

Research in the Grisons

Atlas of the history of the Grisons

500 years of history crisp and compact on 250 pages



Karin Fuchs assesses sample pages. The atlas on the history of the Grisons will be published in 2024. Image. D. Heinen

September 23, 1524 marks an important event in the history of the Grisons. On this day, the Federal Charter of Ilanz was notarized, which is generally regarded as the first “constitution of the Grisons”. Therefore, this date is also the starting point for the “Atlas on the History of the Grisons”, which will be published in 2024. The atlas will present the history of the Grisons during the last 500 years in an informative and illustrative way.

Historian Karin Fuchs from the Institute for Cultural Research of the Grisons (Institut für Kulturforschung, ikg) is leading the major project, which began in spring 2020. Fuchs describes the genesis of the project: “The idea for a historical–statistical atlas came from State Archivist Reto Weiss. He approached the ikg because we are very well connected and have the professional know-how for this task. The atlas is being produced in collaboration with the state archives of the Grisons and with substantial financial support from the canton of the Grisons.”

There are several features that distinguish the atlas. First, the approach is different from other historical publications, says Fuchs: “Normally, you start researching and then, in the next step, you think about how you want to present the results. In our case, it was the other way around. Since the visual presentation using maps, illustrations and infographics will be a main feature of the atlas, we first considered how the atlas should look. Each topic will be presented on two double–page spreads. The project team, in collaboration with the project committee and the advisory committee, consisting of experts from universities and the cantonal administration, determined fifty topics.”

Another challenge: to present fifty individual topics in the areas of population, environment, economy, politics and culture in a compact way over a period of 500 years. In the end, the aim is to produce a lean book with 250 pages. Fuchs explains, “In order to obtain this know-how, we are involving many researchers with the relevant expertise. That makes coordination challenging.” In addition, she says, historians are generally not accustomed to presenting their research findings visually. Nevertheless, Fuchs has succeeded in sparking an appetite for the

Original article published in the Bündner Woche on September 1, 2021

visual approach. Researchers from all over Switzerland have shown great interest in participating, and concepts already exist for most of the topics.

The “Atlas of the history of the Grisons 1524–2024” is intended to appeal equally to all Grisons residents, therefore the atlas will be published in all three cantonal languages. Fuchs explains: “Of course, it is an additional challenge to produce three publications of equal quality. However, it is of great concern to us to take all languages and regions into account. The atlas should cover a broad range of interests. It is aimed at the entire population, at interested laypersons as well as at specialists. In addition, I expect that a variety of connections between the topics will emerge and that new insights and connections will thus become visible.”

Authors: Karin Fuchs and Daniela Heinen

The Institute for Cultural Research of the Grisons conducts and promotes research in the humanities, social sciences and cultural studies with a general reference to the Alpine region and with special emphasis on the Grisons and neighboring regions. www.kulturforschung.ch

Sponsored Content: The content of this article was provided by Academia Raetica, the association for the promotion of science, research and education in Graubünden:

www.academiaaetica.ch.



Daniela Heinen