

### **3 Historical geographical features of the project space**

The project space, coming from its spatial size, geographical determinations and topographic location, has been integrated into the historically changing east-west and north-south demographic processes and power shifts of the continent. The radical changes of the state-making processes in the region have almost been continuous in history, states and empires were born and ceased to exist in course of history. In all historical periods several possible divisions of the region appeared: a single state covering the whole of the Carpathian Basin, the division of the regions in the basin among several powers or the integration of the whole Carpathian Basin into a much larger empire.

From the aspect of the Carpathian Mountains in the narrower sense this issue raised the dilemma whether the Carpathians would be the long-term boundary, the border of a single state covering the Carpathian Basin, or of a basin divided among several states, or a “simple transport obstacle” within a large empire.

The Carpathians influenced not only the direction of migration of different groups and peoples but also the long-term processes of both the mountainous areas and the systems of basins largely determined by the Carpathians. We also have to see, however, that the Carpathians have almost never been an unmanageable obstacle in history; it has been permeable at almost all the time for all peoples and later for all armies.

#### **3.1 Spatial constituents and consequences of the long-term historical processes**

Until the great rearrangement induced by the modernisation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, several state forming and demographic historical processes had occurred in the region, of which we only indicate a few.

- In the region in the broader sense, the central and southern processes of the European continent had almost always had an influence since the early times.
- The large part of the Carpathian Basin had first been integrated within the frameworks of the Roman Empire as part of the European economic, social and population development processes. In the last period of the Roman Empire, the bigger part of the Carpathian region was thus the periphery of this great southern integration. The external border of the empire was mostly the River Danube, in smaller eastern border sections were made by the range of the Carpathians. In the territory of the province of Dacia, the Romans started the utilisation of the large part of the basin by exploiting the natural assets, minerals of the area. The development of the outer areas had different devel-

opment direction and character than the basins. In the north-western part, different Germanic tribes appeared, Slavic tribes in the northern parts, while different eastern peoples gathered in the eastern foreground of the mountain range.

- During the great Eurasian migrations, the Carpathians were not an obstacle, almost all mobile ethnic groups were able to pass the mountains. Fights were made for the rule of the basins and not for the mountain range.
- The real power issue after the defeat of the Roman Empire was whether the basin should be subordinate to one single power or several smaller powers, or maybe would become part of a new macro-regional organisation in the long run.
- The Hun Empire gradually fell into pieces after 453, so at the collapse of the West Roman Empire (in 476) disintegration became typical in the region.
- The power unity of the Carpathians in the broader sense was re-created by the Avar people. Around 600, the Avar Empire organised the major part of the Carpathians and the basins into one single political unit. After the breakdown of the power of the Avars (by Charlemagne), the region gradually turned into a conflict zone among the Eastern Frankish Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Great Moravian Empire and the Hungarian tribes arriving from the east.
- From the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Hungarians determined to a large extent the most essential processes within the Carpathian Basin and on the inner edge of the mountain range. (On the outer edges the Germans, Moravians, Poles, in the eastern territory for a short period the Besenyő, later the Kuns tribes, permanently the Romanians, in the south the Serbs became dominant people of the territory.) In the Hungarian spatial view and land use, the mountain range was not very much appreciated, actually the Hungarians consciously created a macro-regional frontier zone in the large part of the mountain. The watershed on the ridges of the Carpathians gradually became the state borders of the Hungarian motherland, and these functions were preserved for almost a thousand years, within changing political, power, spatial etc. relations.
- The Hungarian ethnic area was not radically expanded to the higher elevations, so the indigenous population of the mountains (Slavic), the immigrating Romanians and the continuously and consciously settled down Germans acquired partly homogeneous ethnic areas.
- In the present western areas of the project space (Ostmark, Steiermark) a Hungarian–German rivalry, in the eastern areas (Halics, Lodoméria) a Hungarian–Slavic competition took place for a longer period. In the Hungarian–Polish border region, a peaceful co-existence was more typical.

