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CONTEMPORARY ATLASES OF SERBIA

*Mirčeta Vemić*¹* *Suzana Lović**

*Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" SASA, Belgrade

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Abstract: There are a number of publications under the title 'Atlas of Serbia', but few of them are real atlases, i.e. cartographic works in the traditional sense of the word. In the last century, a small number of geographical, geological, historical, linguistic and other atlases were published for Serbia individually or in the Yugoslav state, and there has not been any larger, complex, synthetic atlas belonging to the category of national atlases. At the beginning of this century, cartographic activity in the country ceased to be a state monopoly, which has resulted in certain progress in the production of atlases, but they have mostly been made by foreign licenses, and only in some cases with certain complements, or with modest attempts on independent work. This paper refers to analysis of conditions and production of the atlas of Serbia at the turn of centuries, as well as needs and opportunities of developing new atlases, including the development of the national atlas of Serbia.

Key words: map (atlas), mapping, geographical atlas, national atlas, cartography, Serbia

Introduction

The word 'atlas' is usually defined as a collection of geographical maps which in its content, purpose, editorial solutions and means of realization makes a unique whole (Peterca, Radošević, & Racetin, 1974; Sališček, 1982). It comes from the name of the Greek mythological giant Atlas (Greek Atlas), who holds the firmament on his shoulders, so that this term also has another use². The broader meaning of the word 'atlas', which means any collection in the literary form, appears in a number of titles of different publications, such as: 'Subjective Atlas of Serbia', unusual book filled with various forms of video-caricature; 'Illustrated Atlas of Serbia', the publication markedly illustrated with photographs and cartographic representations; then 'Serbia - Atlas of Obscurities', which contains articles and photographs of strange and wonderful

¹ Correspondence to: mvemic@eunet.rs

² Today in Serbia with the word 'atlas' in the name there is a bank Atlas Group, the manufacturer of electricity meters 'Atlas Electronis', or a company 'Atlas Kopko Group', manufacturer of compressors, generators, industrial tools, construction and mining machinery and equipment and the like.

tourist destinations; then 'Development Atlas of Serbia', in the form of a digital database of regional development of Serbia³, and so on. However, the basic meaning of the word 'atlas' is related to the collections of geographical, historical, linguistic, technogenic and the like maps, which this paper will analyze in the broader review relating to the territory of Serbia at the turn of the 20th in the 21st century.

Atlases of Serbia and Serbia in Atlases

The territory of Serbia with the surroundings was mapped in many atlases, starting from the first collection of maps⁴ compiled by Mercator and named 'Atlas'. Since then the production of atlases has constantly increased containing various atlas maps associated to this territory. In the last century, the production developed in two directions: partly in the form of special editions of the atlas of Serbia, and the larger issues were within the Yugoslav state. In addition, many of the maps of Serbia were also published in various foreign atlases. In Serbia, making the atlas was in line with the general development of cartography in the country and almost at the same level in comparison with neighbouring countries, while it was lagging behind, and is now lagging behind the developed countries of Europe and the world. Of all recently published atlases in Serbia, the largest number of them has been for school needs. In addition to the school atlases, certain number of other specialized atlases by areas was also published. Until recently, there has been one particular company 'Geokarta' in Belgrade, "cartographic institution of the wider Yugoslav importance specialized to develop and reproduce all kinds of geographical maps, plans, atlases and relief" (Vemić, 2007), which is now in the Republic Geodetic Institute in Belgrade.

School Atlases

Since the foundation in 1947 up to the present, 'Geokarta' processed, and then individually or in co-publishing with other publishing houses published several stable school atlases in several publishing series, from which almost all generations of geographers were taught in Serbia after the Second World War to the present. They are the following:

- Geographic Atlas of the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Grade of Elementary School,
- Geographic Atlas for Secondary Schools,

³ <http://www.razvoj.gov.rs/RASnew/Srbija-Inedx.htm>

⁴ The first atlas map of Serbia with the surroundings, entitled WALACHIA SERVIA, BULGARIA et Romania, was published in the first Atlas of Mercator from 1595.

- Historical Atlas,
- Geographic Atlas for Elementary School with Computer Disk.

