

Geolinguistic Methods in Research of Historical Personal Names

About the Project of Atlas of Historical Surnames in Hungary (AHSH)



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Introduction

Geolinguistics has provided linguistic research with a general tool whose origins date back to the 19th century, within both Hungarian and international standards. According to its broad definition, geolinguistics refers to "spatial linguistics", a discipline examining those influences brought about by contact between languages, the regional variations existing within a language and the special properties possessed by dialects. As a method, linguistic geography enables researchers to depict the spatial movements produced by contact influences between languages and dialects, thereby allowing for the effective recreation of diachronic linguistic processes and their connections.

Materials and Methods

We have created two databases of historical personal names found in Carpathian Basin (Hungarian Kingdom) which rely upon the first and second country-wide censuses (1715 and 1720). These censuses can give the most over-all picture of multiethnic historical Hungary in the early part of the 18th century.

Our goal is to search for the type of source that would

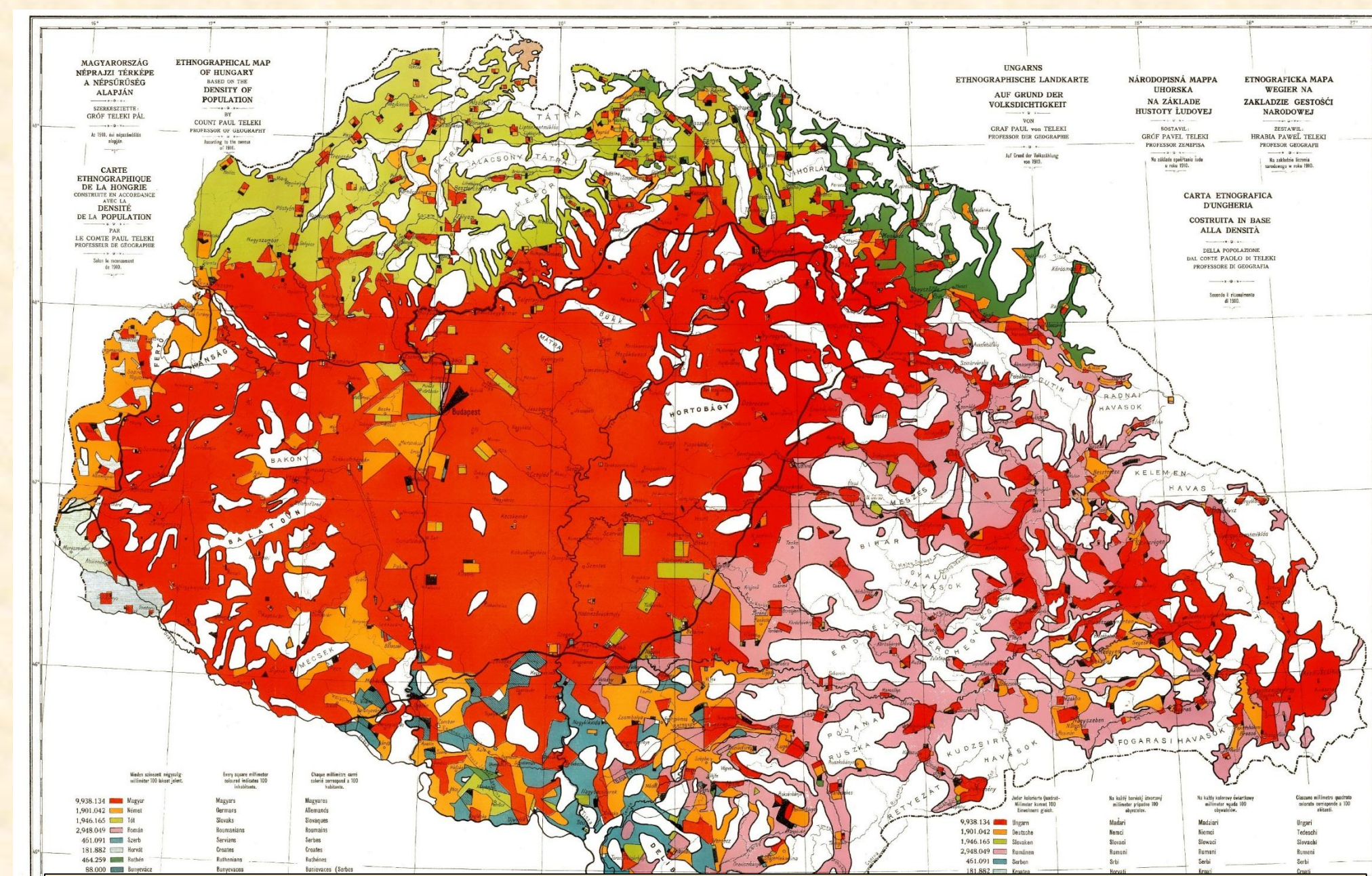
1. approach as closely as possible the period when surnames were evolving (in the 14-15th centuries in the case of the Hungarian name system) and
 2. cover the **Hungarian language area** (and the Hungarian name system) as much as possible. (Therefore Hungary's territory as it existed prior to 1920 had to be used as our basis.)
- In the second period of the research (since 2015), the program is working on digitalizing the data material on **Transylvania**.