- In the eastern and southern part of the region there was a partition and a gradual segregation between the western and the eastern Christian Church. The church segregation proved to be stronger than any other social characteristics for centuries.
- In 1241–1242 a significant part of the region was conquered by Mongol troops, but only the eastern areas remained under Mongol (a super power of Asia at that time) influence for a longer time.
- The Hungarians occasionally expanded their rule to a larger part of the Carpathians, or joint kingdoms (of the Czech, the Hungarians and the Poles) created a formal power unity over the whole of the region.
- Due to the specific order of the feudal spatial dependencies, already in the early times the formation of smaller, partly autonomous or “awarded” areas started (Silesia, Little Poland, Halics, Lodoméria, Wallachia, Moldva). These region in turn could become specific units with own identity.
- With the gradual expansion of the Turks, first the southern parts of the macro-region, after 1526 gradually other parts of the bottom of the Carpathian Basin were under Turkish rule. The Carpathian region became a battlefield between Christians and Muslims for a long time.
- The appearance and expansion of the reformation led to a sharp division of the former Catholic Church within the region. In the traditional areas of the Orthodox Church the reformation had hardly any success.
- In 1648, at the beginning of the formation of the new administrative order of Europe, the largest part of the Carpathian region was under Turkish rule, smaller parts belonged to the Habsburgs and the eastern and north-eastern parts to Poland. (The Principality of Transylvania had a special position in political, power and spatial structures.) After 1686 the Turkish Empire was gradually pushed out of the core areas of the Carpathian Basin, but kept its rule over the southern edges and the eastern parts of the Carpathian area.
- Ethnic territories have not been always sharply separated, many different combinations of the co-existence of ethnic groups could have been observed: Germans, Moravians, Hungarians, Slovaks in the Little Carpathians; Germans, Slovaks and Poles in the southern part of Silesia; Poles, Slovaks, Hungarians and Germans in the northern frontier zone; Poles, Ukrainians/Rusins, Hungarians and Romanians in north-east etc. The development of the situation of the Jewish population of Galicia was an issue of an independent ethnic area all through the modernisation period.
- By multiple division of Poland (in 1772, 1793 and 1795) a significant part of the Carpathian area was annexed to the Habsburg Empire, while the eastern parts remained under Turkish rule before the independence movements of the new small states.

- Napoleon temporarily rearranged the territorial administrative division of the area several times, after his defeat the Habsburgs, the Prussians and the Russians became dominant power factors.
- Between 1815 and 1848 a relative stability of the ruling powers characterised the area (although Kraków with its narrower neighbourhood was annexed to the Habsburg Empire in 1846). The major part of the region belonged to the Habsburg Empire, its eastern and southern parts to the Ottoman Empire. Smaller areas were integrated into the German and the Russian Empire.

As a result of the long-term historical development, significant development disparities evolved among the different areas of the Carpathian's Region by the end of the feudal times. The social, economic, cultural, civilisational level basically decreased or gained a special content from west to east.

### **3.2 Spatial processes of the project region in the time of modernisation**

Revolutions and wars of independence in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the social, economic and technical (railway) development gradually also created a new situation in the Carpathian region. The Austrian–Russian co-operation – later rivalry –, and the Russian–Turk opposition determined the major directions of the transformation.

After the next great European rearrangement (Berlin Congress in 1878), the major part of the region became territory of the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy. In the south, Serbia integrated some areas, in the East, the newly independent Romania did so. From the present project space, only negligible areas belonged at this time to the Russian and the German Empire. This period is very interesting because not only political borders and relations changed in the area but the modernisation was also accelerated. The major part of railway constructions were implemented within the new state borders, and the political relations had a great influence on the direction of the railway, the frequency and quality of the lines (in the Russian areas even the rail gauge). Railway construction started in the western part of the Carpathian Basin already before 1840, followed by construction around the capital city of Hungary in 1847 (Pest–Vác, Pest–Szolnok).

The spatial policy differences between the two parts of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (Austrian Empire and Kingdom of Hungary) appeared mostly in the construction of the railway network. The debate over the Vienna or Budapest centred railway network was solved by making Vienna the centre of the Austrian areas and Budapest the railway centre of Hungary, covering the largest part of the Carpathian Basin. The railway network had state political (military strategic, de-

fence), economic policy (single market), and national policy (integration of the ethnic minorities to the majority) considerations in the region.

For the Carpathian region it meant that the Austrians built their own large-capacity railway along the external ridges of the Carpathians, defining the movements from Bukovina to Vienna, while the Hungarians constructed railways crossing the borders of the Carpathians in the most necessary cases and places, only.

