Words in Space and Time

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Acknowledgments

I began toying with the idea of Words in Space and Time: A Historical Atlas of Language Politics in Modern Central Europe in the mid-2000s, when I was still busy finishing my monograph The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe (Kamusella 2009). Even though at 1200 pages this monograph was already quite extensive, I could not hope to fit into it all the material I had gathered. Another problem was that it is difficult to maintain the reader’s interest in such an encyclopedic tome. Then it dawned on me that the wealth of information may be more effectively presented in the form of maps, which also makes it possible to show crucial spatial relations among various elements of the story. On the other hand, employing cartography for this task would allow for subverting and problematizing the typically twentieth-century use of this technology for fortifying national master narratives across Central Europe’s ethnolinguistic nation-states.

Paul Robert Magocsi’s renowned Historical Atlas of (East) Central Europe (1992, 2003, 2019) offered an immediate inspiration. In 2010, I had the good luck to meet him during the conference on Slavic Languages in Migration organized by the Institut für Slavistik at the University of Vienna. Professor Magocsi (and earlier, in 2009, Anngret Simms, University College Dublin, in her capacity as an editorial board member of the Irish Historic Towns Atlas) forewarned me that mapmaking was extremely labor-intensive and costly, while there were no customized grants available for covering such expenses, especially commissioning the drawing or generating of maps with professional cartographers. Unfortunately, nothing has changed in this regard during the last decade. Most grant-making institutions either push a historian to acquire a mapmaking skill (which takes decades to hone) or refuse to pay for a cartographer’s services.

That is why I appreciate all the more the understanding and foresight of these few grant-making bodies, which going against the grain of received knowledge and preconceptions, decided to support the research and mapmaking for this atlas. Importantly, the initial two grants that I used to launch this project, came in 2008–2009 with no strings attached, namely, from the Start-up Fund for New Lecturers and the Long Room Hub Research Initiative Funding Scheme, both based in Trinity College Dublin. After a longish hiatus, in 2013, I received a small research grant from the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland. However, a breakthrough came the following year when the grant board of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) agreed with my opinion that purchasing a cartographer’s services is an instrument for analyzing and presenting research data, hence in essence not different from securing a spectrometer for a physicist or a specialized computer for DNA sequencing. The RSE Arts & Humanities Small Grant enabled me to produce more than half of the maps in this atlas. My home School of History at the University of St Andrews kindly offered some further research support for necessary mapmaking. However, in a couple of cases, rather than sitting on my hands, I decided to press on with the project by paying for cartographic services from my own pocket.

In its initial stage, the project gained much from the discussion, which at the invitation of Motoki Nomachi 野町 素己, was held in 2011 in the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center (SRC) at Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan. The discussants, namely, Yukiyasu Arai 荒井 幸康 (SRC), Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly (University of Victoria,
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British Columbia, Canada), Catherine Gibson (European University Institute, Florence), Michael Moser (University of Vienna) and Motoki Nomachi (SRC) shared their opinions in the form of articles that were usefully gathered in the edited volume *Central Europe through the Lens of Language Politics: On the Sample Maps from the Atlas of Language Politics in Modern Central Europe* (Kamusella, Nomachi and Gibson 2017). The plans presented in that volume predicted about 70 to 80 maps for this atlas, but the aforementioned problems with securing appropriate grants for mapmaking convinced me to stop this project at 40-odd maps in order to finally conclude it after an entire decade in the works.

Another source of inspiration for the atlas were ad hoc conversations during the exhibitions of sample maps. The first exhibition, thanks to the kind invitation extended by Motoki Nomachi and Akihiro Iwashita 岩下 明裕, took place in 2009 at the Start-up Conference of the Global Center of Excellence Program on Reshaping Japan’s Border Studies, held at the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center. Five years later, in 2014, at the invitation of Kiyoushi Hara 極東 (Toshi University of Art and Design, Tokyo), Liangun Bao 包 联群 (University of Tokyo) and Xing Huang 黄行 (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), a broader range of the by then completed maps was exhibited during the conference on Standard Norms in Written Languages: Historical and Comparative Studies Between East and West, held in the Institute of Mongolian Studies at the University of Inner Mongolia in Hohhot, China. In addition, while still at Trinity College Dublin, in 2009, I used the concept of the atlas and some initial maps as a visual backdrop for my talks on “A Steel Hand in a Kid Glove: Language in Modern Central Europe” and “Language and Politics in Postcommunist Europe,” delivered in the framework of the 7th Lewis Glucksman Memorial Symposium for the Long Room Hub at Trinity College Dublin.

