



Briefings on Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria

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This essay contains briefings on three middle-income Eastern European countries – Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. All three countries are recent entrants into the European Union (EU) – Hungary joined in 2004 and Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. Each briefing focuses on political, economic, and cultural history and on indicators of recent socio-economic development. I originally wrote the briefings for Budapest to Tehran By Train, a program operated by Stanford Travel/Study in March-April 2016.

The historical section of each briefing sets out key turning points in history for the country during the past two millennia. I look at how the Hungarian, Romanian, and Bulgarian nations were formed, how they fared in World Wars I and II, and how they have evolved since 1945. The primary socio-economic indicators are levels and growth rates of income per capita, adult literacy, life expectancy, and rankings in the United Nations' Human Development Index, the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, and Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index. I append a time line, a bibliography, and a description of sites that I visited in Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria.

A Briefing on Hungary

Historic Trends in Hungary (5th century-1914). Hungary, with an area one-tenth larger than Maine, has a homogeneous population of 9.8 million. Nearly all Hungarians, 92 percent, are of Magyar descent, two percent are Roma, and the remaining 6 percent belong to other ethnic groups. About half are Christian (37 percent Catholic and 14 percent Protestant), and the others do not identify with a religion.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hungary_topographic_map.jpg>

Contemporary Hungary

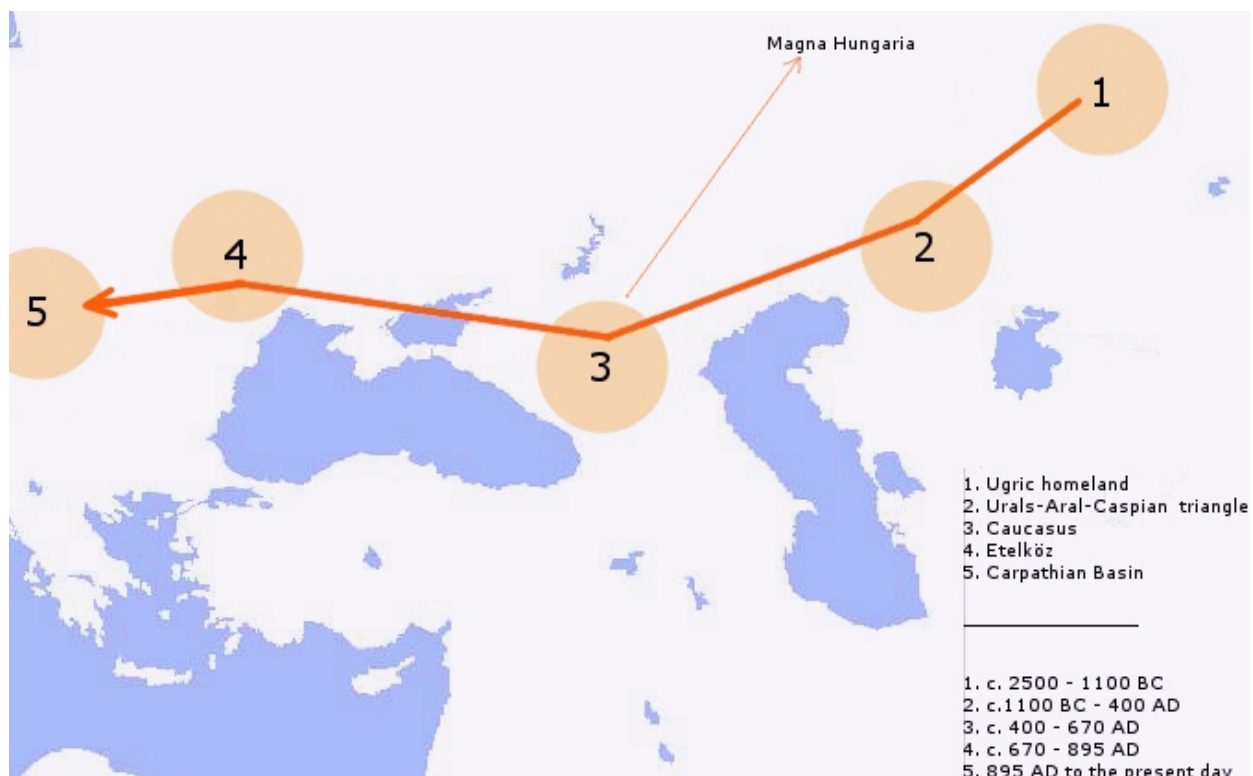
Two steppe nomadic Turkic tribes from Asia briefly lived in the Hungarian Plains. The Huns arrived in the 420s CE, but disappeared after their leader, Attila, was killed in 453. The Avars came in the 550s and were finally defeated by Charlemagne in the 790s.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Central_and_Eastern_Europe_around_700_AD.jpg>

Central and Southeastern Europe, c. 700 – Avar Confederacy (Red), Byzantine Empire (Purple), and Magyars (Yellow)

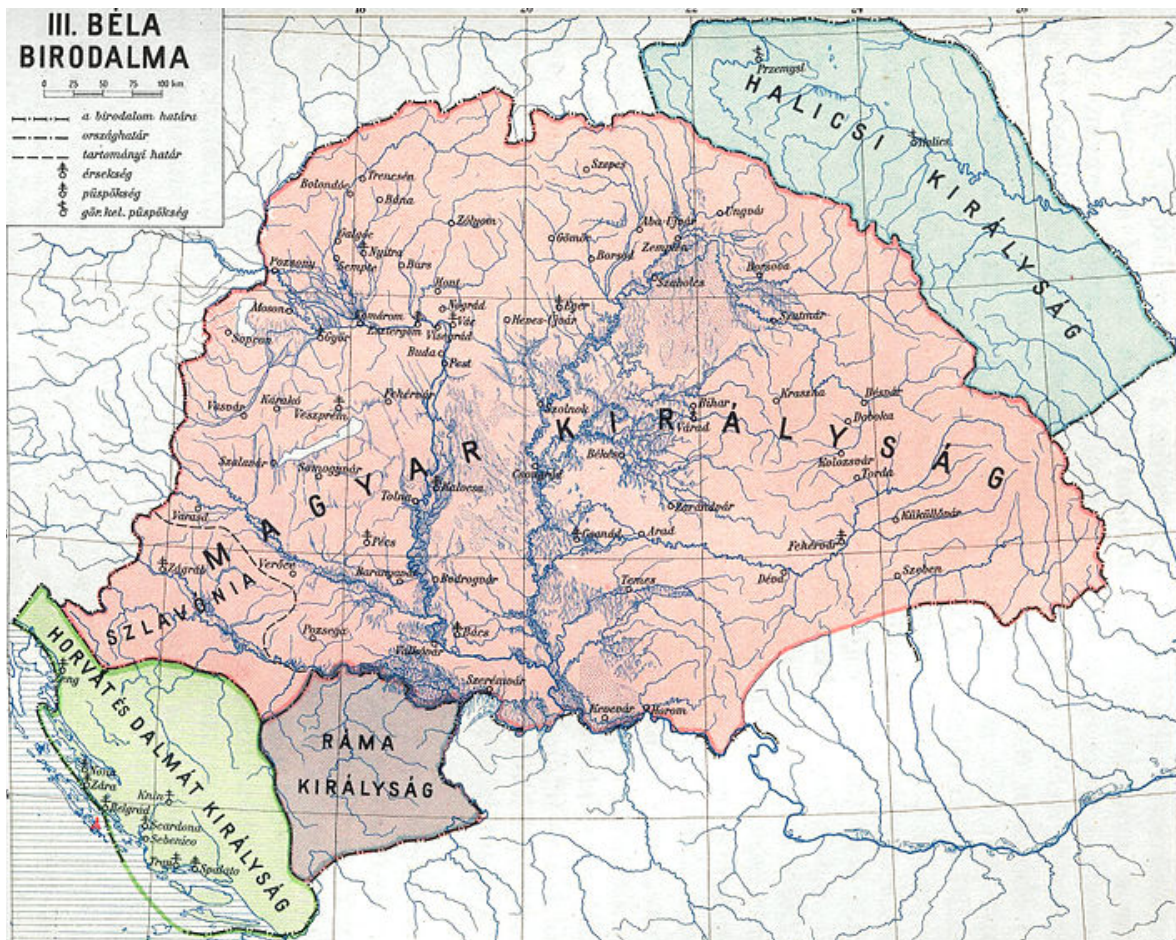
The Magyars, who speak a Finno-Ugric language related to Finnish, arrived in Hungary from Russia in the 890s. Their leader was Arpad, who formed the first Magyar dynasty. Within a century, the Magyars created a large, agrarian kingdom, and in the early 11th century King Istvan (Steven) converted to Christianity.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Migration_of_Hungarians.jpg>