The **AHSH software** is naturally able to take any name form found in its database, the lemma or name elements and represent it as a map.

Objectives

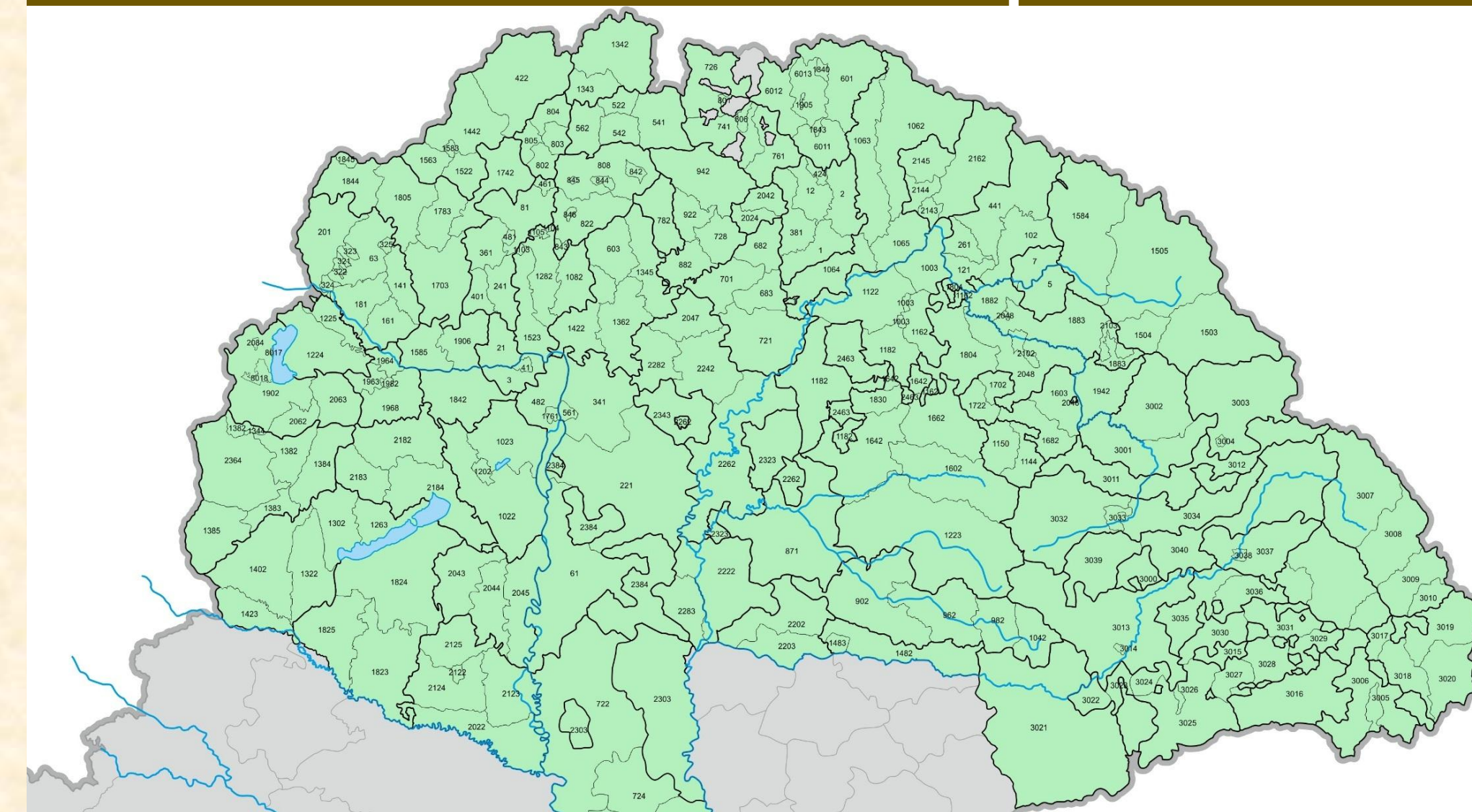
How Personal Names Are Connected to Ethnicity?

