

International Symposium on Cultural Heritage in Geosciences, Mining and Metallurgy Ten years in retrospective

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An overview is given of the symposia on the Cultural Heritage in Geosciences, Mining and Metallurgy.

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The symposia

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin wall, Peter Schmidt, librarian in the Rare Books Department of Freiberg's Technical University and Lieselotte Jontes, library director of the University of Leoben, started their first talks to establish a symposium on Cultural Heritage. In 1993 the First International Symposium on Cultural Heritage in Geosciences, Mining and Metallurgy was held in Freiberg, Saxony (Fig. 1). It was for the first time a get-together of geoscientists and mining scientists, who were interested in the history of their discipline (Fig. 2). The symposium gave a definition of the position of these sciences. Librarians, archivists, museums curators and interested people from other disciplines took part, an exchange of opinions began to flow.

This very successful first symposium was followed by the second one in Leoben (Austria) in 1995. The general theme of this symposium was "Art and culture in mining and geosciences". The background for this theme was the rich collection in the Leoben University library, where pictures of mining places, works in the mines, traditions of miners have been collected. Therefore this symposium was accompanied by a very fine exhibition on these topics from the funds of the University Library.

The third symposium was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 1997. The famous Mining Institute was hosting the congress, many colleagues from different countries, but especially from Russia and the southeast European countries were participating. The Slovakian mining town Banská Štiavnica was hosting the fourth congress in 1998. The general theme was "World mining education traditions". In Banská Štiavnica was

one of the world's oldest mining universities, the organization of the education of miners started in this town, therefore it was a good place to talk about these topics.

The fifth congress brought us to the United States, to Golden (CO) with its famous Colorado School of Mines. This old mining town in the American West, where in former times the gold rush brought lots of people to the country, gave new topics, new colleagues and a very different surrounding.

As a contrast, the sixth Symposium was held in the small Slovenian mining town of Idrija, where the famous mercury mine is still working. Very appropriately, the general theme at this congress was "Occupational health and ecological aspects of mining".

The Seventh Erbe-Symposium, at which this paper was presented, was held in the Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum Naturalis in Leiden and provided the surrounding for our tenth anniversary. It is my hope, that these symposia on cultural heritage will continue, and thus the rich tradition of miners, metallurgists and geologists will be preserved, helping young workers and scientists to better understand their profession.

We are looking forward to our next (8th) Erbe-Symposium in Schwaz in Tyrol, 3-7 October, 2005, which Dr. Hauser will be organizing (Hauser, 2003). The old mining town Schwaz in Tyrol will host – so I hope – a lot of our community. As a resume I would like to say, that those symposia have made the scientific community a bit richer, we ourselves have got a lot of new friends not only in the field of science, but real friends in our life. I do hope, that the Erbe-symposia will still go on, that younger people will bring new ideas, new enthusiasm to our group, so that the idea to preserve the cultural heritage in the fields of geosciences and mining and metallurgical sciences will be carried on.

The proceedings

All the symposia led to proceedings volumes, to keep in mind the lectures that were held at the congress. It was the merit of Tillfried Cernajsek and Christoph Hauser from the Geological Survey of Austria, to publish the first three symposium volumes. They took their time, their knowledge and last but not least a large amount

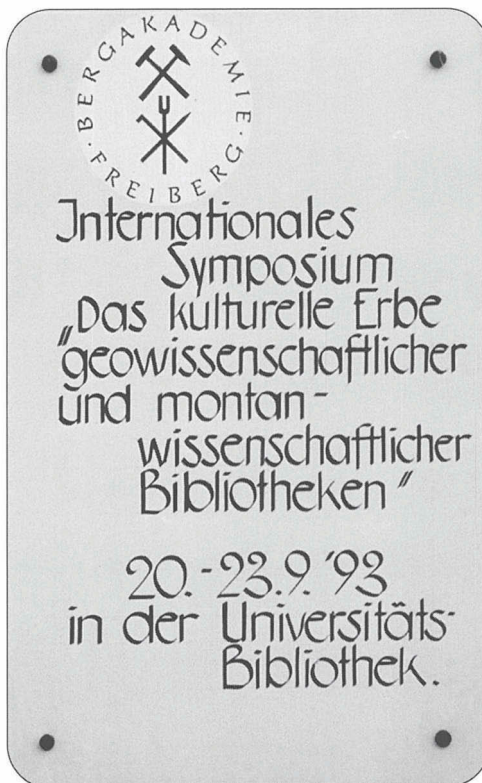


Fig. 1. Sign announcing the first Erbe Symposium at the Bergakademie Freiberg.



Fig. 2. Participants of the first Erbe Symposium at the grave of Abraham Gottlob Werner (1749-1817) in Freiberg.

of the budget of their institution, to print those volumes. The first one, the Freiberg volume (Cernajsek *et al.*, 1996), was the most difficult one, because there was such a lot of articles, and Peter Schmidt, the main organizer of this symposium, had his thoughts already on the next project he was planning. So the two colleagues from Vienna and people from the library in Leoben were the workers in this field. The second proceedings volume (Cernajsek *et al.*, 1997) was not so difficult to edit, there was some money left and the call for papers was done efficiently. The St. Petersburg proceedings were more difficult (Cernajsek & Hauser, 2000), colleagues from Russia thought, that the book of abstracts would meet all the needs of the participants. Drs Cernajsek and Hauser got as many manuscripts as possible for the third volume, but it contains only a sample from the many papers presented.

In Banská Štiavnica (the former Schemnitz) Elena Kasiarova and Maria Sikorova (1999) published the volume nicely with the help of the colleagues from Leoben and Vienna to translate abstracts and articles. In Golden, Joanne Lerud did the editing of the proceedings of the meeting at Golden (CO) with the help of her colleagues (Lerud *et al.*, 2001). The Idrija volume was beautifully published (Dizdarevič & Peljhan, 2003) and very quickly so it could be presented at the Symposium in Leiden.

The Peter Schmidt Award

As a new and interesting feature, in Golden the 'Peter Schmidt Award' was inaugurated. It is given to people, who in memory of Peter Schmidt's work support the aims of cultural heritage.

The first one to get the award was Lieselotte Jontes, who together with Peter Schmidt initiated the Erbe-symposia. In Idrija the award was given to Tillfried Cernajsek and Christoph Hauser. They did a lot for the printing of the proceedings volumes and played a major role in the organization of the congresses. In Leiden, the award was presented to Joanne Lerud for the excellent way in which she organised the Fifth Symposium and published its Proceedings (Winkler Prins, 2004).

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