

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 an 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

significantly involved in cross-border activities; other case studies are less affected by cross-border exchange, but locational effects close to international boundaries play a role. The third part addresses physical land use and agrarian transformations, again an issue that would not necessarily be solely connected with borderland studies. The case studies presented in this section justify their inclusion by highlighting aspects of frontier development that brings 19th century debates commencing in the fringes of the American West or Russia into its present-day Asian context. The fourth part is focusing on governance aspects that range from Myanmar's internal treatment of minorities to the issues of enclaves and islands in international border situations. Relational aspects are central in the fifth section where apart from commodities and persons discourses and reinterpretations are the centre of debate and interest. The heading of the sixth part - humanitarians, religion, and NGOs - sounds a bit awkward and combines four papers that would have fitted on other sections as well. The final part goes back from soft to hard power issues in borderlands by addressing control practices, security mechanisms and military presence. The brief overview of the topics and themes that have taken their case studies mainly from the Chinese periphery - nearly all neighbouring countries are part of case studies - and some from the South-East Asian peninsula and Central Asia indicates a challenge for a handbook that hardly can be achieved. Beyond questioning the usefulness of very expensive handbooks lies the issue of whether a field of debate can be reproduced in such a volume that justifies the acceptance of it as a milestone. The topics presented here are much wider than the conceptual framing in the opening section suggests. The common feature of all papers is their relevance to perceiving borderland issues as highly complex themes that incorporate locational aspects, the perception of borders as perforated lines that allow crossing for some and not for others, both degrees of liberty or lack can apply to persons, commodities and ideas. The volume presents the state of the art in borderland debates to a certain degree, the preferential scope of topics, selective conceptual framing endeavours and very interesting case studies. For all readers interested in Asian borderlands it is a valuable source of information, but its exorbitant price in comparison to the feeble and incoherent illustration will probably not fulfil the idea of a handbook that students of borderlands would like to purchase. Consequently, the handbook seems to be a sequence of seven thematic issues that could have published in an academic journal. The challenge of revealing the breadth and width of relevant aspects connected to contemporary issues in Asian borderlands has been addressed in adequate depth in research consortia such

e.g. Crossroads Asia or in the up to now six conferences of the Asian Borderlands Research Network. All efforts combined indicate the complexity and importance of continued research in the established field of interdisciplinary enquiry for which this edited volume is a dearly and valuable addition.

HERMANN KREUTZMANN

BÄTZING, WERNER: Die Alpen. Das Verschwinden einer Kulturlandschaft. 216 S., 228 Abb. und 2 Karten. WBG Theiss. Darmstadt 2018. ISBN 978-3-8062-3779-5. €38,00

Wer sich im deutschsprachigen Raum wissenschaftlich mit den Alpen befasst, kommt an den substanziellen Arbeiten von Werner BÄTZING (em. Professor für Kulturgeographie an der FAU Erlangen) nicht vorbei. Neben einer überarbeiteten Neuauflage seines Standardwerkes „Die Alpen“ (BÄTZING 2015a) und einer an die interessierte Öffentlichkeit gerichteten Streitschrift zur Zukunft der Alpen (BÄTZING 2015b), gibt BÄTZING nun seinen vergriffenen „Bildatlas Alpen. Eine Kulturlandschaft im Portrait“ (BÄTZING 2005) unter dem neuen Titel „Die Alpen. Das Verschwinden einer Landschaft“ neu heraus. Die Neubetitelung geschieht völlig zurecht, handelt es sich doch nicht um eine nur kosmetisch veränderte Neuauflage, sondern ein quasi vollkommen neues Buch, da drei Viertel der Fotografien ersetzt und die Anzahl der Bilder um etwa ein Fünftel auf 228 erhöht wurde. Zudem wurden sämtliche Texte überarbeitet und aktualisiert und das fünfte Kapitel „Aktuelle Situation und Zukunft der Alpen“ vollständig neu konzipiert und geschrieben.

Der neue Bildband richtet sich ebenso wie die Streitschrift (BÄTZING 2015b) an ein breites Publikum, dem Zeit oder Muße für die Lektüre der umfassenden Monographie fehlen (BÄTZING 2015a) und das sich vor allem einen visuellen Eindruck über die Alpen und aktuelle Entwicklungen in diesem, im weltweiten Vergleich sehr dicht besiedelten und intensiv erschlossenen, Hochgebirgsraum machen möchte. Aber auch das wissenschaftliche Fachpublikum und über die Alpen Vortragende wie Lehrende können den Bildband als wertvolle Quelle für inhaltlich kommentierte und in einen logischen Gesamtzusammenhang eingebettete Illustrationen heranziehen, quasi als sehr umfangreichen Bildanhang zur BÄTZING'schen Alpen-Monographie. Daher ähneln sowohl die stringente und sinnvolle Gliederung des Buches als auch zahlreiche inhaltliche Aussagen denen der erwähnten Monographien: Das erste Kapitel widmet sich den unterschiedlichen „Alpen-Bildern“,