The further approach takes into consideration the connection between personal names' origins and ethnicities. The etymological research of Hungarian surnames of the Middle Ages shows the distribution of the lingual origin which may contribute to the **historical-demographical reconstruction of ethnic patterns**. Later on (from the 16th centuries) this relationship is not always clear. Hungarian researchers mostly rely on regular censuses (with data of spoken languages and ethnicity) taken in the 19-20th centuries for studying **language-borders**. But earlier, before the end of 18th century only the tax censuses and tithings can be used to demonstrate earlier ethnic patterns.



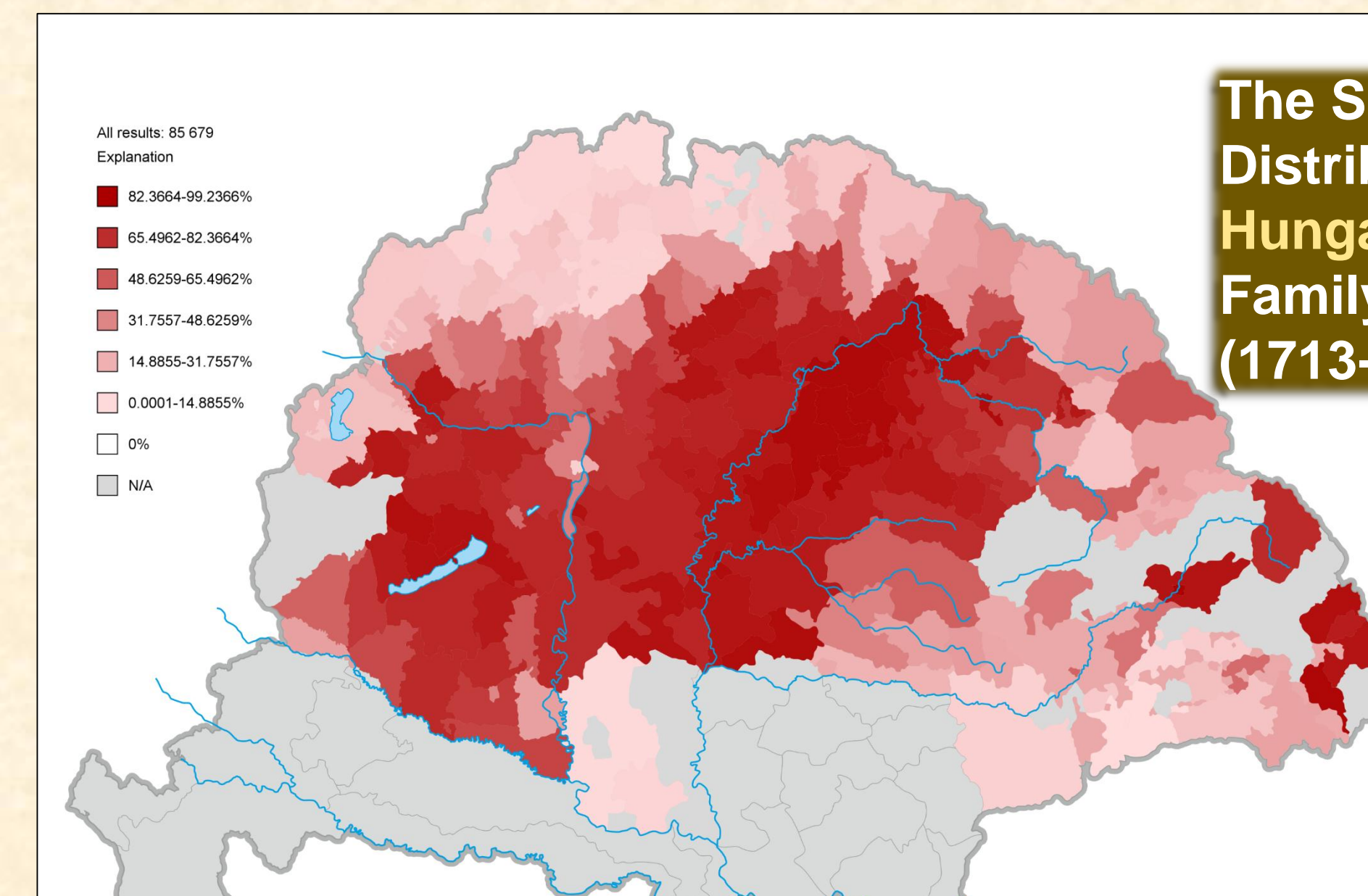
Ethnographic map of Hungarian Kingdom (1910). "Red map" was made for the peace talk in Trianon by Count Pál Teleki (1920)

