these publications. Nonetheless, some other interesting approaches in atlas structure and design could be explored throughout the document analysis process.

1. Introduction

School atlases are important educational tools in Hungary from the 16th century (Makádi 2022). However, the content of newer and newer school atlas editions often raises debates within the community of Geography and History teachers, not only because they are getting thinner, but also because the ratio of maps and additional graphs and charts seem to change towards the latter's benefit. Moreover, while there are many historic maps available that would complement the explanation (and understanding) of processes in social geography, or how our understanding of the world developed, there are very few examples of including these in the atlases provided for Geography and History education.

This paper's goal is to compare the structure and content of school atlases from Hungary, where History and Geography lessons have almost always been taught separately, with the content of school atlases from France, where these aforementioned subjects are taught in a complex subject aiming for the synthesis-focused understanding of spatial and historic processes.

Finally, a few suggestions were made on how to include historic maps in school atlases to highlight the progress of our worldview or social change alongside spatial data.

Research questions and hypotheses

Question 1: Is there a difference throughout the generations of school atlases in the inclusion of historic maps?

Question 2: Do those atlases, which supplement a curriculum of complex history and geography education, contain more historic maps?

Hypothesis 1: Historic maps have been scarcely included in Hungarian school atlases.

Hypothesis 2: The inclusion of historic maps is more widespread in French atlases, but not very common.

2. Literature review

Defining a historic map is quite a conundrum. According to Piovan (2019) any map that is already published is a historic map, since data collection cannot keep up with the pace of geomorphological and socio-economical changes in the world. Newberry Library's website explains the term the following way: "A historic map is a map drawn or printed in the past that fosters study and comprehension of the geography or geographical ideas of the time and place in which it was produced. A historical map is a modern map made to illustrate some past geographical situation or event. Hence, a map of Boston published in 1775 is a historic map; while a map prepared in 2002 to show Boston in 1775 is a historical map." (2016). In this paper the terminology will be used along the aforementioned guidelines.

Historic maps not only have cultural value these days but can be sources of knowledge in research or in education. In some cases, this means the shift of sediments containing ores, in others, the research of military history or tracing the historically dynamic meaning of certain concepts (Piovan 2019, Berzsenyi 2020). Sometimes, they are the source for urban evolution analysis and the design of monument-heritage conservation (San-Antonio-Gómez et al. 2014), or the basis of researching the changes of agricultural activity in a given area (Pindozzi et al. 2015). It is even a possibility to create more reasonable school districts through the investigation of historic spatial data in education policy (Kelly 2019). But the approach to educational concepts throughout the analysis of the occurrence of a specific map page (and function) is also possible (Kiss–Török, 2022)

Education however should not only view historic maps as tools for policy making, but as resources in curriculum design as well. According to Harley (1990), maps should be interpreted in three contexts: the context of society, the cartographer, and other maps. Maps display how people interact with their environments and peers and visualize how communities and civilizations relate to the world. Thus, a map is an image of the maker's worldview (Pacheco–Velez 2009). As a consequence, when historic maps are used in education, students and teachers are required to analyse the social context and the changing perspectives as well. Since maps are always a simplified version of the world through the lens of the cartographer, students can practice critical thinking and explore possible biases within maps. Furthermore, comparing historical maps and historic naps (e.g. a migration map with a historic railroad map) can be a tool for enquiry-based learning (Bolick 2006). According to Jacob-Rousseau (2009), the integration of historic resources into geography teaching allows the analysis of long-term spatial processes with the methods of geographical research. However, he highlights the risk of bias, since historic maps in an unfortunate combination can lead students to false conclusions.

When teaching history, exploring the change of borders in light of the political journey of a given nation can be intriguing (Parellada et al. 2020). In addition, border changes show possible imbalances in the infrastructure of a country, e.g. how the railroads changed in Hungary after 1920. In higher education, historic maps even provide an opportunity for introducing critical cartography, analysing how political frameworks appear on historic maps, and raising awareness about maps as active social constructors (Moss 2015). This has been realized by Danzer and his peers, who published multiple workbooks containing maps to teach world and American history with (Danzer et al. 1991, Danzer 1998). To sum up, there are many possibilities to include historic maps in education, both as resources and as tools for skill development.

