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# Historical Map Collection

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After three years of closure, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2013, the extravagant [Historical Map Collection at the Faculty of Science](#), Geographical Institute finally reopened its doors once again. This momentous event was met by a wonderful reception to unveil the grand display to invited guests. A large gathering attended, obviously knowing how important this event is to be commemorated which was dictated by various people who have made massive contributions to the collection such as Dr. Eva Novotná, the director of the collection.

Having first been established in 1891 and later significantly developed by Prof. Václav Švambara, the map collection has been through a process of highs and lows. From its turmoil in the 1950s when there was a lack of funding provided by the faculty, the collection has risen from the ashes in recent years to become a highly regarded display.

Reconstruction began in 2011 under Dr. Novotná who decided the collection needed to be revamped, a perfect way to stay in relation to the times. The many maps, atlases and globes have all been restored as well as the interior of the exhibition such as new worktops and state-of-the-art computers. This is an obvious sign that the collection is now suited to the development of technology especially with the digitalisation of the works. This will bring in a wider audience who will be able to access the maps online as well as at the collection. As reiterated by Dr. Novotná during the reopening presentation, there are currently 19 000 items which can be accessed online. This is major step for the new reformed collection as there is large emphasis that not only is it an archive; it is still active in development. This includes the digitalisation of exhibits and also the frequent use for research by students and academics.

With the restoration of the collection being such an immense project, it was not a surprise that there was such a large amount of people working on the construction. All departments from the Geographical Institute of the Faculty of Science provided assistance as well as many external helpers ranging from architects to engineers. This shows simply how important the Historical Collection of Maps is with the large scale process it has gone through and the exhibition certainly did not disappoint.

In the exhibition, a large range of invaluable items were on display which impressively dates back from the 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Highly interesting maps depicted different continents and countries, which were some of the first produced of them. However it was not just impressive maps on display: there were also globes which were constructed centuries ago and also a construction plan of the St Vitus Cathedral in Prague which are guaranteed to attract visitors. Amongst the many exhibits, work by famous cartographers such as Johann Homann from Germany and the French Guillaume Delisle also appear in the displays. With such a massive catalogue of maps, many are stored in the refurbished cabinets which can be requested to view. As previously mentioned, the increase of workspaces in the exhibition shows the dedication towards an active collection where people can use the sources for research.

As well as the exhibition itself, it is also noteworthy to take a look at the restoration process information which is available to view along the corridor outside the exhibition. Detailed accounts are included as well as photos which showed step by step how the collection became what it is now.

A thoroughly interesting exhibition which can be identified by the efforts put into it, Prof. Švambara's dream of having a fitting place to display all the magnificent maps has finally been achieved.

### Admission and opening hours

The Collection is open on Wednesdays 10.00-17.00 except for the 1st of July to the 31st of August and from the 15th until the 31st of December and National Holidays. Visitors will not be allowed in from 16.30.

Registration fee to use the collection is 70 Kč.

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