Magyar Migrations and Settlement of Hungary (Area #5), 890s

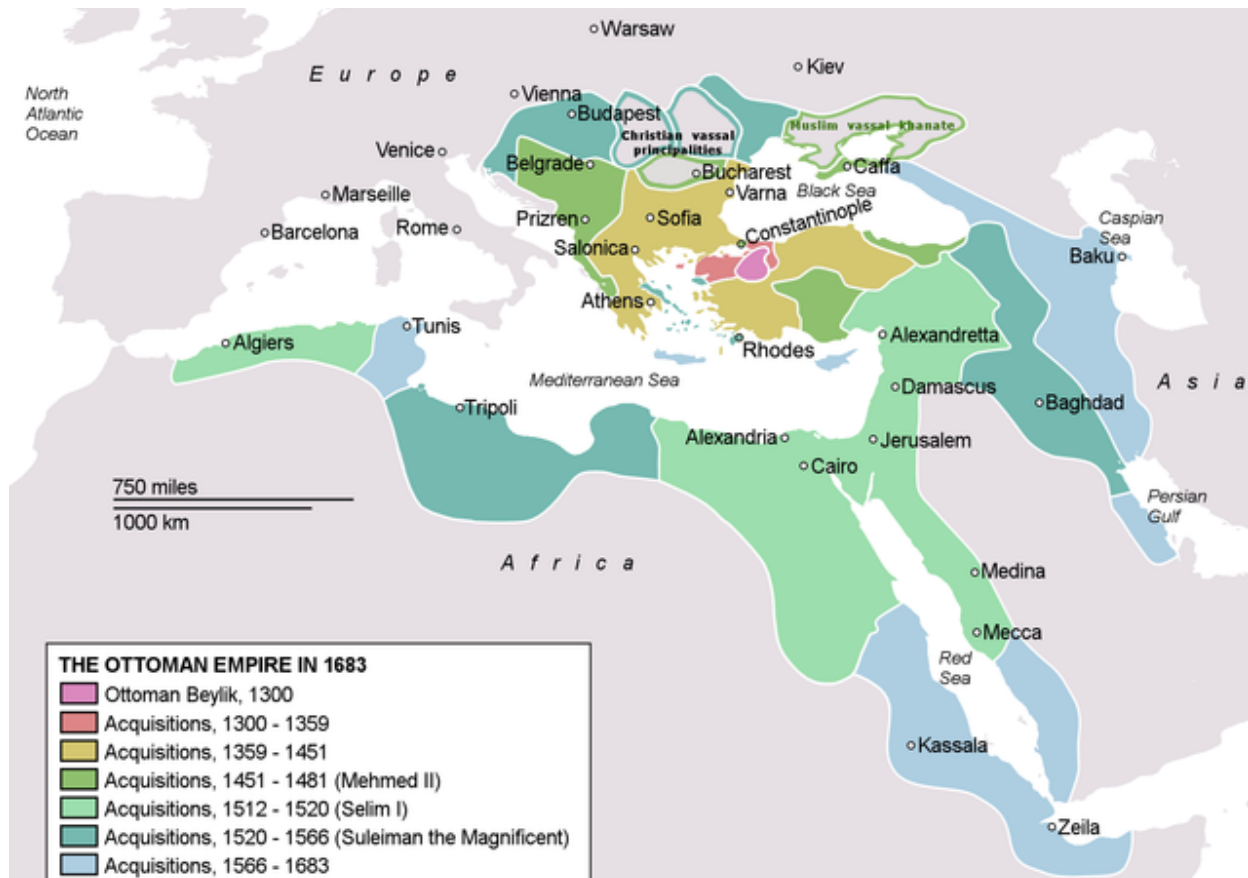
The Magyar kingdom included modern Hungary, Slovakia, Transylvania, and, after 1102, Croatia. The prosperous Kingdom of Hungary and Croatia exported beef, wine, and salt.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hungary,_Croatia,_Bosnia_and_Galicia_in_the_12th_century.jpg

The Kingdom of Hungary Under King Bela III (late 12th century) – Hungary (Pink), Croatia (Green), Bosnia (Gray), Galicia (Blue)

The expanding Turkish Ottoman Empire took over the Balkans and then conquered much of the Kingdom of Hungary after winning the Battle of Mohacs (1526).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OttomanEmpireIn1683.png>

Hungary (including Croatia) in the Ottoman Empire, 1526-1699

Magyar kings continued to rule northwestern Hungary as part of the Habsburg Austrian kingdom. A Christian coalition defeated the Ottoman army at the Battle of Vienna (1683), and the Habsburgs

claimed all of Hungary (including Transylvania and Croatia) after the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Battle_of_Vienna_1683_11.PNG>

*Ottoman Army Losing the Battle of Vienna, 1683 –
Stemmed the Ottoman Advance in Europe*

In the 1848 Revolution, Hungarian nobles declared their independence, but Austria suppressed the revolt with the aid of Russia. Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph (ruled 1848-1916) agreed in 1867 to the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, dividing the

Habsburg Empire into two parts. The Hungarian king ruled Hungary, Transylvania, Croatia, Slovakia, and the Banat.

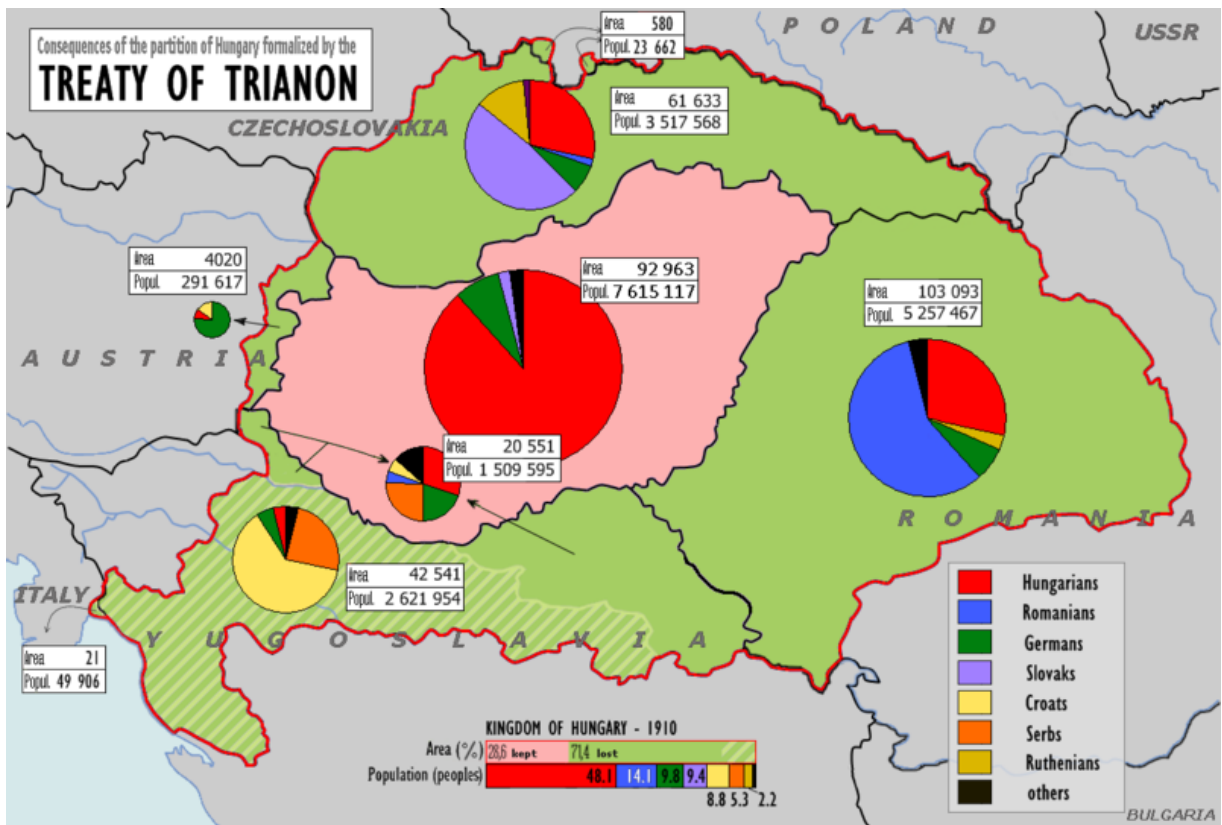


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Austria-Hungary_map.svg

Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy, 1910 – Hungary (#16, including Transylvania, Slovakia, and the Banat), Croatia (#s 5 and 17)

Historic Trends in Hungary (1914-present). In World War I (1914-1918), Britain, France, and the United States defeated Austria-Hungary (in alliance with Germany and the Ottoman Empire). In the

Treaty of Trianon (1920), Hungary lost two-thirds of its land and almost 60 percent of its population (which fell from 18 million to 8 million), and 3.2 million Magyar speakers were transferred to other countries.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Magyarország_1920.png

*Treaty of Trianon (1920) –
Hungary Lost 10 Million People, including 3.2 Million Magyars*

During the inter-war period, truncated Hungary was afflicted by revisionist desires to regain territory and Magyar people, economic pain during the Great Depression, and the rise of ultra-right-wing political

movements, especially the Arrow Cross. Hungary joined Germany, Italy, and Japan in the Axis alliance during World War II and temporarily regained much of its lost territory, including part of Transylvania.