All of these atlases were designed in accordance with the curricula of the subjects of geography and history in elementary and secondary schools, but they were used for wider purposes as general encyclopedic atlases. Their volume is about one hundred pages. In the last ten to fifteen years, when the state monopoly on the production of maps and atlases was abolished in Serbia, similar school atlases have been published by private publishers, such as:

- Geographic atlas, 'Magic map', Belgrade,
- Geographic atlas (in Serbian and Hungarian) and Historical Atlas, 'Intersystem Cartography', Belgrade,
- Geographic world atlas for elementary school, 'Prosveta' Niš and 'Merkur-sv' Belgrade,
- School geographical atlas, 'Epoha' from Požega and others.

These atlases, created after the model of the 'Geokarta' atlases, are similar in scope and are also designed to the school curricula of entitled subjects. The similarity between them and the 'Geokarta' atlases is so large in some cases that several court procedures were conducted among their publishers relating to the copyright infringements.

Traffic-Tourist Atlases

Besides school atlases, traffic and tourist atlases have had major production in the last time, especially in quantitative terms. After 'Road Atlas of Yugoslavia' from 1991, 'Geokarta' has not done new atlases, but private publishers were agile and published the following:

- Road Atlas – Serbia 1:880 000 and
- Road Atlas – Belgrade and its surroundings 1:20 000, 'Magic map', Belgrade⁵,
- Serbia - Road Atlas 1:570 000, 'Intersystem Cartography', Belgrade⁶,
- Atlas of the Danube 1:1, 000, 000
- Tourist Atlas of Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia 1:390 000, 'Merkur-sv', Belgrade⁷.

⁵ <http://www.magicmap.rs>

⁶ <http://www.intersistem.rs>

⁷ <http://www.merkur-sv.rs>

Atlases of General Purpose

Today in Serbia, most atlases of general purpose have originated from abroad, and before that in the Yugoslav state, at the end of the last century, the best known atlas was 'Great Atlas of the World' from 1972 and its reprint from 1985, published by 'Mladinska knjiga', Ljubljana - Belgrade. After this atlas, several home publishers began to purchase licenses of some foreign atlases, and with a translation into Serbian they published them in domestic market. Thus the publisher of rare and unusual books 'Mono and Manjana' from Belgrade published 'Encyclopedic Atlas of the World' at 354 pages, with 450 maps. The original atlas was published by the English publisher 'Dorling Kindersley'. Moreover, the publisher similarly published the 'Bible Atlas' at 188 pages, 'Encyclopedic Historical Atlas of the World' at 345 pages and 'Atlas of the Universe' at 216 pages, which belong to a group of the more expensive atlases in our market⁸.

Similarly, the graphic publishing company 'Pi-Press' from Pirot has recently published 'Geographic Atlas of the World' translated from Spanish. The atlas is printed on 450 pages on high quality paper with hard cover. There are 150 geographical maps, including the map of Serbia. Both general and special purposes of the atlas can be found in the marketing text on the website of the publisher: "The atlas is composed of texts, geographical maps and is richly illustrated with colour photographs ... This atlas is understandable to the broad public, both for students and pupils"⁹.

Besides home publishers who publish foreign editions of atlases by translating them, there are foreign publishers of atlases who publish in Serbian. 'Atlas of the World in Six Books' was published by 'Monde Neuf' from Ljubljana, Slovenia, and printed by the 'Politika' from Belgrade in 2007. This publication was printed in a high print run and had low cost per copy, so it was very quickly sold out. 'Atlas of Serbia' has been among these six books which entered the classrooms and replaced the home school atlases in the learning process due to the half lower price. The same 2007, in order to secure the market by low price, a slightly revised school edition of this atlas was printed under the title 'Geographic Atlas of Serbia for School and Home'. That would be quite acceptable if a low price did not bring the poor quality of the aforementioned atlas. On the occasion of the publication of 'Atlas of Serbia' from the six-part edition of the atlases, a sharp reaction appeared in the 'Politika' (on the 27th of

⁸ <http://www.monoimanjana.rs/izdanja.aspx>

⁹ <http://www.pi-press.com>

February 2008) under the title: 'Gaps and deceits', in which the reader Dragoljub M. Kočić, professor from Belgrade, noted several gross errors and mistakes in regard of presenting the cultural heritage of Serbia.

