

Historic Town Atlases of Poland - the Progress up of Today

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Abstract. These projects, i.e. Historic Town Atlases of Poland, include, first of all, the information on historic town atlases in Poland of: Toruń, Kraków, Wrocław and some other. In preparation for print, there are many other historic atlases for the towns of: Ostróda, Sandomierz, and many other ones. It is the right moment to publish a full list of atlases for Polish towns being in print. Urban development in general but also urban research are today confronted with some fundamental choices which must take into consideration the topographical development of a town and other vestiges of its past (historical street-plan, monuments, fortifications etc. Today, i.e. 20 years from the start of this European project, we have still methodological problems, how to present elements of maps and plans in atlases.

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At the end of 1993, thus nearly 20 years ago, a team of Toruń Nicolaus Copernicus University scholars (Czacharowski, Czaja, Koziel), published the first book of the "Historic Towns Atlas of Poland" Volume 1, Book 1 - Elbląg. By this publication, Poland as the first state of the so-called Eastern Block joined the publishers of for historic European towns atlases, covering many European states. The International Commission of Town History which in 1965 during a Vienna Congress decided to place in its programme this task as one of the main projects, playing the patronage over the edition of the town atlases, gave the first impulse to them. In accordance with the recommendation of this Commission, these atlases were to be published in form of separate files for each town, containing the following specification of plans:

- a) a 19th century or else the pre-industrial period cadastral plan in 1:2500 scale;
- b) a 19th century map contemporary to the cadastral plan, presenting the town and its surroundings generally in 1:25000 scale;
- c) a modern plan of the town,

- d) a plan of spatial development of the town from the Middle Ages to the contemporary times in 1:5000 scale.

Apart from that, the atlas shall contain a reproduction of a remote, most representative view on the town. An integral part of the atlas must be a concise historic comment, containing the town's history with a particular attention paid to its spatial development. The implementation of this programme is, however, dependent upon the cartographic sources being preserved.

Up to now, atlases have been published for many European towns, of which one half has been published by German scholars, amongst whom, particularly devoted are professors Heinz Stoob from Münster and Edith Ennen from Bonn. The atlases published up to now correspond best with the requirements imposed by the Commission, and they are also perfect from the material and technical points of view. German editorial experience serves as a template to the publishers from other European states.

The main task for the edition of atlases is the creation of source bases for the research over the urbanization of Europe and spatial changes in towns, and therefore, it must be adjusted to this function from the point of view of language. Therefore, it is necessary to use in the comments and explanations, apart from the national language, also one of congress languages. For Polish edition, German language was elected because of a particular interest of our Western neighbours in the history of Polish towns.

Apart from the main scholarly purpose, the individual books of the atlas can be also useful for other needs, and in particular for:

- a) urban, architectural, and conservative work, environmental protection,
- b) teaching and didactic purposes in schools and universities,
- c) making popular the knowledge on towns history.

We may also hope that the Historic Polish Town Atlases shall be useful tools for conservators, urbanist ateliers, museums, archeological workshops, educational, administrative and other institutions.

Up to now, the following atlases have been completed for the territory of Poland: Elbląg, Toruń, Chełmno, Bydgoszcz, Grudziądz, Giżycko, Niemcza, Trzebnica, Środa Śląska, Wrocław, Racibórz, and Kraków. Currently, at the Faculty of Historical Scholarship and the Faculty of Earth Sciences of Toruń NCU, the work has been started on atlases for the following towns: Świecie, Chojnice, Ostróda, Fordon, Sepólno Krajeńskie.

Scholarly centres in Kraków prepare for publishing atlases for: Sandomierz, and a team of scholars in Wrocław prepare atlases for Wrocław.

The hope and conviction shall be expressed that by 2030, if the project does not encounter unexpected difficulties, atlases for towns of the whole territory of Poland shall have been prepared.