- Hungary during World War II -

- Hungary in 1920-1938
- Territories annexed in 1938
- Territories annexed in 1939
- Territories annexed in 1940
- Territories annexed in 1941
- Borders of states within Axis-controlled Europe (as of 1941)

Source: Wikimedia Commons available at

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hungary_in_1941_with_territories_annexed_in_1938-1941.png>

Territories Annexed to Hungary, Vienna Accords, 1938-1941

After Hungary and the Axis lost the war, the Soviet Union imposed Communist governments throughout Eastern Europe, including

Hungary. A reign of terror in Hungary lasted five years (1948-1953). In the 1956 Revolution, Imre Nagy and his colleagues courageously tried to renounce Hungary's alliance with the Soviet Union (the Warsaw Pact) and declare neutrality. But Soviet troops invaded to suppress the revolt and re-impose strict control.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hungarian_Revolution_1956_-_Sovjet_tank_with_Hungarian_flag.jpg>*

*Soviet T-55 Tank, Flying a Hungarian Flag –
Hungarian Revolution, Budapest, October 1956*

Janos Kádár (1956-1989) gradually reduced state controls (“Goulash Communism”) to try to offset economic failures. When the

Soviet Union imploded in 1989, Hungary dissolved the Communist Party and established the Republic of Hungary.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:J%C3%A1nos_K%C3%A1d%C3%A1r_\(fototeca.iiccr.ro\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:J%C3%A1nos_K%C3%A1d%C3%A1r_(fototeca.iiccr.ro).jpg)>

*Janos Kádár, Hungary's Leader (1956-1989) –
Goulash Communism Led to a Doubling of Per Capita Income*

Hungary shifted its political orientation toward Western Europe, joining NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004. The democratic country also began the difficult economic transition from central-planning to market-orientation. Viktor Orbán and his FIDESZ (Federation of Young Democrats) party won the elections of 1998, 2010,

2014 and 2018. Orbán moved FIDESZ to the center-right and gradually crushed his political opposition on the left. As a populist and nationalistic prime minister, Orbán has been charismatic and bombastic and a vocal opponent of EU refugee/migration policy.

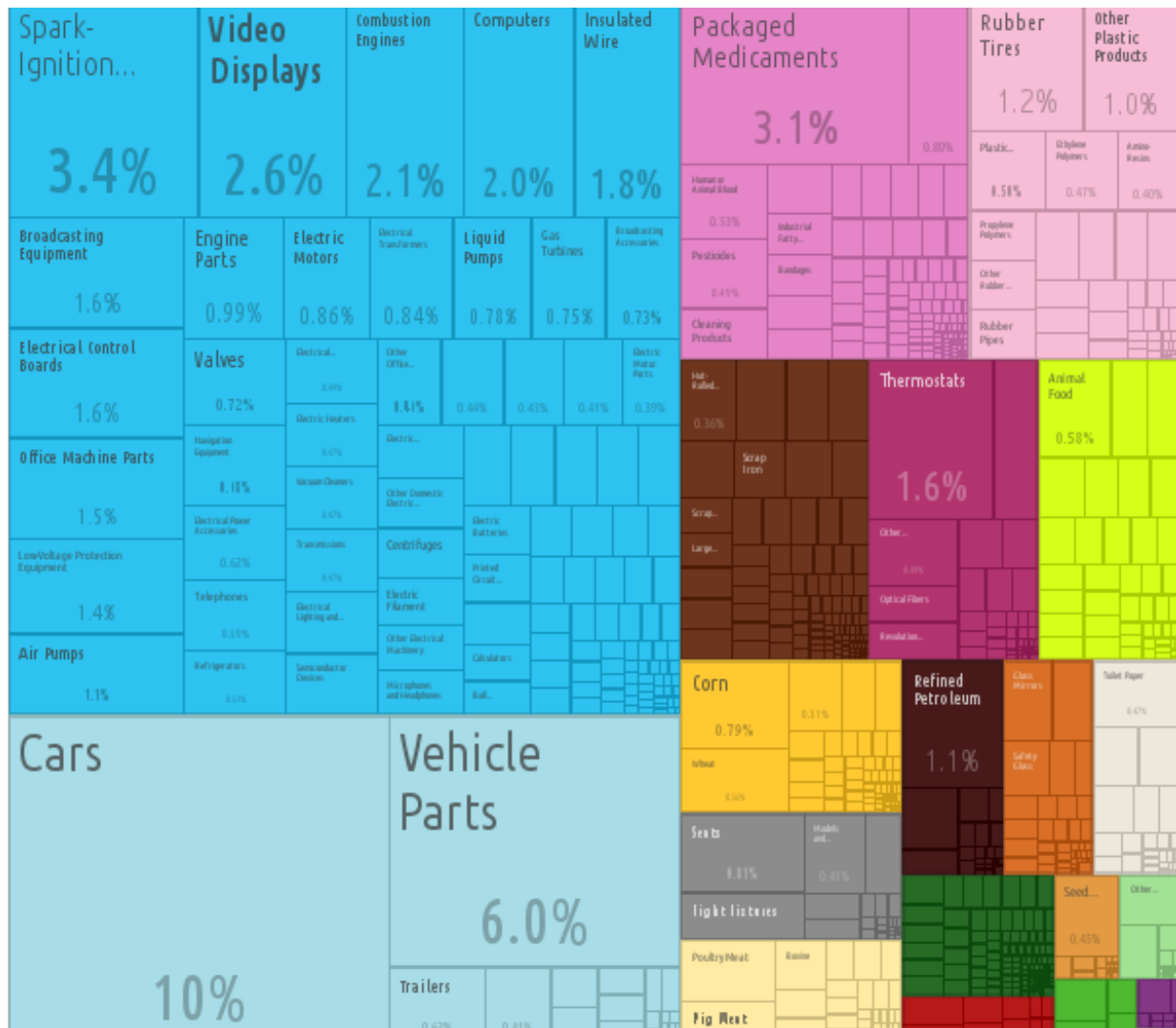


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Orb%C3%A1n_Viktor_2011-01-07.jpg>

*Viktor Orbán –
Hungary's Controversial Prime Minister (2010-present)*

In 2019, the rate of adult literacy in Hungary was 99 percent, and the life expectancy of its 9.8 million people was 76 years. The level of income per capita in 2019 (measured by the World Bank in current PPP prices) was \$34,507, which was 74 percent of the European Union

average and 53 percent of the US level. Hungarian income per capita (in constant PPP 2017 dollars) grew at an annual rate of 3.3 percent between 1993 and 2008, declined by 6.5 percent in 2009, and then resumed growth at an annual rate of 3.1 percent (2009-2019).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hungary_Exports_Treemap_2017.svg

Proportional Representation of Hungary's Export Earnings in 2017 – Leading Items Were Electronic Equipment, Autos, and Vehicle Parts

The World Bank's estimate of the share of Hungarians with incomes beneath the national poverty line was 12.3 percent (2018). Hungary ranked 40th of 189 countries in the UNDP's Human Development Index (2019), 52nd of 190 countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index (2019), and only 70th of 198 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (2019).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hu-map.png>>

Contemporary Hungary – Rebounding from Seven Centuries of Travails

A Briefing on Romania

Historic Trends in Ancient and Medieval Romania. Romania's 19.4 million people reside in a country that is 95 percent the size of Oregon and two-and-a-half times larger than Hungary.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Un-romania.png>>

*Contemporary Romania –
Five-sixths of Its Population Is Ethnic Romanian*

The ethnic make-up of modern Romania is quite homogeneous – about five-sixths of Romania's population is ethnic Romanian, 6 percent

is Hungarian, 3 percent is Roma, and 8 percent is of other nationalities.

The contemporary break-down of professed religious faith reflects Romania's historical development and location – Orthodox Christian, 82 percent; Protestant, 6 percent; Catholic, 4 percent; and others or not specified, 8 percent.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chiuiesti,Cluj-DSCF1172.JPG>>

Most Romanians (82 Percent) Are Orthodox Christians

A hotly contested debate has arisen over the origin of the Romanian people, whose language is in the Latin language family.

More than two millennia ago the Dacians, an Indo-European-speaking

people related to the Thracians, inhabited the plains between the Danube River and the Carpathian Mountains. The Dacians grew wheat and barley and mined gold and iron. Roman Emperor Trajan conquered Dacian King Decebalus after two fierce wars (101-102 and 105-106 CE), and Rome ruled the Province of Dacia until 271.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roman_provinces_trajan.svg

The Roman Empire At Its Peak Under Emperor Trajan, c. 110 CE – Recently-conquered Province of Dacia in Magenta Color

Most Romanian historians believe that, after the Romans departed, a fused culture, the Daco-Romans, continued to occupy the region,