From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century until World War I a dominant feature of the larger part of the project space was the belonging to an actually single economic space, the region was not cut by tariff borders. Capital, architecture styles, labour etc. could freely move within the Austro–Hungarian Monarchy.

A very important factor of this period was the conscious development and strengthening of the imperial centres and the national capitals. The rivalry of Vienna and Budapest created two modern large cities similar to each other in many respects. The capital cities of the smaller countries (Bucharest, Beograd) developed extremely rapidly into modern large cities. In the case of Kraków, Bratislava, Lemberg and Chernovic, provincial centres became the focus of development.

World War I basically rearranged the state territories and state borders in the region. For the Carpathians, one of the most important changes was the birth of Czechoslovakia, a country that created new administrative frameworks for the northern part of the Carpathians. The other turn of large importance was the increase of the territory of Romania, in the middle of which ran the central and the southern main ranges of the Carpathians. After the re-foundation of Poland, the northernmost areas became parts of the Polish state again. Austria lost its influence in the macro-region in the broader sense; it became a definitely Alpine country with negligible Carpathian areas left. Hungary kept its areas in the bottom of the Carpathian Basin and lost its areas in the Carpathians. Within the new Yugoslavia, Beograd became much more interested in the Dinarides than in the Carpathians.

The period between the two world wars was not favourable for inter-state co-operations among the winners and losers of World War I. The Little Entente (Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia) protected its territorial gains against the Hungarian territorial revision efforts. In the Carpathian region, even the Czechoslovakian and the Romanian railways were connected, although the single development of the Carpathian region was never on the agenda. The formerly single economic space was now split by tariff borders, national economic policies etc. into special and allegedly sovereign parts.

Within the new state borders, the transformation of the networks (railway, road, settlements) started in accordance with the new state borders. The role of Budapest and Vienna was naturally depreciated in the new processes. The role of

Prague became more important in the Czechoslovakian part of the Carpathians, the significance of Bucharest in the Romanian parts of the mountain range. New roads and railways were built, according to the needs of the new capital cities.

During World War II a considerable (and short-term) rearrangement of the state territories and state borders took place again. The new spatial configurations, however, were short-lived. After World War II practically the whole area was under Soviet military rule. Essential spatial rearrangements took place again, Poland was “pushed” westwards, and after the war the Soviet Union acquired the territory of Transcarpathia, thus became a stakeholder in the Carpathian Basin.

The iron curtain was pulled down after 1945 in the western areas of the Carpathian region, as well, especially after the Soviet Union withdrew from Austria in 1955. The relationships between the neighbouring capitalist Austrian and the socialist Hungarian, Slovak and Czech territories were interrupted. (Later the Austrian–Hungarian relations developed more rapidly than the Austrian–Czechoslovakian ones.)

In the relationship among the respective socialist states – also in the Carpathian region – isolation became dominant, many of the formerly functioning rail and road connections among the states ceased to exist. The connections between the neighbouring populations were especially weak along the borders of the Soviet Union. In many respects it is justified to talk about a “socialist iron curtain”.

After 1989 and 1991 new transformations, partly rearrangements of states occurred in the region. The disintegration of the Soviet Union left Ukraine as an actor interested in the region. After the secession of Czechoslovakia, Slovakia became a fully Carpathian country. In the decreased territory of Serbia, the significance of the areas belonging to the Carpathian project space was appreciated.

In 1993 the Carpathians Euroregion was established, a formation that integrated the eastern areas of the project region into an organisational framework. The co-operation integrating the border regions of several countries had a difficult start and its results have been very moderate so far. Euroregions were established in the whole of the project space, now there is no area in the region that is not a member in at least one Euroregion.

The systemic changes did not solve overnight the effects of the many decades of isolation, especially in the southern areas where the Yugoslav civil war resulted in new restrictions and new border locks.

In 1995 Austria became an EU member, making the European Union a significant stakeholder in the region. Different European Union programmes between Austria and the neighbouring Carpathian areas were launched. The enlargement of the European Union in 2004 made the larger part of the project space EU territories. After the enlargement of 2007 it is only the Ukrainian and the Serbian parts of the project space that are outside the borders of the Union. In the major part of the project space it is the EU rules that prevail now.