AHSH Basic Map

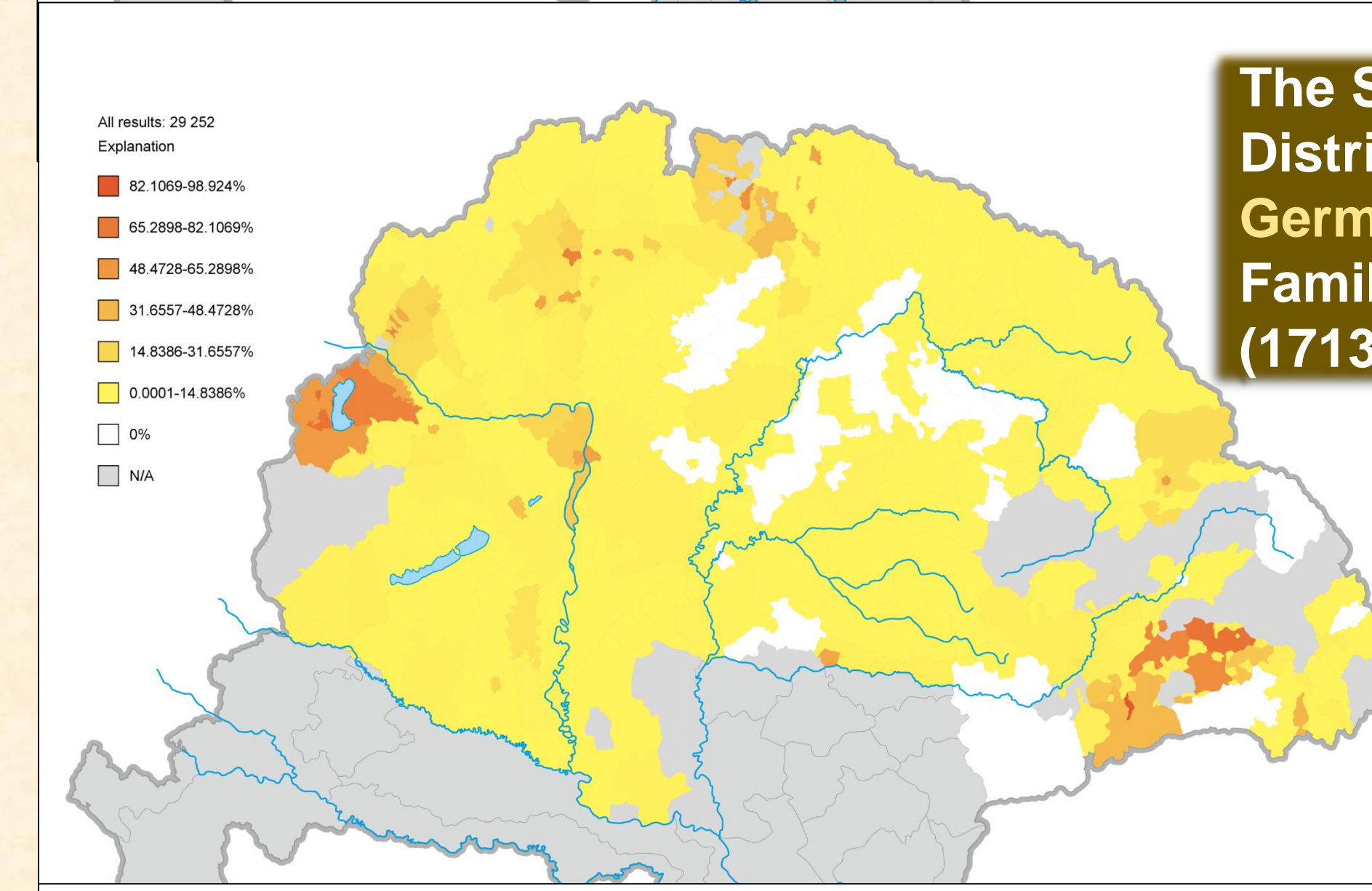


Municipal Boundaries in the Hungarian Kingdom in the Early 18th Century (counties, districts, cities). Map design: JÁNOS N. FODOR
Map graphics: BALÁZS PRUKUSZ. © AHSH 2014