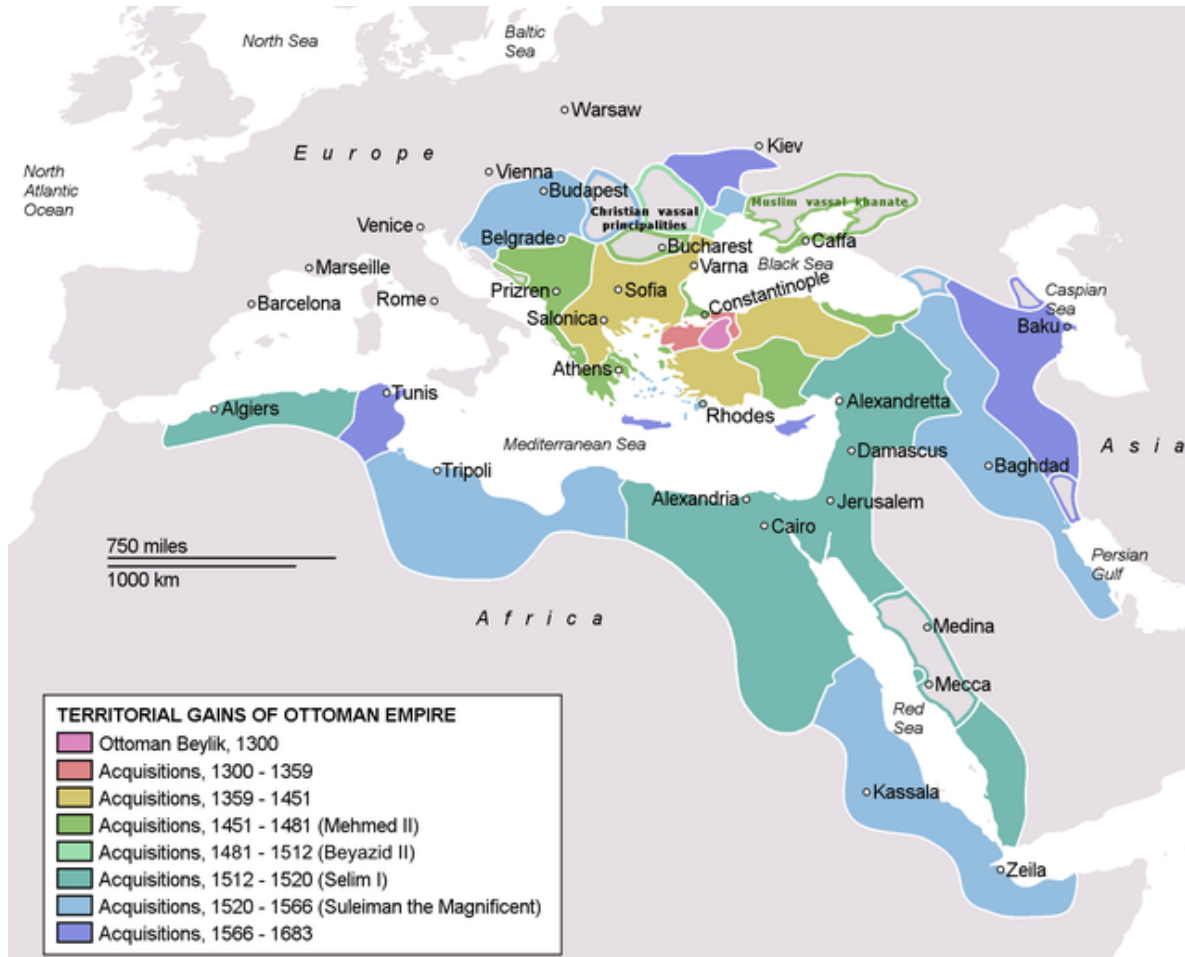
retreating into the Carpathian Mountains to avoid invaders, and that this group intermarried with Slavs and evolved into the Romanian people about 1000 CE. Many other historians, especially those of Hungarian origin, dispute that interpretation, citing the lack of archeological or written evidence of continuous Daco-Roman occupation. That group of historians postulates, instead, that the Romanian people likely received their Latin-based language from the Vlachs, an ethnic group scattered throughout the Balkans whose language is Latin-based. The political significance of the debate centers on which group earlier occupied Transylvania – the Daco-Romans (from the 3rd century), predecessors of modern Romanians, or the Magyars (from the late 9th century), ancestors of modern Hungarians.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Th%C3%A9odore_Valerio,_P%C3%A2tre_valaque_de_Zabalcz,_Romanian_shepherd_from_Z%C4%83bal%C8%9B,_1852.jpg

*Vlach-speaking Romanian Shepherd –
Painting by Théodore Valerio, 1852*

In the Medieval period, most Romanians were farmers, living in the principalities of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania under the rule of the Kingdom of Hungary. Romanian princes in Wallachia (1330) and Moldavia (1394) created separate principalities, independent of Hungary, based on Orthodox Christianity and feudalism. The Ottoman Empire subjected both Romanian principalities to vassal clientage – Wallachia in 1476 and Moldavia in 1538.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OttomanEmpireIn1683.png>

Expansion of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1683 – Incorporated Wallachia in the late 14th century and Moldavia in the late 15th century

The Romanian princes were allowed to rule in return for paying annual tribute, providing military service, and receiving Ottoman protection. Prince Mihai the Brave (1593-1601) briefly unified the two principalities and declared independence from the Turks, but both unification and freedom ended after his death.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mihai_1600.png>

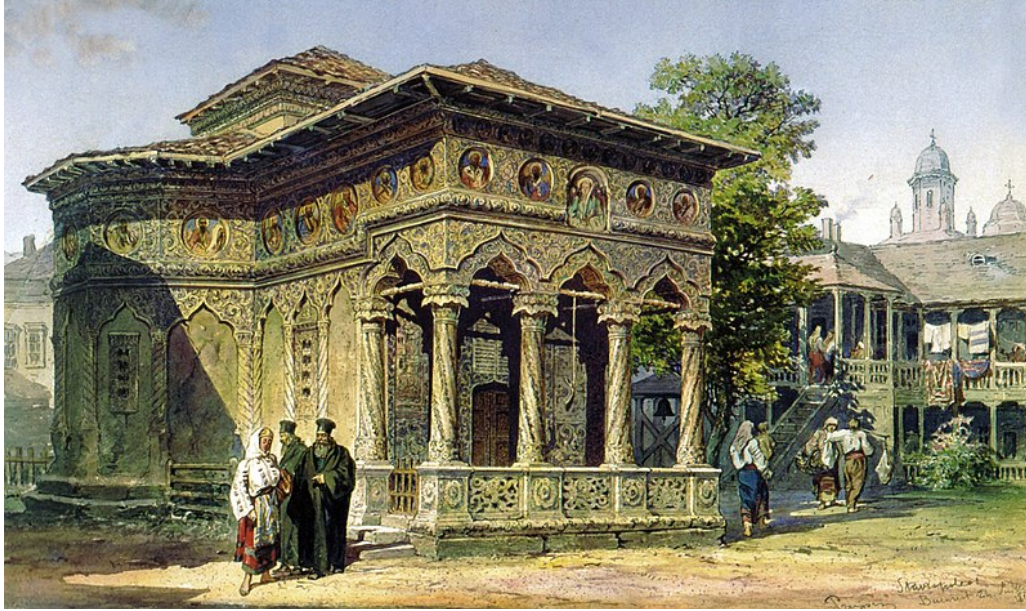
Regions Controlled Briefly by Prince Mihai the Brave, 1600-1601



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Misu_Popp_-_Mihai_Viteazul.jpg>

Prince Mihai the Brave (1593-1601), Briefly Unified Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania – Painting by Misu Popp, 1881

Historic Trends in Romania (18th century-present). In the 18th century, Ottoman control of Wallachia and Moldavia faced threats from both Austria-Hungary and Russia. To ensure loyalty and gain revenue, the Ottoman sultans sold the princedoms of Wallachia and Moldavia to wealthy Greek merchants, known as Phanariots, after the Phanar district of Constantinople in which they lived. The Phanariot system lasted from 1711 until 1821, when the outbreak of the Greek Revolution against Ottoman rule ended it.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stavropoleos_Preziosi.jpg>

Stavropoleus Church, Built in Bucharest by Phanariot Ruler, Nicholas Mavrocordatos – 1868 Lithograph by Amadeo Preziosi

Wallachia and Moldavia gained autonomy within the Ottoman Empire under the Treaty of Paris (1856), which followed the Crimean War. Britain and France, after aiding the Ottomans in defeating Russia in that war, desired to reduce Russian influence in the Romanian principalities. Wallachia and Moldavia merged in 1861, took the name, Romania, in 1862, and invited in a German prince, who became Prince (and, in 1881, King) Carol (ruled 1866-1914). Romania achieved full independence in 1878 under the provisions of the Congress of Berlin (but had to return a small area, southern Bessarabia, to Russia).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Romania_1859-1878.png>

Romanian Independence – Congress of Berlin (1878)

King Carol negotiated a secret defensive alliance with Austria-Hungary in 1883, which was later joined by Germany and Italy, aimed at protecting against invasion from Russia. When World War I began in 1914, Romania declared neutrality. It joined the Triple Entente (Britain, France, and Russia) in 1915, after being promised post-war transfers of Romanian-inhabited areas of Austria-Hungary, especially Transylvania.

The country benefited greatly from choosing the winning side. The treaties following the Settlement of Versailles (1919) transferred Transylvania and the Banat from former Austria-Hungary and Bessarabia from Russia to Romania, more than doubling Romania's area and nearly doubling its population (from 8.5 million to 16.3 million).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Romania_territory_during_20th_century.gif>

Romanian Territorial Changes, 1878-present

During the inter-war period (1919-1939), Romania was afflicted by the Great Depression and experienced the rise of the Iron Guard fascist movement and authoritarian government. King Carol II instituted a royal dictatorship in 1938, before being forced to abdicate in 1940. Romania joined Germany and Italy in the Axis alliance in 1940, choosing the losing side in World War II. In 1944, the Soviet army invaded, and Romania switched sides and joined the Allies.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-B03212,_M%C3%BCnchen,_Staatsbesuch_Ion_Antonescu_bei_Hitler.jpg>

*Axis Leadership Meeting in Munich, 1941 –
Ion Antonescu of Romania (Left) and Adolf Hitler of Germany*

Following a carefully-managed transition, the Soviets brutally installed a Communist government in 1947. Nicolae Ceausescu imposed kleptocratic, family rule in Romania beginning in 1965. Following the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union, Ceausescu and his wife were executed on Christmas Day, 1989 on live television.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nicolae_Ceausescu.png>

*Nicolae Ceausescu, Leader of Romania (1965-1989) –
Kleptocratic Communism*

The transition to democracy in Romania was difficult. Former Communists retained power until the 1996 election. Thereafter, Romania shifted toward a Western alliance, joining NATO in 2004 and

the European Union (EU) in 2007. The economic reforms required for EU accession assisted social and economic progress.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Florin_C%C3%AE%C8%9Bu_-_jan_2020.jpg>

Florin Cîtu, Prime Minister of Romania (December 2020 –)