Title	Publishing information	Number of pages	Number of historic maps	Number of topographic maps	Number of thematic maps	Number of non-map elements
Kozma Gyula: Iskolai atlasz középtanodák, polgári és kereskedelmi iskolák számára	Dobrowsky és Franke Könyvkiadóhivatala, 1885	74	0	17	35	2
Dr Kogutowitz Károly Iskolai Atlasza	Magyar Királyi Állami Térképészet, 1931	36	0	7	23	3
Földrajzi Atlasz Általános Iskolák Számára (Geography Atlas for Elementary Schools)	Kartográfiai Vállalat, 1957	32	0	12	17	6
School Atlas in English	Cartographia, 2019	178	1	30	323	224
Történelmi atlasz középiskolásoknak (High School Atlas for History)	Oktatási Hivatal, 2021	96	1	0	183	11
Földrajzi atlasz középiskolásoknak (High School Atlas for Geography)	Oktatási Hivatal, 2021	80	0	26	99	20
Középiskolai földrajzi atlasz (High School Atlas for Geography)	Cartographia, 2022	159	0	45	206	65

Table 1 The conter	t analysis of schoo	l atlases from l	Hungary

3. Methods

The main method of this research was document analysis. This method is common in research related to social sciences, and it is also successfully used in educational history research for the systematic analysis of documents, for the assembly of textual and illustrative mosaics, and for the exploration of the context of the historical past (see Berzsenyi 2024).

The content of school atlases from the 19th century, up until the most recent ones were analysed based on their content. This analysis included the search for any historic maps within the content of a given atlas, and assuming the ratio of types of maps (topographic or thematic) and other contacts (e.g. diagrams, charts, satellite images) in the edition. The analysis cannot be assumed as comprehensive, since there were limited resources available. The choosing of atlases therefore can be viewed as a convenience sampling, since only those could be included which were available either as physical copies or in a digital format in any of the online repositories. In addition, some of the Hungarian atlases had no digital copies, but reviews exist, which list the content of the publication in detail.

During the analysis, maps were regarded as historic if they fit the aforementioned hypothesis. In the case of topographic and thematic maps, the standard understanding of these in Hungarian educational context was used. The label "topographic maps" were used for those maps which are included in the atlas to

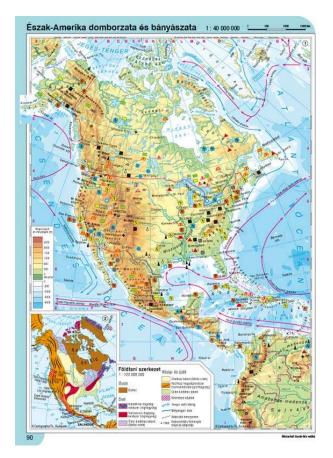


Fig. 1 Topographic and thematic map of North America in the Cartographia Atlas (2022)

primarily showcase the terrain of an area, with the inclusion of borders and natural resources, the latter becoming customary in the Hungarian school atlases in the 20th century. Maps were labelled "thematic" if they display additional data or themes for the purpose of explaining processes, showcasing social constructs, or the spatial distribution of phenomena. Non-map elements include graphs, photos, satellite images, tables and illustrations.

