

The Szilágyság

The ethnographic area known as Szilágyság corresponds to the County Szilágy in what is now northwest Transylvania. Technically the Szilágyság is not part of historic Transylvania. It was part of the Partium. Confused? Here is a short discussion of Transylvania.

István Lázár writes in his book, *Transylvania: A short history*, that there are 3 distinct territorial entities.

1. Geographic Transylvania

“It has an ideal shape and is a geographically homogenous basin surrounded by well defined mountain ranges with an area of approximately 57,000 square kilometers.” For those who would like a bit more detail, he also writes, “It is easy to draw Transylvania’s natural geographic boundaries. The region lies in the mighty embrace of the crests of the eastern and southern Carpathians. It begins in the north at the sources of the river Tisza and extends in the south to that stretch of the Danube which once again flows in an easterly direction, and which by snuggling up to the southernmost tip of the Carpathians, separates the Carpathian and Balkan mountain systems. Its western boundaries are formed by the rivers flowing toward the center of the Carpathian basin. They emerge among their own detritus from the valleys of the central, isolated Transylvanian mountains, and both to the north and south of these mountains from the Carpathian ranges. Thus, it is enclosed on two sides by mountains, traversed only by nearly intractable passes, and on the third side by rivers and, formerly, extensive marshy areas.”

2. Historic Transylvania

...“a variable area which in the 17th century, as an independent principality, extended far beyond the boundaries of the geographic Transylvania. The attached areas were referred to as Partium. This Partium shifted back and forth between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Principality of Transylvania.”

Wikipedia defines the Partium as:

Partium (Hungarian: Partium or Részek) was a historical region of the Kingdom of Hungary that roughly corresponds to the contemporary Crisana historical region of Romania. The name derives from the Latin “Partium Regni Hungariæ,” parts of the Kingdom of Hungary that were transferred to Prince John II Sigismund of Transylvania by the Treaty of Speyer (Spires) in 1571.

Partium initially consisted of the counties of Máramaros (Maramures), Middle Szolnok (Közép-Szolnok/Solnocul de Mijloc), Kraszna (Crasna) [our dances will be from here] and Bihar (Bihar) and the Kövár region (Kövár vidéke), along with Szörény (Severin) and eastern Zaránd that were already part of John II Sigismund’s realm. These territories were ruled by Transylvania but were not formally part of the Principality (later Grand Principality) of Transylvania.

The area of Partium fluctuated over time and was wholly overrun by Ottoman troops in 1660 but was back in Transylvanian possession by the end of the century. By the 18th century, the area had shrunk to Middle Szolnok, Kraszna, the Kovár region, and a rump Zaránd. With administrative reorganization within the Hungary in the middle of the 19th century, the Partium territories were incorporated into the Kingdom’s county (comitatus) system.

Couple Dances from Szilágyság

The couple dances consist of slow and fast csárdás, sometimes called lassú és friss csárdás or félfordulós és ugrálós or csárdás és ropogós. We can categorize these steps as others in Hungarian dance into movement families.

Resting	Basic crossover	Turning	Men's slapping
Single Csárdás	Open	Couple	Even
Cifra	Closed	Woman walk around	Syncopated
Heel clicks	Transitions	Woman turnout	

MUSIC: Fondor Ensemble. Szilágysági dallamok. Új élő népzene 11./Living Village Music Vol. 11. FMVMCS011-2005.

SONG:

A nagy utca véges kalendérum
The main street is bursting in color
Minden kiskapuba rózsa nyilik
There are roses blooming in every gate
Minden kiskapuba kettő három
In every gate there are two or three (blooming)
Csak az enyém hervadt el a nyáron
Only in mine have they wilted during the summer

A a kislány férjhez akar menni
This young girl wants to get married
A szomszédja elakarja venni
her neighbor wants to marry her
Kedves lányom ne hagyálel minket
My dear daughter, don't leave us
Mi lesz velünk ha te itthagysz minket
What will come of us if you leave us

Az a kislány piros pántlikája
That young girl's red ribbon
Nem köti már többet a hajába
She doesn't tie it in her hair anymore (only singles wear ribbons)
Tedd el lányom a láda fiokba
My daughter, put it away in the trunk
Majd jó lesz a kislányod hajába
It will be good someday for your daughter
Ha lányod lesz jó lesz a hajába
If you have a daughter, it will be good in her hair
Ha fiad lesz csárdás kalapjába.
If you have a son, it will be good in his csárdás hat.