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The research results are published multilingually as atlases volumes and in excerpts on the Internet. The digital visualisation allows an interactive, multimedia linking of maps, images and texts. www.herder-institut.de/town-atlas-silesia

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A fundamental work for comparative urban research in the European context

HERDER INSTITUTE
for Historical Research on East Central Europe
INSTITUTE OF THE LEIBNIZ ASSOCIATION

Historical-Topographical Atlas of Silesian Towns
Historisch-topographischer Atlas schlesischer Städte
Historyczno-topograficzny atlas miast śląskich
Historicko-topografický atlas slezských měst

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The aim of the atlas is to document the development of 34 selected towns in the historic region of Silesia from the 19th to the 21st century. The area covered is formed by the Prussian province of Silesia and the Austrian Duchy of Silesia within their 19th-century borders.

It provides a synoptic documentation of the settlement development of these towns from the beginning of the Industrial Age in Silesia through the expansion during industrialisation and the development of their modern transport infrastructures as well as the creation of residential areas in the period between the two World Wars.

The period after 1945 is examined primarily in terms of the different forms of redevelopment and the changing functions of the areas cited, including the towns' current transformations.

The results of the research project of the Herder Institute in association with Polish and German partners represent a combination of facts, information and interpretations of the history and present-day situation of the covered Silesian towns in a Europe that is growing together. The project itself is thus part of this process.

Twenty-nine authors from Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany have written the articles on the history of the towns covering the settlement, transport and economic geography of each town and its hinterland.

In addition to written sources, their work is also based on a series of partly unique maps and aerial photographs at a uniform scale of 1:25,000. These date back to key years around 1830, 1900, 1940, 1975 and 2000. Of particular significance are the maps depicting the towns’ evolution, the so-called development phases maps, which have been created exclusively for this atlas. Furthermore, the views of towns and individual buildings provided give an insight into the townscape.

The chronology of the selected maps and aerial photographs clarifies the changes in the urban landscape over the past two centuries and enables researchers and practitioners to make insightful comparisons of past and present land use, including its consequences.