

FORUM: REVIEWS AND COMMENTS

BOLASHVILI, NANA; DITTMANN, ANDREAS; KING, LORENZ and NEIDZE, VAZHA (eds.): National Atlas of Georgia. X, 138 pp.; numerous colored photos, figures, tables and graphics. Franz Steiner Verlag Stuttgart 2018. ISBN 978-3-515-12057-9 (Print), 978-3-515-12183-5 (Ebook). €196.00.

A national atlas of Georgia was published in the Georgian capital Tbilisi in 2012 in Georgian language; only the title and place of publication are given in English and Russian, while all map legends and explanatory texts were published exclusively in Georgian. Thus, this work largely eluded international perception. The cooperation between the Vakhushti-Bagratiuni-Institute of Geography of the State Ivane-Javakishvili University in Tbilisi and the Geographical Institute of the Justus-Liebig-University in Giessen has now made an English edition possible. However, it is not just a translation, but a comprehensive revision with new maps and thematic additions. The 100th anniversary of the State University in Tbilisi and Georgia's participation as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair in autumn 2018 were the external occasions, the close scientific cooperation between the editors the engine. Georgia, nearly of the size of Bavaria or Ireland, is thus prominently represented with a new publication that can have an impact far beyond geography.

The structure of the atlas follows proven conventions: The spatial location and orographic and administrative overviews are followed by maps on tectonics and geology, which also include mineral resources, landscape development since the Tertiary, volcanism and seismicity, then maps on geomorphology with views on karst, the coastal development on the Black Sea and natural risks. A series of climatological overviews and maps on hydrology and glaciology show humid and arid regions and give an impression of recent glacier retreat. Soil and vegetation maps impressively illustrate the natural diversity of the country. The landscape maps correspond to a particularly well-kept working direction in Georgian geography. Thus the entire spectrum of the natural area becomes comprehensible. The fact that maps on the socio-economy of the region take up less space is due to the lack of published regionalized data and corresponds to the presentation of the 2012 atlas. In addition to the maps published there, data from the most recent population census (2014) and an update to 2016

have also been included, which increases the topicality of the publication. The importance of the autocephalous Georgian Church is reflected in an overview of the eparchies (dioceses) and their subordinate monasteries. Maps of the Georgian economy cover energy production, industry, major transport routes, agriculture and tourism. One last series of maps looks back into the past, lists the numerous archaeologically significant sites and describes the territorial development between the 6th century BC and the end of the 19th century AD. Most of the thematic sections are introduced by short texts, which often include some vivid pictures and some references to literature. This makes the atlas as a whole a comprehensive introduction to the country.

Some maps deserve special mention: The earthquake map (p. 25) recalls the tectonic-geological situation of Georgia at the collision of the Arabic and Scythian (Eurasian) lithosphere plates, which was modified by movements of the Anatolian and Iranian plates; the relatively sparsely populated region of Racha in the mountainous north of Georgia is particularly affected, where a severe earthquake occurred in 1991. The ridge line map (p. 27) marks with the Likhi [Surami] mountain range as connection between the Greater and Lesser Caucasus a mountain range of relatively low altitude (997 m at the Rikoti Pass), which however separates the warm and humid Pontic west of Georgia from the warm and dry basin landscapes of East Georgia and thus is not only a hydrographic but also a climatic borderline of the first order (p. 56). The natural hazard maps give an impression of the high natural hazard potential, which is further increased by anthropogenic interventions (pp. 38-42 and 43). The legend of the soil map (p. 74) makes an important contribution beyond this map with its juxtaposition of traditional terminology (taken from Russian soil science) and international terminology. Maps on vegetation and fauna document the high number of endemisms in the Caucasian region; in addition, one may be astonished at the large number of economically used grape varieties (the actual number goes far beyond this!), even though the distribution area of viticulture is generously expanded (p. 107). The population maps show the high population losses that Georgia experienced during the decades of transformation: almost all municipalities show declining birth rates and rising mortality rates.