4. Results

School atlases in Hungary

The earliest atlas, which was thoroughly described in the Hungarian Geographical Review, after a state educational reform in 1868 made the usage of school atlases compulsory (Makádi 2022), was Kozma's atlas for middle schools and grammar schools (Hanusz 1885). This atlas did not properly match the current curriculum and was only suitable for teaching the current state of political geography, with little insight to physical geography. This atlas had several newer editions with minor modifications, but the approach remained the same. A few decades later, the "Pocket Atlas", edited by Bátky, published in 1916, shows a different concept. It contains articles related to the maps, and it intends to supplement the geography material of formal education. In this publication an article by Littke analyses the economic development of Great Britain and France between 1887 and 1912 (Horváth 1916), and it supposably contains older maps to highlight the historic approach of the content. From the next decades, an atlas which would contain historic maps or even approach was not found. The School Atlas from 1931 (Kogutowitz 1931) contains mainly political maps. The Geography Atlas for Elementary Schools is analysed thoroughly by Nagy (1958), and it mostly consists of topographical and climate maps - befitting the curriculum of the age, focusing on physical geography at elementary level, but not highlighted the historic changes of geomorphology through old maps. This is especially interesting, because geography and history used to be taught as one complex subject in the 17th and 18th centuries (Makádi 2020), but this seems to have not affected atlas design.

The case with modern atlases is very similar to their earlier counterparts. The School Atlas in English (2019) is a comprehensive book consisting of four chapters: Geography, History and Civics, Social Studies, and Anglo-Saxon Culture. It is intended to be a practical solution for Hungarian–English bilingual education, which is rather widespread in the country. In this case there is only one map highlighting historical aspects: Eratosthenes' world map from the 3rd century BC, digitally redrawn. In addition, there is an image explaining the Ptolemaic geocentric system (p. 53). Both are in the History and Civics chapter. In this chapter there are many timelines attached to the more than 100 historical maps (included in thematic maps), but the contemporary cartography is consistently omitted.

The 2021 editions of Hungarian school atlases, which are the most accessible for students, contain one historic map in the High School Atlas for History. This particular map is a digitalized and reduced (in size) version of Teleki's Red Map (1919). Interestingly, all the maps illustrating the distribution of ethnicities within the Carpathian Basin use the colouring of the Red Map, no matter which period is examined. However, there are two pairs of satellite images in the geography atlas, showing change over time, one to illustrate the disappearance of Lake Aral, and one which shows Mount St. Helens before and after its eruption in 1980.

The 2022 atlas edition by Cartographia is nearly twice as thick as the one issued by the state. It contains twice as many topographic maps, nearly twice as many thematic maps, and nearly three times as many illustrations. Despite the generous amount of content, maps or images highlighting historical aspects are not included in this edition. This atlas contains three ethnicity maps of the Carpathian Basin, from which one is coloured parallel with the Red Map in this atlas as well, even though it does not include that map. Regarding the seemingly high number of thematic maps in the Cartographia atlases, it is important to mention that most topographic maps are augmented with a series of thematic ones for each continent, illustrating geological and climatic data (Fig 1).

School atlases in France

According to the French national curriculum (2013), history, social studies, and geography are taught as a synthesising complex subject in secondary education. In this curriculum maps are specifically indexed as a tool for the development of critical thinking. However, the separation of thematic and topographic maps in these publications is extremely difficult, since these focus on social, geological and historic phenomena combined, thus a different grouping was applied focusing on the specific and dominant content of each map. Still, the differentiation of topographic, historic and thematic (political, social or historical) maps and non-map elements is consistent.

Interestingly, in the early school atlases, geographical and historical maps are presented separately. The 1851 edition of Le Nouvel Atlas de Géographie (Cortambert 1851) contains 64 maps or illustrations on 70 pages. Among these, 24 are historical maps, but historic maps were not included. There are 4 images explaining terrestrial and celestial phenomena, 27 show political maps, and 9 maps are topographic. A bit later, in 1865, the Atlas Universel d'Histoire et de Géographie was published (Bouillet 1865), which is a very interesting publication. From its 619 pages 526 contain texts explaining and describing maps and spatial

