A Journey through the History of Maps in the Holdings of the Research Library of Zadar

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Abstract: Using the example of the Collection of Maps and Atlases in the holdings of the Research Library of Zadar, this paper will attempt to clarify the manner of its formation, the origin and processing, storage, display and the process of its digitalisation as the safest way of its protection and a wider availability to users. The Research Library of Zadar is one of the largest public loan libraries in Croatia. It was founded in 1855 on the basis of a donation by Piero Alessandro Paravia (1797–1857), in whose honour it was named Biblioteca Comunale Paravia. After the Second World War it was renamed, first as Narodna, and then Naučna biblioteka, and since 1992 it has operated under its present name of the Research Library of Zadar.

The holdings of the Library keep about 950 000 bibliographic units, 34 of which originate from the 15th century, and about 1020 from the 16th century. One of the most notable collections of the Research Library is the Collection of Maps and Atlases, which contains 2491 units. This collection stores numerous maps and atlases, among which the following stand out: Benedetto Bordone: Isolario ... Nel gual si ragiona di tutte l'Isole del Mondo, Venezia, 1547; Abraham Ortelius: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, Antwerpen, 1575 (within which a special one is Ioannes Sambucus: Ilyricum, Vienna; Wolfgang Lazio: Carinthiae Ducatus et Goritiae Palatines; Pietro Coppo: Histriae tabula); Natale Bonifacio: Zarae et Sebenici descriptio; Gerard Mercator: Sclavonia, Croatia, Bosnia cum Dalmatiae Parte, Amsterdam, 1630, Giuseppe Rosaccio: Zarra (an extract from the atlas Viaggio da Venetia a Constantinopoli per mare e per terra ...), Venezia, 1598; Vincenzo Maria Coronelli: Contando di Zara. Parte della Dalmatia, Venezia, 1688; Nicolaes Visscher II: Atlas minor sive geographia compendiosa qua orbis terrarum perpaucas attamen novissimas tabulas ostenditur, Amsterdam, 1683–1684, Guillaume Sanson: [Atlas], Amsterdam, about 1720; Guillaume De L'Isle: [Atlas], Amsterdam, 1739; Johann Baptist Homann and Georg Matthaus Seutter: (an atlas without the front page), Augsburg, mid. 18th century; Joseph Roux: Recueil des Principaux Plans des Ports et Rades de la Mer Mediterranée, Genova, 1779; Antonio Zatta: Atlante novissimo ed Accresciuto sulle Osservazioni e Scoperte fatte dai più recenti Geografi, I–IV, Venezia, 1779–1785; Giovanni Antonio Capellaris: Carfa dell'Istria ..., Trieste, 1797; Vicenzo De Lucio: Nuova carta del Mare Adriatico o sia Golfo di Venezia disegnata secondo l'ultime osservazioni Astronomiche e rilevi fatti sopra luogo con li dettagli delle coste, Trieste, 1809.

In addition to the above mentioned maps and atlases the Library also stores several old geographic works containing numerous geographical maps: Filippo Ferrari: Lexicon Geographicum, Milano, 1627; ibid: Epitome geographicvm in quattuor libros diuisum. Pavia, 1605; Jean Marie Bruyset: Atlas des enfants ou nouvelle methode pour aprendre la Geographie, Lyon, 1774; Claudio Buffier: Geografia universale, Venezia, 1767.

Also, many maps were published in the travel books of European scientists, writers, sailors and others, who, while touring the eastern coast of the Adriatic wrote down their geographic, ethnographic and other observations. The rich cartographic heritage which is held in the
holdings of the Research Library of Zadar is a valuable source for scientific research as well as an indicator of a centuries-long cultural and scientific tradition of one of the most important Croatian towns.

Since the old maps, atlases and lexicons of geographical terms are an extremely important cultural asset, it is necessary to take care of their permanent protection along with their being used for research, exhibition and educational purposes. For this reason the digitalisation is required of at least the part of the cartographic heritage that is most often used and which is exposed to different types of damage. The previous procedures of digitalisation (DIKAZ – the Digital Library of Zadar) have been partial, but were nevertheless an acceptable beginning of more serious and systematic processing and display of this rich cultural heritage.

Ahead of us is the systematisation and cataloguing of this cartographic heritage in an online catalogue, and then a systematic digitalisation which should ensure availability to a wider circle of users. From a technical point of view, this will facilitate user research, and from the aspect of protection, the materials will be protected from wear and various types of damage. Although several papers on this collection have been published so far, its significance requires comprehensive listing, processing, and research on the origin of the materials, as well as digitalisation in order to protect it and make it more available to the scientific community.

**Keywords:** The Collection of Maps and Atlases of the Research Library of Zadar, storage, processing, use–listing–digitisation