A methodological and political problem arises in dealing with the territories that see themselves as independent states, belong to Georgia according to international law, but are currently not under Georgian state power, Abkhazia and South Ossetia (from the Georgian point of view: the Tskhinvali region). They could easily be included in the physical-geographical maps because sufficient information is available, whereas they had to be largely excluded from the socio-economic maps. All the more interesting is the map on p. 95, which highlights the demarcation of the two secession areas and the distribution of internally displaced persons and thus draws attention to Georgia's greatest domestic political problem.

Every book, every atlas permits improvements and awakens wishes. It has already been suggested that the scope of socio-economic maps is small. Here, for example, maps of regional added value and financial flows to the regions or municipalities could be included - knowing well that relevant data material is difficult to obtain. However, it is precisely such deficits that show how difficult it is to develop new topics for an adequate cartographic representation. The maps of the historical development would have allowed one or the other additional time cut if the historical atlas of Georgia (*Sakartvelos istoriis at'las*; Tbilisi 2016) had also been used. In the case of the city maps (pp. 93-95), a more comprehensive inscription (e.g. city district names) would be useful, and the agricultural map (pp. 103) probably needs updating, since it was already taken almost unchanged from the *Atlas Gruzinskoy SSR of 1964* (pp. 217/218) into the Georgian edition of 2012. And there are certainly a few minor omissions that make the maps more difficult to understand: The point system used to assess the anthropogenic influence on the relief (p. 43) is not explained; the reference period for the climate data is missing, as is the reference year on the secondary map of the industrial production value by region (p. 101).

But these are negligible details in view of a impressive cartographic and editorial achievement with which the small South Caucasian state presents its spatial diversity. The editors enriched our knowledge by translating, revising, modifying and supplementing the Georgian edition of the National Atlas and made a valuable contribution to scientific relations with Georgia. In view of the diversity of the content and the excellent print quality, even the price seems reasonable.

JÖRG STADELBAUER

HORSTMANN, ALEXANDER, SAXER, MARTIN and RIPPA, ALESSANDRO (eds.): *Routledge Handbook of Asian Borderlands*. XXI, 462 pp. 100 figures, 21 maps and 2 tables. Routledge. London and New York 2018. ISBN 978-1-138-91750-7. £175.00.

The topic of Asian borderlands has been the object of several studies since the delineation and demarcation of most of the existing borders commenced in the nineteenth century. Research themes, disciplines and focus of interest have changed over time. The search for 'natural' and 'scientific' borders in the framework of imperialism suggested the existence of an objective and agreeable separation of spatial territories that was promoted by the actors of boundary-making themselves. The contemporary debates diverted the attention from the colonial project of domination and exploitation by separating civilisations, cultural and ecological areas, ethnic groups and nationalities. A new turn in discussing borderlands emerged in the phase of post-World War II decolonisation with the emergence of newly independent states and resultant boundary conflicts. Academic treatment of borderlands has initially focused on legal aspects of placing boundary lines of separation, on political aspects of disputed territories, irredentism movements, right of self-determinism for minorities, quests for regional autonomy and refugee movements across borders. Borderlands were perceived as clear-cut areas that separated somewhat homogenous entities on both sides of the boundary. Cold War perceptions supported the acceptance of borders as impenetrable given lines of separation. The project of pursuing political stability incorporated boundary-making on various levels independent of ideological affiliations.

In post-Cold War times and the age of globalisation, the issues and viewpoints on borderlands have significantly changed and stimulated important ongoing debates; a variety of reasons could be given from changing academic paradigms to political developments, from minority issues to global migration. The edited volume under review contains thirty-five contributions that are divided in seven sections. The selection of five papers in the first part undermines the paradigm shift in borderland studies. Topics such as violence, gendered borderlands, intimate militarism, bordering and Zomia partly indicate the conceptual framing of the book. The following topical six parts begin with brief introductions and address a wide range of issues that would not necessarily all be regarded as borderland issues in a narrow sense of perception. Livelihoods, commodities, mobilities is the heading for a section that highlights issues of facilitating survival in border regions of China's periphery. Sometimes the actors are