

Lozovanu, D., Delinschi, A., Kahl, T. and Prishchepov, A. (eds.): *Gagauziya (Gagauz Yeri) Avtonom Bölgesi Atlası / Atlas of ATU Gagauzia (Gagauz Yeri)*. Editura PROART, Chişinău, 2014, 72 p.

The atlas of Gagauzia (or formally Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauzia) is an attempt to present the general characteristics of this relatively small autonomous region of the Republic of Moldova established 20 years ago. Gagauzia covers only 1848 km<sup>2</sup>, where 156 thousand people lived in 2004, whose majority was Gagauzian. Gagauzians are Orthodox Christians who speak Gagauzian which belongs to the Turkic language group.

According to the authors' introduction, this is the first thematic atlas about Gagauzia (and also the first in the broader region), which serves as "a model of the regional Atlases in Republic of Moldova and abroad" (p. 9). Moreover, based on the outfit of high standard, the diverse content and the involvement of governmental institutions in the preparation of the atlas, this collection of maps looks more a national atlas of Gagauzia than a "simple" regional atlas. Naturally, labeling the atlas of an autonomous territory as 'national' would lead to political conflicts particularly in a country which still faces territorial conflicts with the *de facto* sovereign Transnistrian state.

The atlas is addressed not only to scholars but everyone who is interested in Gagauzia's geography, economics, ecology, history and ethnography. The authors intend this issue

on the one hand as a scientific basis for development programs, and on the other as a source of information about Gagauzia. Contrary to the above mentioned specific target, the reason for creating this atlas sounds rather vague, as it is "due to the spirit of times, perception of something new ..." (p. 9).

Looking into the atlas one can find 77 maps on 72 pages. The maps do not accompanied and explained by texts (only by short additional information in some cases), except the introductory words and dedications by the managing editor, the governor of Gagauzia and the main sponsor. Both the texts and the legends are available in four languages (Gagauzian, Moldavian, Russian and English) to reach not only local and Moldovan readers but also the outside world. Place-names are written in Moldovan, Gagauzian and Russian in the autonomous



territory and without Gagauzian names outside Gagauzia. Regarding the place-names, two inconsequences can be found on page 14 and 15 where Gagauzian names are missing.

The autonomous territory's current conditions are depicted in 14 topics. Out of the 77 maps, only 47 are limited to Gagauzia itself. The weight of the topics does not reflect the general structure of the international traditions in atlas cartography. Some issues are underrepresented or even missing, which is probably due to the hard-to-access statistical data, while some topics are overrepresented, which reports on the local importance of these issues (e.g. ethnic structure). Analyzing the structure of the atlas, we identified only one map which does not meet the logic chain of the atlas at all: this is the map of the central part of Comrat, the seat of Gagauzia (p. 52). But overall, except this case, the atlas' structure satisfies the criteria of a regional atlas.

The number of maps by categories clearly shows the topics with high local interest. Among demographic maps, ethnicity is presented in four maps and two diagrams, while only one map is dedicated to natural increase and migration which strongly affect the country's demographic, economical and social circumstances. Similarly, 17 maps focus on issues related to the agriculture, while other parts of economy presented only in 5 maps. Most of the topics representing the Gagauzian society (e.g. education, culture, health care, religion, sport, tourism) are approached from an infrastructural perspective: for instance education maps concentrate on the number of the institutions rather than the educational attainment of the population.

The last two maps before the historical maps depict the distribution of Gagauzians in the broader region based on official and estimated data. Since the title of the book refers that the atlas' content is about Gagauzia and not about Gagauzians, involving this issue reports on inconsistency. This highlights the mingled nation concepts (territorial or cultural) characterizing the whole region. Similarly, the historical maps are probably involved to the atlas in order to strengthen local/regional/ethnic (Gagauzian) identity, otherwise their inclusion is meaningless. Both phenomena underpin that the book serves as a national atlas and thereby it is a cartographic tool for Gagauzian nation building (as all of the national atlases).