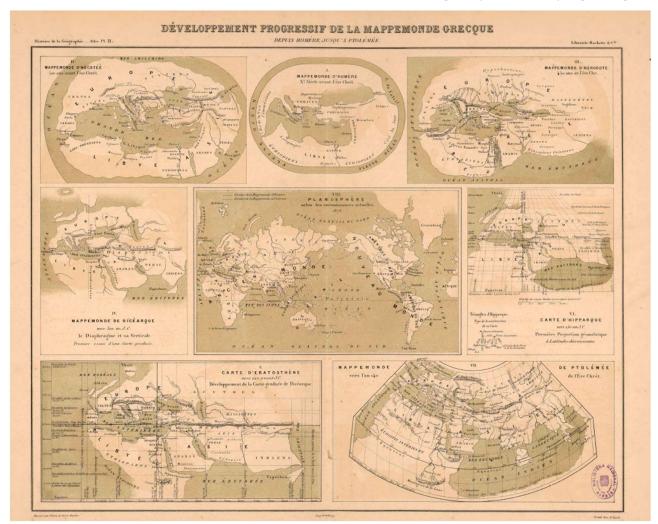


Fig. 2 The development of ancient Greek world maps, de Saint-Martin (1874), p. 8

historical concepts. It contains 86 maps, to supplement the texts, from which 41 are historical, 44 are political (with some mountain ranges being visualised), and there is one topographic map, of France. A few years later de Saint-Martin's Atlas dressé pour l'Histoire de la Géographie et des Découvertes Géographiques (1874) was published, which was intended for enquiring mind, rather than education, however it would serve very well as an educational tool. It contains 13 pages of maps and contrasts re-drawn historic maps with the contemporary knowledge of the world with very short and straightforward textual explanations. It contains 8 maps from ancient philosophers and geographers, 14 (mainly world) maps from the Middle Ages, and Ortelius' Mappa Mundi on a separate page. Each section is organised by age, and the structure of the old maps is compared with the actual knowledge of the world at the time (Fig. 2).

A bit later an atlas for university studies was published, the Histoire Générale de l'Europe par la Géographie Politique (Lefebvre 1886), which was a translation of an atlas by Edward A. Freeman from Oxford University. This atlas contains 74 historical maps in colour, and short explanations comparing changes in an examined period, but the original, historic map representations were omitted. In the Atlas de Géographie Ancienne, de Moyen-age et Moderne (Grosselin-Delamarche 1897), which was another atlas for university students, the 109 maps are separated into 3 topics: ancient geography, geography of the Middle Ages, and modern geography – the latter separated into "historical maps", and "physical and political maps" sub-

categories. But even maps explaining historical concepts (Fig. 3) use the same legend as maps displaying contemporary data, and historic maps were not added to the collection.

Unfortunately, atlases from the early 20th century were not available in the repositories used. From the examined 8 textbooks and atlases from 1985 two contained tasks for comparing historic and modern maps, and interestingly enough, these books connect and parallel the early map technologies to children's early map making and interpretation skills (Chevalier 1993). However, the complementary school atlas (Bonnerot– Guevellou 1981) only contains historical (25), political (40) and topographical (11) maps, and some supplementary illustrations, despite the preface specifically stating that the purpose of the atlas is to enhance thinking skills related to the understanding of spatio-temporal processes.

From modern atlases a supplementary atlas for high school was examined, titled La France. Atlas géographique et géopolitique (Beucher et al. 2022), which specifically aims to explore spatial changes over time. It follows the guidelines of the previously mentioned atlases: its 373 pages dominantly contain textual explanation of processes. In addition, there are approximately one hundred thematic maps, mainly illustrating contemporary data, with a few series of maps showing changes of the past decade. Even though it provides a very thorough socio-spatial analysis of France, without historic or even historical maps, the development of critical thinking skills is questionable via this methodology.