In 2019, the rate of adult literacy in Romania was 99 percent, and the life expectancy of its 19.4 million people was 75 years, both comparable to those in Hungary. The level of income per capita in 2019 (measured by the World Bank in current PPP prices) was \$32,297, which was 69 percent of the European Union average and 49 percent of the US level. Romanian income per capita (in constant PPP 2017

However, the World Bank's estimate of the share of Romanians with incomes beneath the national poverty line was 23.8 percent (2018). Romania ranked 49th of 189 countries in the UNDP's Human Development Index (2019), 55th of 190 countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index (2019), and, in a tie with Hungary, only 70th of 198 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (2019).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ro-map.png>>

Contemporary Romania – Struggling to Emulate Western Europe

A Briefing on Bulgaria

Historic Trends in Ancient and Medieval Bulgaria. Bulgaria's land area is slightly larger than Ohio, about a fifth bigger than Hungary, and less than half that of Romania.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bulgaria_1994_CIA_map.jpg>

*Contemporary Bulgaria –
Three-fourths of Its Population Is Ethnic Bulgarian*

The population of 7 million is mostly ethnic Bulgarian (77 percent) and contains two sizeable minorities – Turkish (8 percent) and Roma (4 percent). About three-fifths of the Bulgarians practice Orthodox Christianity, 8 percent are Muslim, and one-third choose not to specify or practice other religions.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bulgarian_Girls_05.jpg>

*Young Bulgarian Women Dancers in Traditional Dress –
Three-fifths of Bulgarians Practice Orthodox Christianity*

Over four millennia ago, the region that is now Bulgaria was called Thrace and inhabited by Indo-European-speaking Thracians. The

Thracians were renowned for their skill in metal-working (silver and gold) and horsemanship. Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquered Thrace in the 4th century BCE, and Thracians constituted a significant portion of his army that conquered Persia. The Romans conquered Thrace in the 1st century CE, and it became part of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire in the 4th century.

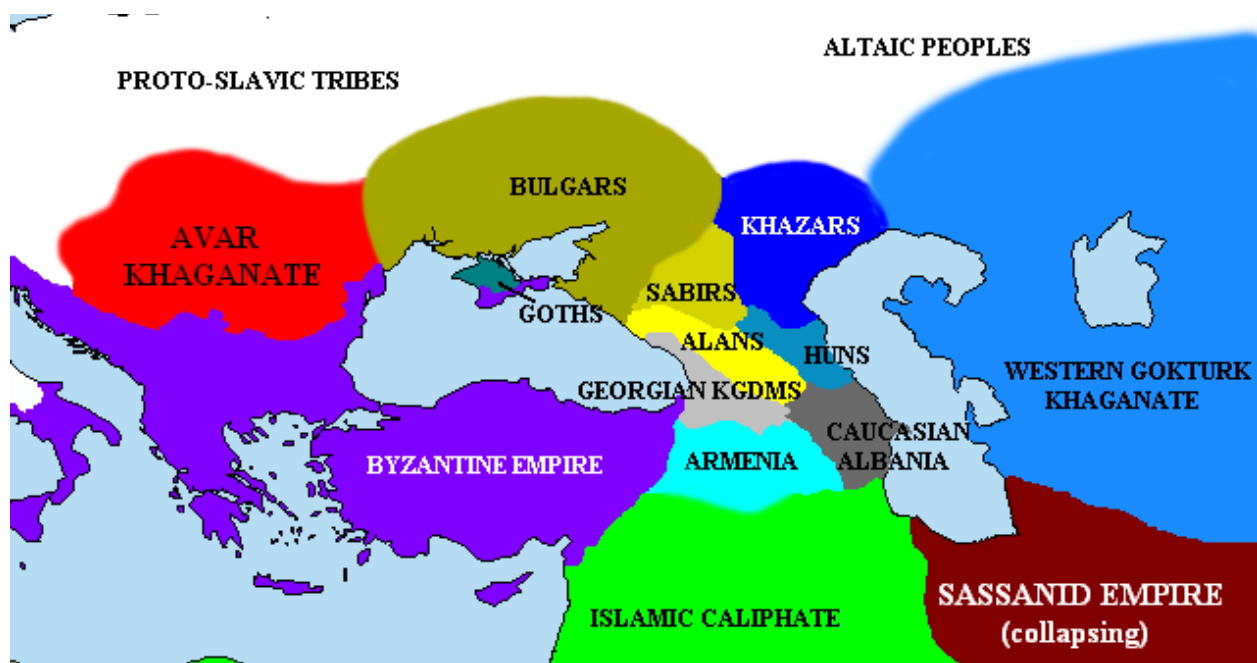


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:MacedonEmpire.jpg>

*Thrace in the Empire of Alexander the Great, 334-323 BCE –
 Thrace Was Located West of the Black Sea and East of Macedonia*

Two immigrant groups of settlers – the Indo-European-speaking South Slavs (6th-7th centuries) and the Turkic-speaking Bulgars (late 7th

century) – migrated separately from Ukraine and replaced the Thracians. The Bulgars provided leadership, the Slavs contributed their language, the neighboring Byzantines offered Orthodox Christianity (in the mid-9th century), and the Bulgars and South Slavs carried out a cultural fusion to form the Bulgarian people.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pontic_steppe_region_around_650_AD.png>

The Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Region in the mid-7th century – Prior to the Bulgar and South Slave Migrations to Byzantine Thrace

The Bulgarians soon expanded across the eastern and central Balkans and created the large, agrarian-based First Bulgarian Empire (9th -11th centuries), which reached its apex of territory and power under

King Simeon I (893-927). The Bulgarian's administrative structure was modeled on that of the Byzantine Empire.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bulgaria_Simeon_I_\(893-927\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bulgaria_Simeon_I_(893-927).svg)

First Bulgarian Empire under King Simeon I (893-927)

The Byzantines regained control in the early 11th century and ruled Bulgaria for nearly 200 years. The Bulgarians formed a second empire in the 14th century. But it fell to the invading Ottoman Empire in 1396, starting five centuries of Turkish rule. Bulgaria then was a key revenue-producing part of the Ottoman Province of Rumelia.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:3_-_Murad_I_map.PNG

Bulgaria Was Part of the Ottoman Empire, 1396-1908 – Early Ottoman Conquests By 1361 (Dark Red), By 1389 (Red), Vassal States (Pink)

Historic Trends in Bulgaria (19th century-present). Two significant questions arose in Ottoman Bulgaria during the 19th century: When would Bulgaria become independent, and who would control Macedonia (a multi-ethnic Ottoman region in the southwestern Balkans inhabited by Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbians, and Albanians)?

In 1878, tsarist Russia defeated the declining Ottoman Empire. The subsequent Treaty of San Stefano created a large, independent Bulgarian state, including Macedonia and western Thrace, which Russia expected to be a subservient ally. Britain, France, and Germany forced Russia to alter that plan. The Congress of Berlin (1878), instead, established a small, truncated independent state in northern Bulgaria, an Ottoman vassal of Eastern Rumelia in southern Bulgaria, and returned Macedonia and western Thrace to Ottoman control.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
 < https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bulgaria-SanStefano-Congress_of_Berlin-1878.PNG >

Bulgaria, 1878 – Treaty of San Stefano versus Congress of Berlin

In 1908, Bulgaria (including Eastern Rumelia) received full independence. Bulgaria then allied with Serbia and Greece to free Macedonia and western Thrace from Ottoman control in the Balkan War of 1912. Despite being on the winning side, Bulgaria felt it received too little of Macedonia. Bulgaria then attacked its former allies (plus

Romania) in the disastrous Balkan War of 1913, lost the fight, and was truncated.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bulgaria_after_balkan_wars_1913-es.svg

Truncated Bulgaria – After Losing the Second Balkan War, 1913

In hopes of resolving the Macedonian question in its favor, Bulgaria entered World War I in 1915 on the side of the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire), which had

promised Macedonia and Thrace to Bulgaria in a post-war settlement. But Bulgaria had chosen the losing coalition. In the Treaty of Neuilly (1919), Bulgaria again lost Macedonia and western Thrace and was forced to pay enormous reparations (which were halved in 1923 and ended in 1932).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bulgaria_after_Treaty_of_Neuilly-sur-Seine.png>

*Treaty of Neuilly (1919) –
Truncated Bulgaria Lost Macedonia, Western Thrace, and Aegean Ports*

During the inter-war period (1919-1939), Bulgaria was bitter about Macedonia (which had been allocated to Yugoslavia, Greece, and Montenegro), rocked by the Great Depression (farm income fell by half), and afflicted with political instability. A growing fascist movement in the 1930s was halted by a military coup. In hopes of recovering its territorial losses, Bulgaria joined the Axis (Germany, Italy, and Japan) in 1941, again choosing the losing side in a major European conflict.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons available at*
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adolf-Hitler-greets-King-Boris-III-of-Bulgaria,-April-1941.jpg>>

Adolf Hitler of Germany Greets King Boris II of Bulgaria, Berlin, 1941

After losing World War II, Bulgaria was invaded by the Soviet army. As in the rest of Eastern Europe, the Russians gradually imposed a Communist government on Bulgaria, taking full control through the Fatherland Front in 1947. Most Communist leaders in Bulgaria were slavishly pro-Russian. Todor Zhivkov (in power 1962-1989) even suggested that Bulgaria should become a Soviet Socialist Republic.

