

# Croatian Geographical Atlases since the 1880s

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## Abstract:

This presentation summarizes the research on geographical atlases in the Croatian language from the first translated school world atlas issued in the late 19th century until the latest atlases published at the beginning of the 21st century. Besides the chronological review of all types of atlases, the research had another objective. It was to determine the similarities and differences in the contents and structure of general world atlases, which might, or might not, have appeared due to the various cartographic environments. Therefore, the eleven most notable and influential atlases printed in the last sixty years were analysed in more detail, using the comparison method. Specifically, several characteristics of atlases, such as the adherence to encyclopaedic principles, approaches to textual content and structure, origins of maps, usage and writing of geographical names, were investigated. In addition, and for a more systematized presentation, a possible categorization of atlases based on the Croatian atlas corpus has been suggested. According to it, atlases are grouped into several types depending on different criteria. Space criterion refers to the covered area (types: world, national and regional atlases). Purpose criterion refers to the main purpose or targeted users (types: general/comprehensive, school, and thematic atlases). The structure criterion refers to the dominant component of the atlas (types: cartographic, encyclopaedic, and statistic atlases). The country-of-origin criterion refers to the country where the dominant part of the atlas, usually the maps, was made (types: domestic and translated atlases).

The most common atlases in the market are school atlases. Targeting different student age groups (preschool/children, primary or secondary school) or their specific interests (e.g., cities, counties, oceans, different continents), they have been produced on a large scale by various publishers in the last thirty years. In most cases, they are either entirely or partly translated atlases with some additional novelties in the maps, graphics, or text sections. One of such translated school atlases is generally the first published translated atlas in Croatia, *Kozen's Geographical Atlas for Secondary School* (1887). It was significantly updated, changed, or supplemented later. With its eleven editions printed until the 1930s, it was either the only or the most respectable atlas in Croatia at the time, with the influence that had been reaching far beyond the school domain.

Although national school atlases are numerous and widely offered by many publishers, their more comprehensive counterparts are produced in limited numbers during a long period, meaning that each atlas has/had been used for a long time. Depending on the country to which it belonged at the time, the Croatian national atlases have included territories such as Austria-Hungary, the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, or the Republic of Croatia. The most recent one is the *Great Atlas of Croatia* (2002 and 2012).

Regional and thematic atlases are rather few compared to other types of atlases. The most detailed regional atlas is the *Atlas of Europe* (1997), which was widely accepted and appreciated because of the extensive textual component and elaborate thematic maps. Recently printed regional atlases of continents are translated and adapted atlases that serve both general and school purposes. For a long time, there were a few thematic atlases available (e.g., *Statistical Atlas of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia* issued in 1915, *Road Atlas of Yugoslavia* from 1965). Nevertheless, various compilations of maps of climate, counties, or oceans have been offered more recently.

General world atlases were first published in the 1930s. Only a few such atlases were issued until the 1960s (such as *Minerva's World Atlas*, 1938) when the first of the total seven editions of the Lexicographical Institute's *World Atlas* appeared in 1961. This atlas is the only general world atlas made entirely in Croatia. Besides, several other publishers have been producing world atlases, so their number and variety increased in the last decades. However, these atlases are based on translated maps of atlases mostly produced by German, British or American publishers, so from the Croatian perspective, their cartographic sections are not exceptional, i.e. sometimes too slightly adapted to the domestic users.

Results of the contents and structure analysis suggest that most general world atlases published after 1961 and available on the Croatian market today have several common characteristics. The covered area is inherently comprehensive, the presentation of spatial units is consistent, the textual part is concise, accurate, organized, and up-to-date, the selection of data is credible and relevant, the interpretation of data strives for maximum objectivity, and the conception is biased because each atlas represents the world from the national perspective of the original publisher. Results also point out that the Institute's *World Atlas* stands out among the others for several reasons, not only for its entirely domestic production. It represents the world from a Croatian perspective, sets a high level of professionalism in data interpretation, contains a strong textual component that makes it a standard encyclopaedic atlas, sets norms in writing geographical names from foreign languages, produces its own maps, and applies its special concise writing style.