This atlas has also passed through scientific criticism as an example of the atlas with intentional errors that have a political connotation. Namely, the atlas had been published before the self-proclaimed independent state of Kosovo and Metohija, and the boundaries of administrative districts on the territory of this province were erased in a series of atlas thematic maps in it, in order to "get an impression that Kosovo and Metohija is a special unity, and because agricultural crops like sugar beets, sunflowers, potatoes, beans, apples, plums, grapes, equally thrive in the provincial boundaries" (Vemić, 2009). The most drastic example of intentional errors in this atlas refers to the map 'Ethnic population structure', the theme of which was renamed in the subtitle into 'Serbs and national minorities', and "instead to present all national entities on one map by the principle of ethnical majority, as it is usually given on ethnical maps, the Serbs are represented on one map and all national minorities living in Serbia are on the other, suggesting thus their opposition and conflict" (Vemić, 2009). Omitting the representation of the cultural heritage of Serbia or artificial polarizing of the presentation of the population should be sufficient reason for this and similar atlases to be declared 'perishable goods' and thus treated in the market.

In order to make up for the lack of general-purpose atlases for Serbia, the cartographic institution 'Magic map' and newspaper firm 'Blic' created an atlas in electronic form under the title 'The Most Detailed Interactive Atlas of Serbia - Serbia by Districts', which, apart from a digital map, also contained a database of settlements, religious sites, geographical terms, tourism, etc.¹⁰

Specialized Atlases of Serbia

In the last 20 years there have been several specialized atlases of Serbia which show a certain way out of the general geographical cartography and the need for more detailed systematic mapping. Such or similar atlases have already existed in the developed countries of Europe and the world. Among these atlases are:

Geological Atlas of Serbia 1:2, 000, 000, (1992–1998) published by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Republic of Serbia, the editor in

¹⁰ <http://www.magicmap.rs>

chief of which is Milorad D. Dimitrijević, and contains 16 separate thematic maps (Dimitrijević, 1992-1998).

Agricultural Atlas of Serbia (1993–1995), published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Water Management and the SASA Committee for the study of the villages, by Peter J. Marković et al. The publication was prepared in four volumes of different scope to a total of 1 167 pages of textual and cartographic content with a number of representations and statistical data (Marković, 1993–1995).

Atlas of Unemployed in Serbia (1993), published by the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Serbia, by Refik Šećibović et al. Atlas has 120 pages of combined, textual and cartographic content (Šećibović, 1993).

Speleological Atlas of Serbia (1998), published by the Geographical Institute 'Jovan Cvijić', SASA, the editor of which is Predrag Djurović. Atlas was done bilingually in Serbian and English, in which 81 caves are represented cartographically and described textually at 290 pages with 12 colours.

Regional Atlas of Vojvodina - Agriculture (2000), by Jovan Romelić and Lazar Lazić, published by the University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Science, Institute of Geography, in which all branches of agricultural activity in Autonomous Province of Vojvodina are represented at 100 pages of textual and cartographic content (Romelić & Lazić, 2000).

Atlas of Old Serbia - European Maps of Kosovo and Metohija (2007), by Mirčeta Vemić and Mladen Strugar, published by 'Svetigora', which contains, along with accompanying text, 40 ancient historical and several historiographical maps of famous European and national geographers and cartographers, related to historic Old Serbia from the 16th to the 20th century (Vemić & Strugar, 2007). This atlas was published in Serbian, English and Russian.

Atlas of winds of Vojvodina (2010), which was made by the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad, under the leadership of professor Vladimir Katić, as a study on the potentials of wind energy and the locations of the profitable investment in this type of energy source in Vojvodina¹¹.

¹¹ http://www.vojvodina.gov.rs/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3243

Geothermal Atlas of Vojvodina (2010), which was made by the Faculty of Mining and Geology, Belgrade, Serbia and the Geological Institute of Serbia and NIS-Naftagas, with the financial support of the Provincial Secretariat for Energy. It consists of 10 maps and one plate in scale 1:300 000 with a base of descriptive and numeric data for all 78 geothermal wells at a depth to 2 000 m.¹²

Initiated Projects of Specialized Atlases in Serbia

Besides mentioned atlases, there is certain number of initiated projects of specialized atlases that are in production. Depending on the size of the project and the financial resources of publishers, they are in different stages of development. The following atlases are among such projects:

Slavic Linguistic Atlas (SLA) - This project was initiated with the establishment of the Yugoslav Committee for Dialectological Atlases at the International Slavic Congress in Moscow in 1959. The Committee was subsequently reorganized and renamed into the Inter-Academic Committee for Dialectological Atlases (SASA), which was involved in the major international projects together with the academies of sciences of other Slavic countries. This project developed the *European Linguistic Atlas* (1974), *Carpathian Dialectological Atlas* (CDA) (1976) and *Serbo-Croatian Dialectological Atlas* (SCDA), i.e. (now) *Serbian Dialectological Atlas* (SDA).