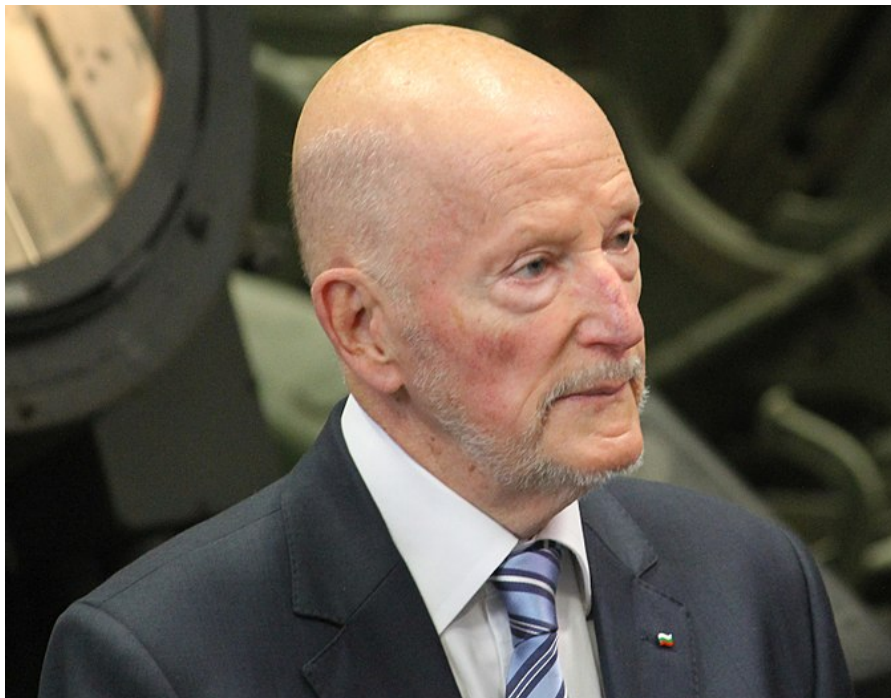


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Todor_%C5%BDivkov_\(fototeca.iiccr.ro\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Todor_%C5%BDivkov_(fototeca.iiccr.ro).jpg)>

Todor Zhivkov (1962-1989) – Promoted Pro-Soviet Communism

When the Soviet Union lost control in 1989, Bulgaria had a palace coup rather than a revolution. Bulgaria then began a difficult transition

to democracy with free elections in 1990. Former King Simeon II returned to Bulgaria in 2001, set up a political party, and won the election. His party pushed through reforms and reduced corruption and crime, allowing Bulgaria to join NATO in 2004 and the European Union in 2007. Territorial revisionism is no longer on the political agenda.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2017-07-04-MMPF-WP-IMG_7624.jpg>

*Simeon Coburggotski (Former King Simeon II) –
Led Bulgaria into NATO (2004) and the EU (2007)*

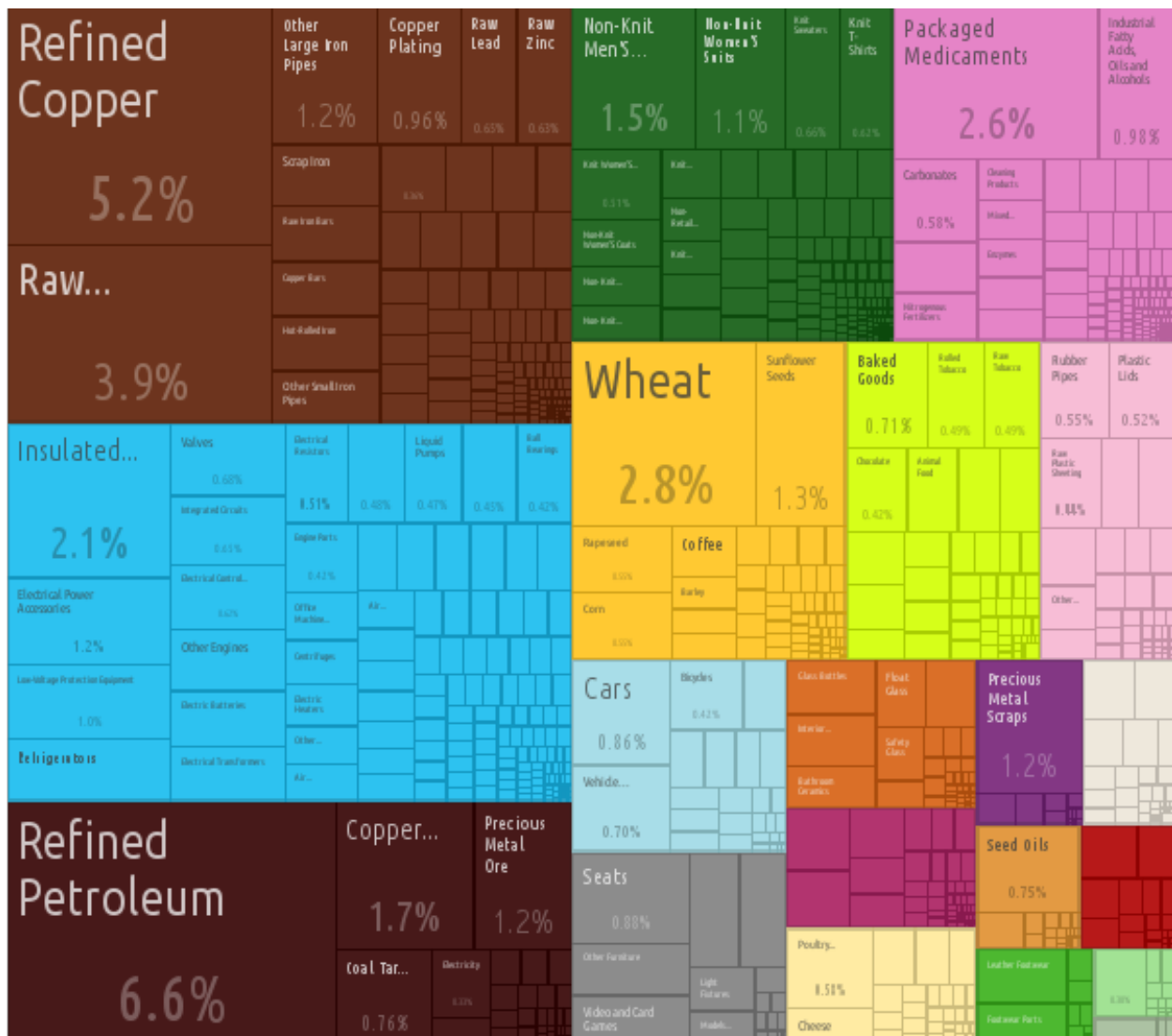
In 2019, the rate of adult literacy in Bulgaria was 98 percent, and the life expectancy of its 7 million people was 75 years, both comparable to those in Hungary and Romania. But Bulgaria is less wealthy than

Hungary and Romania. The level of Bulgarian income per capita in 2019 (measured by the World Bank in current PPP prices) was \$24,790, which was 53 percent of the European Union average and 38 percent of the US level. The comparable per capita income levels were \$34,507 in Hungary and \$32,297 in Romania. Bulgarian income per capita (in constant PPP 2017 dollars) grew at the impressive annual rate of 6.9 percent between 1999 and 2008, declined by 3.7 percent in 2009, and then resumed growth at an annual rate of 3 percent (2009-2019).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A23A2466_\(48914164671\)_cropped.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:A23A2466_(48914164671)_cropped.jpg)>

*Boyko Borisov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria
(2009-2013, 2014-January 2017, and May 2017-present)*



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bulgaria_Exports_Treemap_2017.svg

Proportional Representation of Bulgaria's Export Earnings in 2017 – Leading Items Were Copper, Electrical Equipment, Apparel, and Wheat

However, Bulgaria has a significant poverty problem. The World Bank's estimate of the share of Bulgarians with incomes beneath the national poverty line was 22.6 percent (2018), comparable to that in

Romania (23.8 percent). Bulgaria ranked 56th of 189 countries in the UNDP's Human Development Index (2019), 61st of 190 countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index (2019), and only 74th of 198 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (2019). In all three of those critical indices, Bulgaria ranked lower than Hungary (HDI, 40th; EDB, 52nd; CPI, 70th) and Romania (HDI, 49th; EDB, 55th; CPI, 70th).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bu.html>>

*Contemporary Bulgaria --
Income Per Capita Is Only Half of the EU Average,*

Time Line for Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria

2 nd -1 st millennia BCE	Thrace (today's Bulgaria) inhabited by Indo-European-speaking Thracians – skilled metal-workers, horsemen
509-27 BCE	Roman Republic – Roman Senate elected rulers
5 th c. BCE-1 st c. CE	Dacians inhabited plains between Danube River and Carpathian Mountains – grew wheat, mined iron
334-323 BCE	Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquered Thrace – Thracians made up a large part of his army in Persia
1 st c. BCE-4 th c. CE	Romans occupied Thrace (in today's Bulgaria) – Thrace became part of the Byzantine Empire in the 4 th century
27 BCE-476 CE	Roman Principate – military prowess decided imperial succession
101-106	Roman Emperor Trajan conquered Dacian King Decebalus
106-271	Roman Empire ruled Province of Dacia
3 rd century-9 th century	Romanian historians claim Daco-Roman occupation of Transylvania – Hungarian historians dispute this claim
395-1453	Byzantine Empire – eastern Roman Empire