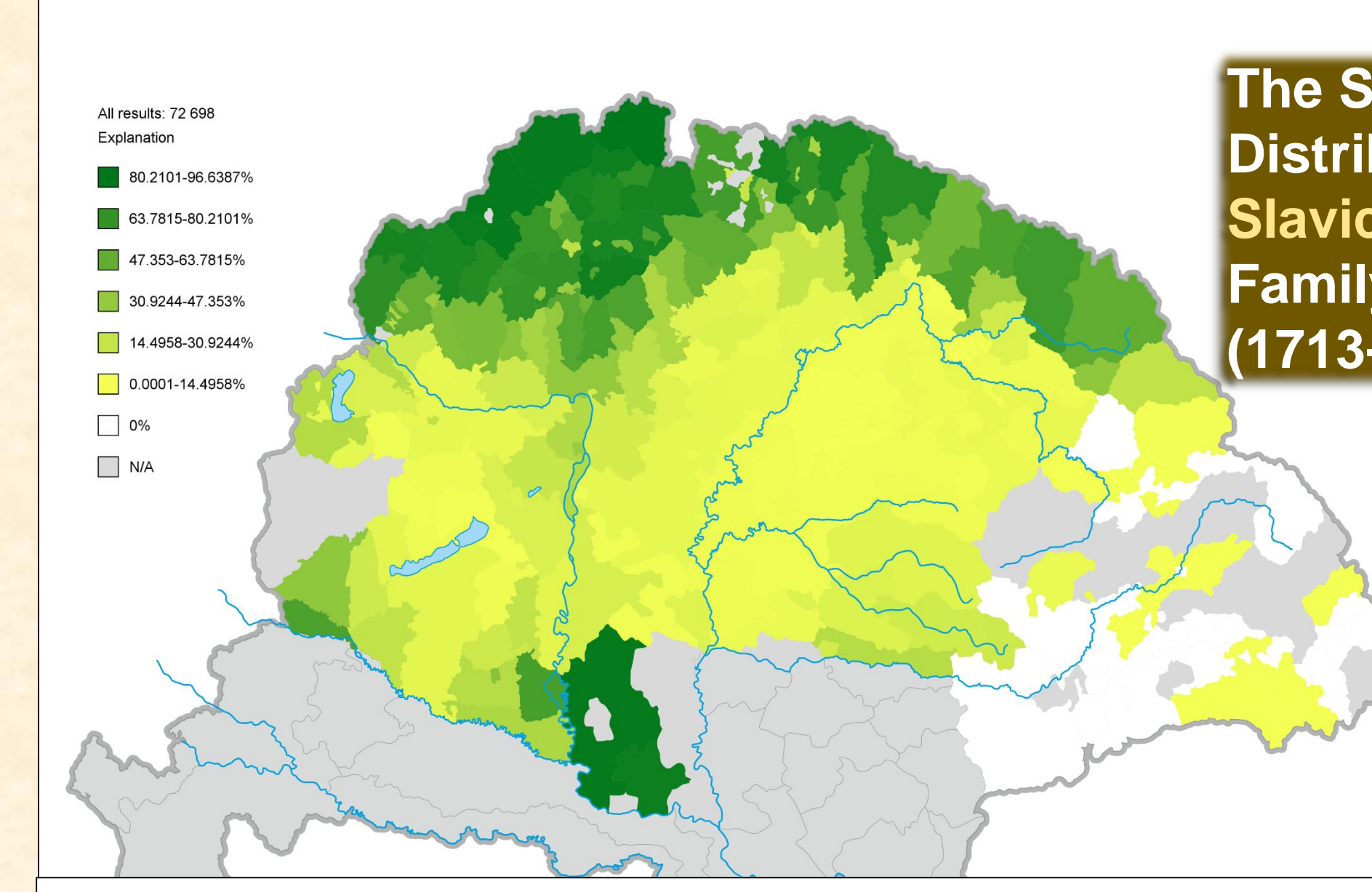
Results



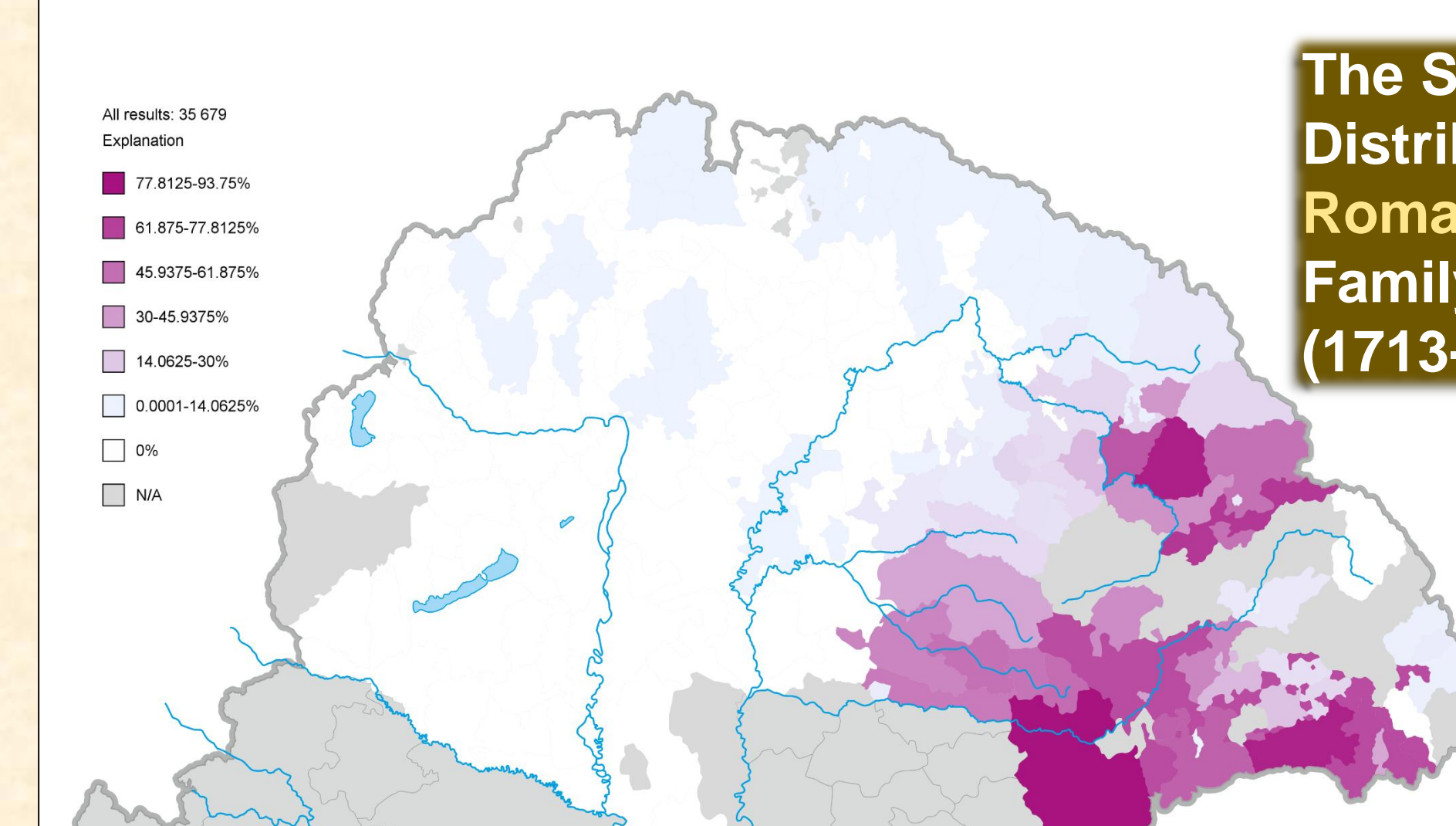
The Spatial Distribution of Hungarian-Origin Family Names (1713-1715)



The Spatial Distribution of German-Origin Family Names (1713-1715)