The design of the maps is generally harmonious. The maps reflect a consistent editorial work with predetermined scale series. The symbols are easy-to-read and easily interpreted. The cartographic elements (title, scale bar, legend) are aesthetic. At the same time, the symbols of the map legend appear to be overcolored, which resulted in too vivid outlook. Colors with less saturation, precisely elaborated symbols would have eventuated in clear-out, more readable maps.

Concerning the territory of Gagauzia, it is a striking phenomenon that the thematic content appears as a so-called "island-like map" (a map on which only a selected area is mapped fully) in most cases. Presenting such a small area it would have been a worth using contiguous thematics to fill in the emptiness among the isolated territories of Gagauzia (like on page 21). A positive but single example is found on page 30, where this deficiency is compensated by the overview map of Moldova. But generally the "island-like map" phenomenon, especially spectacular in case of the physical geographical part of the atlas, reduces readability.

From cartographic point of view, the lack of the geographical grid is considered to be a fault, and, although scale bar is part of the maps, scale in numeric format should also be written on maps. Another problem is the crowding of the maps originated from applying too many diagrams and the multilingual legends, which makes map interpretation difficult (e.g. on page 46).

More minor cartographic errors can be found throughout the atlas, but they are not decreasing the value of enjoyment of maps. Just to name some of the problems: map on

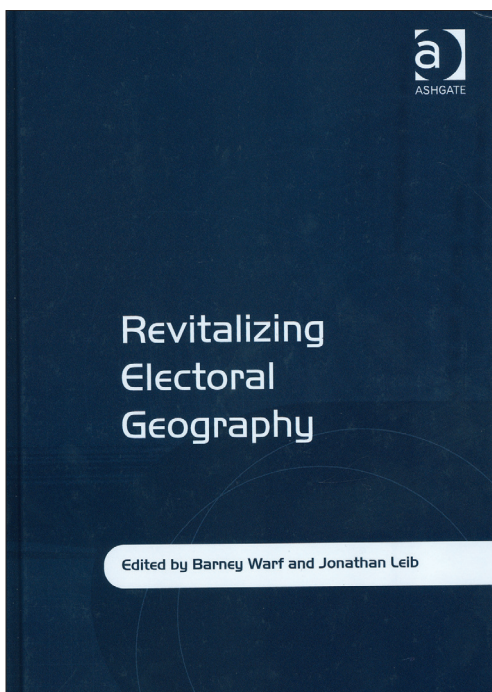
geology, climate and soils does not contain border of communes, therefore the localization of some phenomena challenges the reader. In addition, the soil map legend is constituted by eight categories but the summarizing cake chart includes only six ones. In several maps, contrary to the initial practice, the outlines of the settlements are missing. In case of the maps with landscape orientation in the historical-administrative section, it would have been better to orient them in the same direction.

On the whole, we conclude, that despite the minor cartographic problems, the Atlas of ATU Gagauzia is a well-designed work of high quality, which is recommended for everyone who would like to be acquainted in depth with this region and its cartographic representation.

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**Warf, B. and Leib, J. (ed.): Revitalizing Electoral Geography.** Burlington, Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011. 238 p.

Electoral geography has a long and complex history and once possessed a distinguished status within the discipline of political geography. This dominance decreased after 1980 and the thematic coverage of electoral geography became partially obsolete. While social



geography began to deal with more conceptual questions, electoral geography became utterly positivist and sank into its own 'moribund backwater'. Electoral geographers had to face the challenges of renewal, and this book is an important trial to revitalize electoral geography.

The book consists of three major parts and contains altogether twelve chapters. The first part of the book sets the conceptual background. Barney WARF and Jonathan LEIB, who are the editors of the volume, describe the need for revitalisation and summarise the messages of the studies included in the book. The editors emphasize that the overall goal of these chapters is to show some conceptual, theoretical and methodological perspectives for electoral geographers.

In the second chapter Jonathan LEIB and Nicolas QUINTON discuss the current trends in electoral geography. Authors analyse 224 articles published mainly in English language journals (e.g. Political