420s-450s	Huns occupied the Hungarian Plains – Attila killed, 453
6 th -7 th centuries	Slavic peoples migrated southward from homeland in the Pripet Marshes (Ukraine)
550s-790s	Avar Kingdom in the Hungarian Plains
late 7 th century	Turkic-speaking Bulgars migrated westward from Ukraine into today's Bulgaria
681-1018	First Bulgarian Empire
7 th -10 th centuries	Bulgarian people formed – cultural fusion of Bulgars and South Slavs
796	Charlemagne absorbed Avars into his new Holy Roman Empire
890s	Pechenegs drove Magyars out of southern Russia
890s	500,000 Magyars migrated to Hungarian Plains – displaced 100,000 Slavs there
890s-950s	Magyars plundered Germany, Italy, France – led by king Arpad
893-927	King Simeon II ruled First Bulgarian Empire – apex of territory and power
896-1301	23 Arpad kings ruled Hungary
955	Battle of Lechfeld – German King Otto I routed the Magyars

1000-1038	King Steven (Istvan) I of Hungary ruled – converted to Christianity – defeated invading Bulgarians
1095-1114	King Kalman ruled Hungary – conquered Croatia in 1102 – incorporated into Hungary
1102	<i>Pacta Conventa</i> – Croatian nobles accepted Hungarian rule – guarantee of self-government
1185-1396	Second Bulgarian Empire – apex under Ivan Asen (1218-1241) – fell to Ottoman Empire in 1386
late 12 th century	King Bela III ruled Hungary – Hungary Proper, Transylvania, Slovakia, Croatia, Bosnia, Galicia
1241-1242	Mongols invaded Hungary – annihilated Hungarians – population halved to 1 million
1290	legendary founding of Wallachia by King Radu Negru
1396	The Ottoman Empire conquered Bulgaria – ended Second Bulgarian Empire
1396-1908	Bulgaria in Rumelia – key revenue-producing part of the Ottoman Empire
1456	Janos Hunyadi (White Knight) – defeated Turkish Ottomans at Siege of Belgrade

1476	The Ottoman Empire conquered Wallachia
1493-1519	Maximilian I – arranged Habsburg marriages with rulers of Burgundy (1477), Spain (1495), Hungary (1515)
late 15 th century	Hungary's population was 3 million
1526	Battle of Mohacs – Ottoman Empire defeated Hungary – Hungarian King Louis II Jagiello died
1526	Ferdinand I Habsburg Austria – inherited rule of kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia
1529	Ottoman siege of Vienna – fended off
1538	The Ottoman Empire conquered Moldavia
1541-1686	Turkish Ottoman Empire ruled 2/3 of Hungary – Habsburg Austria ruled 1/3
1600-1601	Prince Mihai the Brave ruled Wallachia, Moldavia, Transylvania – independent of Ottoman Empire
1618-1648	Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) – Austria and Poland defeated by Sweden, Prussia, and France
1683	Battle of Vienna – Christian coalition (Austrian, German, Polish troops) routed Ottoman army – chaotic retreat

1699	Treaty of Karlowitz – Habsburg Austria claimed all of Hungary (Croatia, Slovakia, and Transylvania)
late 17 th century	Hungary's population was 4 million
1701-1714	War of Spanish Succession – Habsburgs lost Spain to France – Austria gained Netherlands, No. Italy
1711-1821	Phanariot system – Ottoman sultans appointed wealthy Greek merchants to rule Wallachia and Moldavia
1756-1763	Seven Years' War – Austria lost Silesia to Prussia
1787	Hungary's population was 9.5 million (including 4 million Magyars)
1799-1815	Napoleonic Wars – Hungary part of Austria – lost most battles, but in winning coalition
1814-1815	Congress of Vienna – Austria swapped Belgium for Venice – Klemens von Metternich's balance-of-power
late 1830s	Hungary's population was 13 million
1848-1916	Franz Joseph ruled – Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary
1848-1849	Hungarian Revolution – Hungary, led by Lajos Kossuth, declared independence

- 1849 Emperor Franz Joseph suppressed Hungarian revolt – re-imposed Austrian control with Russian aid
- 1851 Hungary’s population (less Croatia) was 11.6 million – 40 percent Magyar
- 1859 France and Piedmont defeated Austria – Austria lost Lombardy (northwest Italy)
- 1853-1856 Britain, France, and Ottoman Empire defeated Russia in the Crimean War
- 1856 Treaty of Paris – ended Crimean War – Wallachia and Moldavia gained independence from Ottoman Empire
- 1861 Wallachia and Moldavia merged – took the name, Romania, in 1862
- 1866-1912 Prince (King after 1881) Carol ruled Romania
- 1866 Battle of Königgrätz – Germany defeated Austria – Prussia unified Germany, excluded Austria
- 1867-1918 Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy – dual ministries except foreign affairs, military, and finance
- 1878 Treaty of San Stefano – created a large, independent Bulgaria, including Macedonia and western Thrace

- 1878 Treaty of Berlin – Austria-Hungary occupied Bosnia – Montenegro, Romania, Serbia fully independent
- 1878 Treaty of Berlin – established small, independent state in northern Bulgaria, Ottoman vassal in southern Bulgaria
- 1883 Romania negotiated defensive alliance with Austria-Hungary against Russia – later joined by Germany and Italy
- 1890s Budapest boomed – led world in flour milling – 1.1 million people by 1914
- 1908 Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina – no Russian intervention – Bulgaria gained full independence
- 1912-1913 Balkan Wars – Albania became independent – Serbia, Montenegro, Greece gained – Bulgaria truncated
- 1914 Gavrilo Princip, Bosnian Serb radical – assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria in Sarajevo
- 1914-1918 World War I – Entente (Britain, France, US) defeated Axis (Austria-Hungary, Germany, Ottoman Empire)
- 1914-1918 World War I – Hungary and Bulgaria joined Axis and lost – Romania joined Entente, won, gained Transylvania

- 1918 Chrysanthemum Revolution – Mihály Károlyi took control in Hungary – anti-war
- 1919 Treaty of Versailles – Romania gained Transylvania and Banat from Austria-Hungary and Bessarabia from Russia
- 1919 Treaty of Neuilly – Bulgaria lost Macedonia and western Thrace – forced to pay enormous reparations
- 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic – led by Bela Kun – forced into exile after four months
- 1920 Treaty of Trianon – Hungary lost two-thirds of its land and 10 million people, including 3.2 million Magyars
- 1920-1944 Admiral Miklós Horthy was Regent of Hungary – ultra-conservative – stressed irredentism and anti-Semitism
- 1930-1940 King Carol II ruled Romania – instituted royal dictatorship in 1938 – forced to abdicate in 1940
- 1933-1934 Christian Socials, led by Engelbert Dollfuss, imposed fascism in Austria – Austria a client state of Italy
- 1934 Hungary joined customs union with Italy and Austria – to isolate Yugoslavia
- 1936 Rome-Berlin Axis – Mussolini and Hitler coalition – Italy ended protection of Austria

1938	Hitler's <i>Anschluss</i> – Austria absorbed into Germany – Austria without powerful allies
late 1930s	Hungary's economy dependent on Germany
1938-1945	Austria (Ostmark) part of Nazi Germany – 65,000 Jews killed in Austrian Holocaust
1938-1941	Vienna Awards – Hitler gave Hungary nearly half of territory lost at Trianon, housing 2.3 million Magyar-speakers
1939-1945	World War II – 550,000 Jews killed in horrific Hungarian Holocaust – 350,000 non-Jewish Hungarians killed
1940	Hungary and Romania joined Germany, Italy, and Japan in Axis alliance – entered World War II
1941	Bulgaria joined Germany, Italy, and Japan in Axis alliance – entered World War II
1943	Battle of Voronezh, Russian front – Hungarian troops badly defeated
1944	Hitler invaded Hungary – installed Arrow Cross government, led by Hungarian Nazis
1944	Soviet army invaded Romania – Romania switched sides and joined the Allies
late 1944-early 1945	Russian army invaded Hungary – took Budapest, 200,000 deaths – pillaged, raped

1945-1948	Communists in minority in Soviet-controlled government in Hungary
1947	Soviets installed Communist governments in Romania and Bulgaria
1948-1989	Communist rule of Hungarian government
1948-1953	Reign of Terror in Hungary – led by Mátyás Rákosi – 7 percent (of 9.5 million) convicted
1953-1956	Imre Nagy, Premier of Hungary – reformer
1956	Hungarian Revolution – Nagy declared neutrality – Soviet army took control – 200,000 Hungarians emigrated
1956-1989	Janos Kádár, Communist Leader of Hungary – Goulash Communism – per capita income doubled
1962-1989	Todor Zhivkov, Communist Leader of Bulgaria – slavishly pro-Russian – wanted Bulgaria to join USSR
1965-1989	Nicolae Ceausescu, Communist Leader of Romania – kleptocratic rule – executed on live television, 12/25/89
1968	New Economic Mechanism in Hungary – market orientation within Communist state management
1989-present	democratic governments in Hungary

1990-1993	Joszef Antall, Premier of Hungary – political transition – economic reforms
1994-1998	Gyula Horn, Premier of Hungary – economic austerity – free-market policies
1998-2002	Viktor Orbán, Premier of Hungary – Federation of Young Democrats Party (FIDESZ) – coalition – stabilization
1999	Hungary became full member of NATO
2001-2005	Simeon Coburggotski (Former King Simeon II), Prime Minister of Bulgaria – National Movement Party
2002-2004	Péter Medgyessy, Premier of Hungary – Hungarian Socialist Party – increased social welfare
2004	Hungary acceded to the European Union
2004	Romania and Bulgaria became full members of NATO
2004-2009	Ferenc Gyurcsány, Premier of Hungary – Hungarian Socialist Party – implemented budgetary austerity
2007	Romania and Bulgaria acceded to the European Union
2008	Hungary was severely affected by global financial crisis, economic downturn

2009-2013	Boyko Borisov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria – Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria Party
2009-2010	Gordon Bajnai, Premier of Hungary – Hungarian Socialist Party – managed economic crisis after global recession
2010-present	Viktor Orbán, Premier of Hungary – FIDESZ Party – controversial populist and nationalist
2012-present	Janos Ader, President of Hungary – FIDESZ Party
2014-present	Boyko Borisov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria – Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria Party
2019	Hungary ranked 40 th of 189 countries in the UNDP’s Human Development Index
2019	Romania ranked 49 th of 189 countries in the UNDP’s Human Development Index
2019	Bulgaria ranked 56 th of 189 countries in the UNDP’s Human Development Index
2019-present	Florin Cîtu, Prime Minister of Romania – National Liberal Party – Ph. D, economics, Iowa State, 2001

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Sites Visited in Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria

Cruising the Danube

Stanford Travel/Study Program

July 3-15, 2018

River-Boat-based Aboard the *Royal Crown*

Budapest, Hungary

In 2017, 12 million tourists visited Hungary. Most of them spent time in Budapest, the most popular tourist destination in the country.