Atlas of the Population of Vojvodina was initiated in the late 80s of the last century, and a collection of 86 maps and 22 tables was made for the atlas at the Institute of Geography, University of Novi Sad, under the leadership of professor Slobodan Ćurčić (Ćurčić, 1987).

Atlas of National Architecture of Serbia was initiated in 2003 as a project of the Institute for Cultural Heritage Preservation of the Republic of Serbia with the aim to collect historical and ethnographic, technical and photographic documentation of the most valuable objects of folk architecture that would be published in the volumes of the national architecture of Serbia. It was begun only with the second volume of the Atlas at the end of 2009.

Atlas of Settlements of Vojvodina was initiated several years ago as a project of Serbian Cultural Literary Society (Matica srpska) in collaboration with the Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management and the Museum of Vojvodina in Novi Sad. The successive issuing of maps has been planned for the

¹² http://www.vojvodina.gov.rs/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5011&Itemid=2

next three years: Srem (125 settlements), Banat (176 settlements) and Bačka (166 settlements).

Ethnological Atlas of Serbia was initiated in 2009 in the Ethnographic Institute of SASA, with the aim of "establishing database of the phenomena of traditional folk culture, the content of which could be processed cartographically and as monographs. Such processing will provide assessing the conditions of certain phenomena of traditional folk culture as an integral part of everyday culture, that is, cultural memory. Except for purposes of documentation, the database will be used for purposes of protection and propagation of this part of the cultural heritage of Serbia"¹³.

National Atlas of Serbia

Serbia is the only country in Europe that does not have national atlas, although in the last 70 years there was awareness and need, as well as several attempts, that such scientific and cultural work should be published in the Yugoslav state. The issuing of the national atlases was first initiated by the Academy of Sciences on the 2nd of December 1940 at the initiative of Academician Stevan Bošković. On that occasion, the Academy organized a panel of five members with Milutin Milanković headed. After the Second World War, in 1957, the Serbian Geographical Society also raised a question of making the national atlas of the country. The draft of the project and an outline of the cost estimate was done and submitted to the Federal Executive Council, but nothing was done. In addition to the lack of pronounced political will and consent of the republics and provinces, the atlas was not realized for the reasons of bad scientific and technical cooperation, especially geographers and geodesists. The last attempt at making a similar atlas entitled 'The Great Geographical Atlas of Yugoslavia' (1987) was made by the Military Geographical Institute, Belgrade, Institute of Cartography and Geodesy in Zagreb, along with the executive publisher of the 'Sveučilišna naklada Liber', Zagreb.

Contemporary national atlases are based on the methodological concept of the theory of systems, so that apart from the spatial completeness of the territory of mapping, they include thematic diversity and complexity of mapping in unique whole which is structurally, functionally and generically arranged. Spatial and thematic correlation with the contents of the atlas is followed by the defined scale system of atlas maps, as well as a unique key of cartographic symbols, in accordance with the aims of mapping. The issuing of national atlases is run by

¹³ <http://www.etno-institut.co.rs/cirilica/atlas.asp>

the national academies of sciences, the relevant ministries in the government, as well as other institutions of higher social significance. They are made on the basis of knowledge, scientific exploration, data and other scientific, technical and production potentials of the country, as well as the recommendations and standards of international geographic and cartographic associations, notably the International Commission for the National Atlas of the United Nations, formed in 1956. Geographic and cartographic institutions are the main stakeholders in making such atlases and Geographical Institute "Jovan Cvijić" of the SASA is among them. Preparation, processing and mapping of various researches require multiple scientific and social cooperation of all stakeholders in the project.

Conclusion

Atlases are works of the greatest scientific and cultural significance. They are special geographical encyclopedias containing knowledge and notions of territory and the life of a country, region or the world. Expressed in clear, readable and analytical (or digital) form, atlases are general 'visiting card' of the country, or other completed areas, which show the nature, population, economics, links, and special characteristics that the area has. Serbia at the turn of the 20th in the 21st century cannot commend itself by rich production of atlases, although there are notable results, especially in academic cartography. In addition to school atlases, there are several specialized atlases and a large number of those started. Production of atlases of general purpose is the weakest in Serbia and they are mainly 'imported' from abroad, with no apparent quality control. However, this country has a tradition of atlas making, as well as significant human resources who, in the current relatively weak financial conditions, but in good cooperation, can run and make many more new, thematically different atlases, from which, along with the existing ones, a wider and more complex project of the national atlas of Serbia would be systematically carried out as a direct scientific and methodological step forward.

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