In 2009, the renowned Polish-Jewish historian of Central Europe, Jerzy Tomaszewski (University of Warsaw), always eager to support innovative research, put me in touch with cartographer Robert Chmielewski, who drew all the maps. For the full decade, Robert patiently stood by this project, always at the ready to help when an opportunity appeared for producing more maps. On top of that, I appreciate his meticulousness with the seemingly never-ending rounds of corrections, attention to detail, and efforts to make all the maps objects d’art in their own right.

For the sake of depicting Central Europe as seen through the lens of a specific language and culture, I devised maps executed in selected languages and their scripts. With Agata Reibach (Kondrat) (University of Warsaw) and Eleonora Bergmann (Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw) I collaborated on the Yiddish-language map, with Dorin Lozovanu and Ion Duminica (both from the National Academy of Sciences of Moldova) on the Moldovan-language map in Cyrillic, with Michael Talbot (University of Greenwich) on the map in Osmanlca (Ottoman Turkish), with Andrzej (Andreas) Roczniak (Silesian National Publishing House—Ślonsko Nacyjno Oficyno) on the Silesian-language map, with Lav Subarić (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Neo-Latin Studies, Innsbruck) on the Latin-language map, and with Walter Zelazny (University of Bialystok, Poland) and Tomasz Chmielik (Akademia Literatury de Esperanto) on the Esperanto-language map. Despite numerous attempts, it proved impossible to develop a map of Central Europe in Romani, or the language of the Roma, who at 12 million are present-day Europe’s largest stateless ethnic group (national minority). However, Elena Marushiakova and Veselin Popov (University of Saint Andrews and Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) came to my succor, and together we developed the map of Roma settlements in Central Europe. All the collaborators (with the exception of the Moldovan-language map) also contributed the explicatory texts that accompany the aforementioned maps. In addition, to meet the ERC regulations, Elena Marushiakova and Veselin Popov declare that their text “Roma Settlements in Central Europe, 2009” was written in the framework of the research project “RomaInterbellum: Roma Civic Emancipation between the Two World Wars,” which received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (grant agreement No 694636). This text reflects only the authors’ view, and the agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

In 2009, in Sarajevo, my friend and colleague, Kurt Bassuener (with whom I graduated from Central European University in Prague) arranged a meeting with Ahmet Alibasic (Faculty of Islamic Sciences, University of Sarajevo), who introduced me to Bosnia’s Slavophone literature in Arabic letters. Significantly, this experience made me more attuned to the fact that a variety of scripts may be employed for writing different languages. I understood that actually, any language can be written in any script.

A word of thanks goes to my colleagues at Trinity College Dublin who helped me with my research, especially, to Balazs Apor, Justn Doherty, Ewa Grzegorczyk, Guido Hausmann, Clemens Ruthner and Sarah Smyth in the Department of Russian and Slavic Languages, and to Moray McGowan and Jason McElligott in the Long Room Hub. After the conclusion of the first batch of maps, Amelie Dorn (Centre for Language and Communication Studies, Trinity College Dublin) proofread them, which made me aware of how much care and time must be lavished on maps in “postproduction” in order to make them work properly. In the course of researching, designing and executing further maps, helpful advice and suggestions were kindly shared with me by Ágoston Berecz (European University Institute, Florence), Peter Burke (Cambridge University), Andrea Graziosi (Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II), Iaroslav Hrytsak (Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv), Krzysztof Jaskulowski (SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw), Mateusz Kamusella (Wrocław), Mariusz Markowski (Opole), Akiyoshi Nishiyama 西山 晖義 (Kyoritsu Women’s University, Tokyo), Rok Stergar and Jernej Kosi (University of Ljubljana), Hienadz Sahanovič (Minsk and Warsaw), Bardhyl Selimi (Tirana), Timothy Snyder (Yale University), Jolanta Sujecka (University of Warsaw), Paul Wexler (Tel Aviv University) and Leonid Zashkilnyak (Ivan Franko National University of Lviv).
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It would have taken considerably longer to complete this atlas without David Stonestreet’s gentle but persistent encouragement. László Kontler andBalázs Trencsényi (both from Central European University) kindly recommended the manuscript to Linda Kunos, Senior Editor of Central European University Press. I was delighted to learn that she immediately was interested in publishing this atlas. Indeed, it is a serendipitous occurrence that the publishing house’s name is shared with the atlas’s title, showing what a fitting home it is for this book. I thank Tertia Gillett for careful editing and John Puckett for compiling the index.

Last but not least, I thank my wife Beata, daughter Anna Maria, and mother-in-law Maria for their love, understanding, patience and forbearance. Thankfully, at the screen of my computer, our cat Mochi 餅 distracted me at times, so at long last I could reconnect with my family.

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