Contemporary Budapest is a growing city of 2 million people, one-fifth of Hungary's total population of 9.8 million. The city on the Danube River was created in 1873 through the unification of Buda (the royal center), Pest (the commercial heart), and Óbuda (the site of the Roman town, Aquincum). One of the three towns comprising Budapest has been the commercial or governing center of Hungary since its founding by Magyar immigrants in 896. Today, Budapest features three UNESCO World Heritage sites – the embankment of the Danube River (which divides Buda and Pest), the spectacularly treed Andrassy Avenue region, and the historic Royal Castle District in hilly Buda.

The Stanford group was introduced to Budapest's diverse history through a bus tour of the city that included the Chain Bridge (the city's first bridge across the Danube, built in 1849), the Elisabeth Square (named after the beloved wife of Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph, who supported Hungarian causes), the Jewish Quarter, the Heroes' Square, the Parliament Building (the largest in Europe), and St. Stephen's Basilica (the city's biggest Catholic church). In Pest, we visited the Opera House, the Franz Liszt Museum, the Dohany Street Synagogue, and the Great Market Hall, where we enjoyed a sumptuous tasting of delicious Hungarian sausages, peppers, and spreads. In Buda, we took a guided walking tour of the Royal Castle District, which featured the

Royal Castle, the seven-centuries-old Matthias Church, and the Fisherman’s Bastion.

Kalocsa, Hungary

Kalocsa is a town of 16,000 residents, sited 75 miles south of Budapest. The charming town was founded in the 11th century by King Stephen, Hungary’s first Christian king, as a bishopric, and today it serves as a cathedral town and home to one of Hungary’s four Catholic archbishops. Kalocsa’s importance declined after invading Ottoman Turks ravaged the town in 1529. The town revived in the 19th century as an agricultural and food-processing center. Kalocsa is one of Hungary’s two leading regions for the production of paprika – an essential ingredient of Hungarian goulash. It is made by drying and grinding the fruit of the sweet pepper plant (*Capsicum annum*), native to Mexico. The Spanish brought the capsicum to Spain in the early 16th century, and the Ottoman Turks later introduced “Turkish pepper” to Hungary.

Today, Kalocsa features three attractions – its cathedral and bishopric library, the House of Folk Art Museum, and the Hungarian Paprika Museum – and our group visited all three. At the paprika museum, we learned that paprika became important in the early 19th century, when the British blockade of Napoleon’s Europe prevented the importation of pepper from India. At the folk art museum, we enjoyed a demonstration of Hungarian folk-dancing and visited a traditional rural home. In the cathedral, we listened to a concert performed on an organ with 4600 pipes. We drove to the *puszta* (Hungarian Plain) to watch a demonstration of Hungarian horsemanship. Skillful cowboys rode well-trained steeds. The highlight featured a rider standing with one foot on each of two horses while being pulled by eight additional horses.

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Budapest to Tehran by Train
Stanford Travel/Study Program

March 26-April 13, 2016

Train, Aboard the *Golden Eagle Danube Express*

Budapest and Kecskemet, Hungary

Budapest is home to 2 million people, one-fifth of Hungary's total population of 9.8 million. The city on the Danube River was created in 1873 through the unification of Buda (the royal center), Pest (the commercial heart), and Óbuda (the site of the Roman town, Aquincum). The three towns comprising Budapest have been the commercial and governing center of Hungary since its founding by Magyar immigrants in 896.

The Stanford group was introduced to Budapest's diverse history through an extensive bus tour of the city, visiting Heroes' Square, the Millennium Memorial, the Vajdahunyad Castle, the Opera House, St. Stephen's Basilica, the Chain Bridge, the Royal Castle, the Fisherman's Bastion, and the Matthias Church. We spent a fascinating afternoon touring the Parliament Building, the largest and finest in Europe. The magnificent building was constructed between 1885 and 1902. Later, we enjoyed a cruise on the Danube, viewing Buda on one side and Pest on the other. After departing Budapest on the *Golden Eagle*, we made two stops in Hungary. Near Lajosmizse, we enjoyed a show of horsemanship, featuring breeds and techniques from early Magyar days. In Kecskemet, a small city of 100,000 on the Hungarian plain, we visited the 19th-century, art-nouveau town hall and were treated to a concert of Hungarian music performed by two talented brothers, aged 8 and 10.

Sighisoara and Brasov, Romania

The *Golden Eagle* made two stops – in Sighisoara and Brasov – while traversing the Transylvanian portion of Romania. The central part of Sighisoara, a town of 20,000 residents, is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Between 1191 and 1198, the Hungarian rulers of Transylvania settled Saxons there to develop agriculture and provide defense. The

German settlers were given local autonomy, and they wielded political power through guilds until Romania gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878. The Sighisoara Citadel and its walls are nicely preserved, as is the 64-meter-high Clock Tower, built in 1556. Most of the descendants of the German settlers have emigrated, and Sighisoara now is a declining town largely populated by retired people.

Brasov, in contrast, is a growing city of 300,000 residents, surrounded by the Carpathian Mountains. Our group bussed 12 miles to the village of Bran to visit the much-ballyhooed Bran Castle (“Dracula’s Castle”), originally constructed in 1377. The castle was revived in the 1920s by Queen Marie of Romania, who was a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Bran Castle attracts tourists because of the myth that it is Dracula’s Castle. Vlad III of Wallachia (also known as Vlad the Impaler and Vlad Dracula) ruled brutally in the mid-15th century. But Bram Stoker’s story of Count Dracula, the vampire, is without historical basis.

Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria

We spent an enjoyable and informative day at our only stop in Bulgaria, Veliko Tarnovo. The pleasant town of 73,000 residents and 10,000 university students is located in the mountains of north-central Bulgaria. Veliko Tarnovo has a vibrant atmosphere because it houses Bulgaria’s second largest university. Its moment in Bulgarian history was the 14th century. Veliko Tarnovo then served as the capital of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom, after Bulgaria regained its independence from the Byzantine Empire. But that splendor ended in 1386 when Bulgaria fell to the expanding Ottoman Empire.

The principal attraction in Veliko Tarnovo is the Tsarevets, the royal castle and fortress on the top of a high hill. Part of our group hiked up the steep hill to the Tsarevets. The rest of us visited a very interesting Archeological Museum, which featured artifacts and statuary from a nearby Roman town, Nicopolis Aedestrum (72-475 CE). The museum also displayed pottery from the Thracian settlement of Bulgaria, some

pieces dated as early as the 4th millennium BCE. We bussed eastward to enjoy a rural Bulgarian lunch in Arbanassi village. After lunch, we visited a spectacular Orthodox Christian church in Arbanassi, the Church of the Nativity. The church's beautiful fresco secco paintings, created between 1592 and 1732, depicted the life of Christ in the Byzantine style.

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**A Voyage on the Black Sea Aboard *The World*
The World, Residences At Sea
August 28-September 19, 2013
Ship-based, Aboard *The World, Residences At Sea***

Nessebar, Bulgaria

About 2600 years ago, Dorian Greeks established a colony-settlement, Mesembria, on the little island that is today called Nessebar. Thracians had settled in the region at least 1400 years earlier and had created a small town on the island, which they called Menebria, about 1000 BCE. Mesembria – one of thirty Greek trading ports on the Black Sea coast, set up in the 7th and 6th centuries BCE – exported fish and grain to Greece and received cloth and silver in exchange. The Greek port later was controlled by the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman Empires and by Bulgarian kingdoms. We strolled around the tourist-filled island-town, now a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Archaeological Museum, housed in the Church of St. John the Baptist, contains a rich collection of local artifacts, and the 11th-century Byzantine Church of St. Stefan has remarkable murals.

Constanta, Romania

Constanta is the oldest city and leading port in Romania. When Ionian Greeks founded a city-state there in 600 BCE, they called it Tomis. For four centuries after 29 BCE, Tomis was a leading Roman settlement on

the Black Sea. In 8 CE, Emperor Augustus exiled the Roman poet, Ovid, to Tomis. Emperor Constantine renamed the city Constanta to honor his sister. Constanta, today, is a port city of 425,000 people. Much of its old city is under re-construction in an effort to attract tourists. Sandra and I walked around the old city, searching for charm amid the construction projects. We admired a statue of Ovid and visited the extensive collections of Roman coins, implements, and jewelry in the History and Archeological Museum. I escorted a tour to a UNESCO World Heritage site in the Danube Delta, which features 300 species of birds and 45 fish species.

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