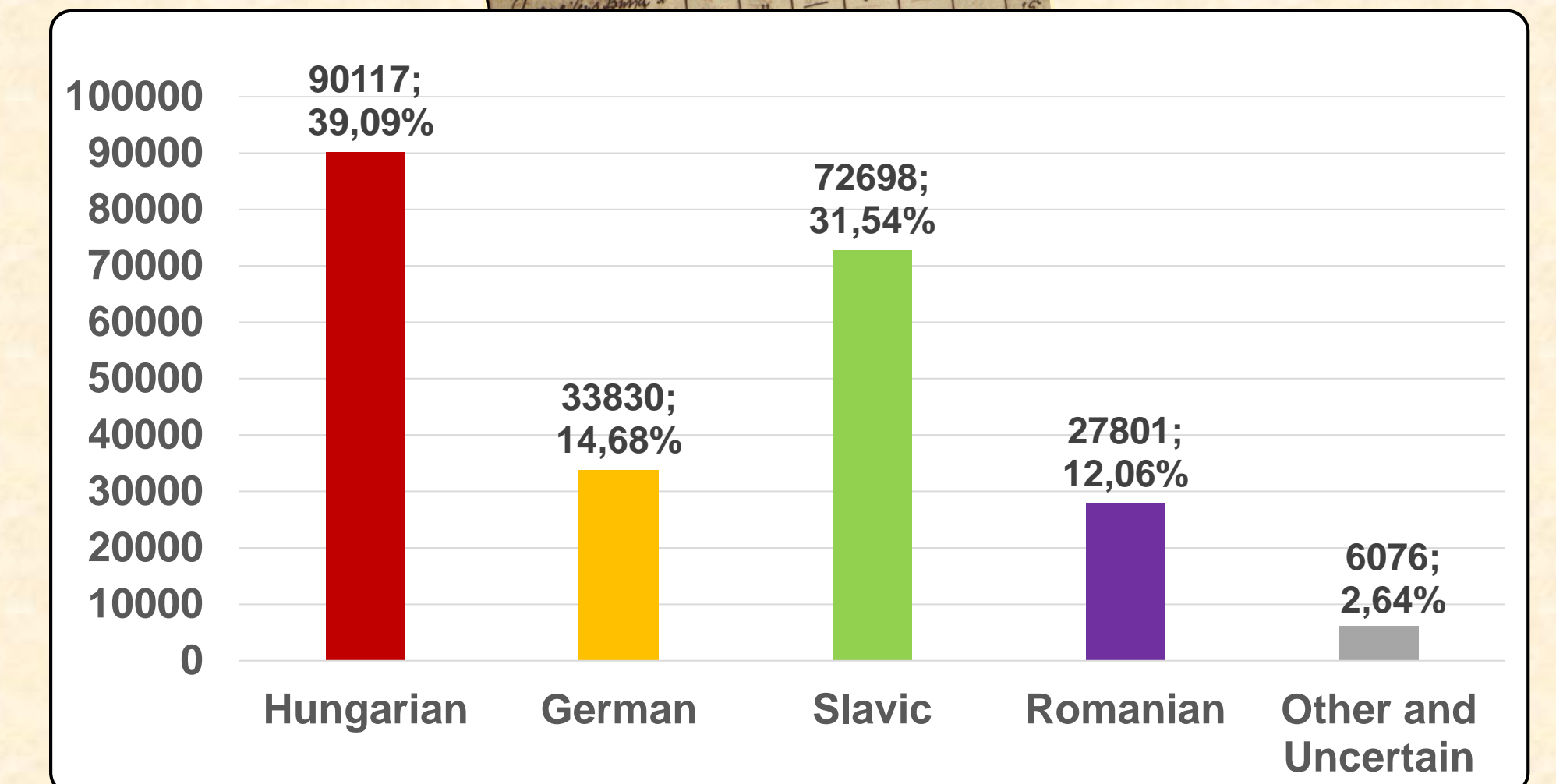


The Spatial Distribution of Slavic-Origin Family Names (1713-1715)



The Spatial Distribution of Romanian-Origin Family Names (1713-1715)

Results



The proportion of Family Name's Origin in Hungarian Kingdom and Transylvania (in 1715)

Conclusion

We have attempted to prove the applicability of the method of name-analysis with the help of resources including both the names and the admission of self-identity or first language of individuals on the basis of later sources. The results of these investigations revealed that name-analysis can be used in order to identify ethnicity, when conducted on the basis of sufficient data.

References

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- Farkas, T. 2013. Surnames of Ethnonymic Origin in the Hungarian Language. In: O. Felecan (ed.), Cluj-Napoca, 504-517.
- N. Fodor, J. 2013. Geolinguistic research of historical personal names found in Carpathian Basin. In: O. Felecan (ed.), Cluj-Napoca, 518-527.
- See also: www.csaladnevatlasz.hu

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