Fig. 3 Europe in 1715. In: Grosselin-Delamarche (1897), maps 66, 67, 68

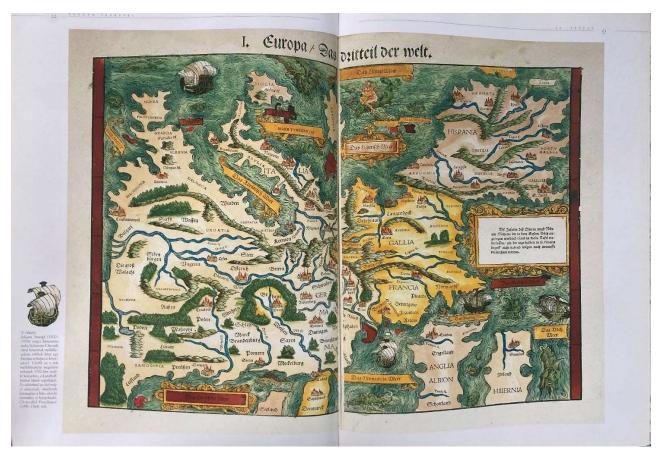


Fig. 4 Historic map page. In: Európa térképei 1521–2001, Plihál (2003)

5. Discussion

Even though this analysis of school atlases cannot be considered comprehensive, some patterns can be identified. The benefits of historic maps in the teaching of spatio-temporal process analysis have been recognised both in Hungary and France rather early, in the 19th century. However, the inclusion of these maps in school atlases scarcely happen, and the reason behind this still needs to be researched.

One possible explanation of the phenomena – though it is mere speculation – that with the early printing and editing technologies it would have been rather vexatious to include copies or renditions of historic maps within the atlases, and even more troublesome for the creators of the atlas to get access to these original documents. This might have led to a tradition of school atlases which do not contain historic maps. Maybe a more logical explanation is the lack of space within a school atlas, since these are intended to be handbooks, thus the number of maps that can fit is very limited, and providing information of the contemporary world might have been valued more by the editors and, as it seems still is. Yet, the benefits of including historic maps within geography and history education cannot be denied, but it might be problematic for teachers to find reliable sources of historic maps.

A good opportunity for interactive historic map analysis in education is using oldmapsonline.org, which provides a generous collection of old maps dated and organized by region. However, it often shows illustrations (sometimes in perspective) labelled as maps, which is a grave methodological concern, and in most cases the legend is omitted from the maps. Furthermore, the geo-referencing of old maps is often problematic, thus the torsion of the maps on this platform might hinder their understanding. Another option is using collections of old maps, but these do not always contain the legend for the maps, which might hinder understanding and analysis (Fig. 4).

Conclusion and limitations

To conclude, it can be seen that the structure and approach of school atlases are very diverse in both countries. The first hypothesis appears to be validated, as there were and are very few historic maps included in school atlases. It is an interesting finding, however, that the newest Hungarian school atlas for history includes Teleki's "red map", and consistently uses its legend throughout all other ethnicity maps of the Carpathian Basin – even though Teleki's usage of red hues has been a question of debate since the past century.

Regarding the second hypothesis, unexpected conclusions can be drawn. Even though the French curriculum emphasizes the analysis of spatio-temporal processes as part of critical thinking skills, and there are examples of historic map inclusion in textbooks (but not in atlases) from the late 20th century, newer inclusions of historic maps were not found. Nevertheless, the structure of atlases in France is very different from the Hungarian ones. While in the 19th century there were atlases including explanatory texts in Hungary as well, nowadays atlases contain mainly charts and maps. In France however, they kept the tradition of textual analysis and explanation attached to maps, including the information on spatial changes, or in some cases including pairs of maps with historical and contemporary data. It is fascinating how the two parallel traditions from the 19th century developed so differently during the past two centuries.

As limitations of the research, it has to be mentioned that only a sampling of the school atlases was possible, as these resources are rarely included in the collections of libraries or online repositories. It is also important to note that comparing the types and amounts of maps within the atlases of the two countries was not an easy endeavour simply because of the different data visualisation traditions in the two countries: while Hungarian atlases contain maps for the description of terrain, French atlases rarely contain a map solely for this purpose, and often social data is shown on a map of topography.

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