

THE CARTOGRAPHIC HERITAGE AT THE RUSSIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

International conference devoted to the Russian Geographical Society archive of maps and geographic papers, their preservation and use in academic research.

St. Petersburg, (tentatively September) 2004.

The proposed conference will be held in Russia, St. Petersburg in (tentatively September) 2004.

This conference is devoted to the preservation and use of historical maps in academic and applied research. The organizers believe that the best way to preserve and utilize historical maps and geographical papers now preserved in archives is to make them more widely available in both digital and paper form to the broader community of researchers. Digitization and dissemination is the best measure for their preservation and a guarantee against accidental destruction and deterioration over time. This conference will bring together historians, geographers, map curators, and experts in related disciplines for an evaluation of the current state of affairs in the Russian map archives, and thus make these important collections a matter of concern for the general public and decision-makers in Russia.

The Russian Geographical Society (RGO) had been selected as the host institution for the several reasons:

- The RGO Archive and Library at St. Petersburg concentrate a great number of maps and related papers, survey diaries, and other materials that were compiled by the Russian academic and military surveyors of the second half of the XIX century. These surveys cover big regions of European Russia, Siberia, Central Asia, North- and North-Western China, Tibet, etc. Many of these maps are scarce and virtually unknown to the international community of scholars. This prestigious collection of maps and documents now requires urgent measures for its preservation.
- It is easier to overcome the organizational and bureaucratic obstacles in this singular collection with its rather small society of associates than in the big system of the Russian Federal Archival Agency. We currently have access and approval of our plans from the RGO President Admiral A. Komaritsyn and the RGO archive curator, Professor, Dr. A. Postnikov.
- If the conference will result in a project for the preservation of the archive and organizing broad access to the collections, it will be possible to manage and control such a project within the RGO.

We propose four major topics of the conference, joined by the general theme: **conversion of historical maps (and spatially-related documents) into digital formats, and utilizing digital images of historical maps in research.**

- History of cartography: problems related to the conversion of paper maps into digital form, and the mathematical parameters of cartography (consisting of spatial accuracy of the survey and geodetic networks, as well as dealing with projections).
- Historical GIS: approaches and experience in building of Historical GIS databases, Historical GIS as an infrastructure for the research community, spatial data models, visualization and analysis of the historical maps.
- Central Asia: one of the major components of the RGO map collections consists of Russian maps and surveys for Central Asia and China
- Environmental history and historical geography: digital methods, databases and GIS.

An approximate number of participants should not exceed 50-60 people.

The following program is suggested.

Arrival. Guests of the conference will be lodged in the downtown hotel of Russian Academy of Sciences, Millionnaia st., near the Winter Palace, fifteen minutes walk from the RGO, or the hotel at Sadovaya st. two minutes walk from the RGO.

At the evening a walk excursion around the city may be planned.

Day 1. Registration opens at 10 a.m. at the building of the Russian Geographical Society, Petersburg, Grivtsova 6.

- 11:00. Opening of the conference at the RGO building. Welcome addresses.
Plenary lecture about the history of the RGO and the holdings of the RGO archive, given by Prof. Postnikov, curator of the RGO archive.
- 13:00 – 14:30 Lunch near the RGO
- 14:30 – 16:45 History of cartography section
- 17:00 Preliminary Tour of the RGO building, including library and archive.
- 19:00 Welcome reception at the RGO.
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- Day 2. 10:00. – 11:30 Parallel sections
Section on the Central Asia and China
Digitization and utilization of historical map sources
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch near the RGO
- 14:30 – 17:00 Parallel sections:
Historical GIS Databases
Environmental history and historical geography
- 19:00 optional
Bus (or boat) tour of St. Petersburg.
Visiting the Collection of the Globes of the Kunstkamera (Museum of Curiosities).
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- Day 3. 10:00 – 12:00 In – Depth Examination of the Archives
- 12:30-14:30 Lunch near the RGO
- 14:30 – 16:00 Business meeting with the RGO representatives and the international project initiative group.
- 16:00 – 16:30 Closing remarks
- 19:00 Excursion to Hermitage Museum