



INTRODUCTION

The first issue of the Annals of the Náprstek Museum appeared fifty years ago, in 1962, to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Náprstek Museum, as the cover states. More precisely, it marked the anniversary of the industrial exhibition organised by Vojta Náprstek on Střelecký ostrov (Shooter's Island) in Prague towards the end of 1862. The exhibition, which displayed modern machinery and equipment brought by Náprstek from the Great Exhibition in London, became the basis for the founding of the Czech Industrial Museum, which, in time and with a change in the collecting programme, became today's Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures.

In the first issue of the Annals this event was commemorated by a contribution from Erich Herold, the director of the Náprstek Museum at the time, and was followed by contributions corresponding to the museum's focus on the study of non-European cultures. This set the Annals' future direction – the publication of original, previously-unpublished results of research in the fields of ethnology, archaeology and history, with a thematic focus on material and spiritual culture and social relationships in non-European cultures. Given the periodical's focus on non-European cultures, it was expected from the start that it would interest researchers and specialists in the rest of the world, and as a result the contributions were, and still are, published only in world languages (English, German, and to a lesser extent Spanish and French). This focus makes the Annals the only periodical of its type in the Czech Republic.

The first six issues were published regularly each year, and it is a telling sign of the political climate at the time that from 1968 to 1973 publication was interrupted. It continued, with some interruptions, until 1990, when the last period of stagnation occurred. Publication resumed, let us hope permanently, in 1997. At that point the concept of the periodical changed slightly – contributions now focus mostly on the specialist processing of the rich collections of the Náprstek Museum, which as a result are becoming known to experts the world over. The part of the periodical devoted to reviews of specialist publications, both domestic and foreign, has also been expanded. In 2008 the Annals entered the Directory of Peer-Reviewed Periodicals published in the Czech Republic.

The Annals now have a firmly-established position among experts on non-European cultures.

We wish the Annals at least another 50 years with the maintenance of the same scholarly level and an ever-higher production quality.

The Editorial Staff