

Digitised Maps in the Danish Map Collection

by ANNIE LENSCHAU-TEGLERS and VIVI GADE RØNSBERG

INTRODUCTION

As in the rest of the library world, The Royal Library in Copenhagen is in the process of digitising its collections. At the moment we are mainly working on the handwritten manual catalogue - but digitising the material is also a major working assignment.

The [Map Collection](#) at The Royal Library has today divided the effort in digitising its materials into 3 groups:

1. Digitised maps as a vital addition to the records in our bibliographic database REX
2. Digitised maps presented as a Digital Facsimile, accessible on our homepage.
3. Digitised maps taken out of its original contents and placed in a Virtual Exhibition also accessible on our homepage

SOME HISTORY

The Map Collection began to scan the maps in 1997 when the Library was in transition because of the building of the 'Black Diamond', our new library building. At first the maps weren't linked to the records in REX, they were only available in a local version of ACDSsee. The primary choice for scanning was the marked up index maps to the maps series showing our holdings. The map series are not immediately available as they are located in another building, so access would be easier and quicker if the index maps were scanned and placed on a computer. This avoided the problem of taking the customer down to the collection only to discover that the required map wasn't there; the holdings could be checked immediately on the computer. The second priority was the over-sized maps, which were placed in one big pile on a large table. When the user wanted to see the map at the bottom, the staff had to move all the maps on the top of it. Now the Library has 2 new storage cabinets with only 2-3 maps in a drawer, but it is still difficult to view the details at the center of a large map, you almost have to crawl upon it, for this digitisation is a big help. The third choice was our maps from Lafreri's Atlas, for preservation reasons.

PROGRESS IN THE DIGITISATION DEVELOPMENT

In 2003 it became possible to present our digitised maps on internet. Henrik Dupont's Exhibition entitled "Denmark on the World Map" gave us the task of scanning and linking the maps showing Denmark, but not parts of Denmark dated up to 1900 as an addition to the exhibition. We got the digitisation finished just a few days before the opening of the exhibition. Today the exhibition can be viewed on the net as a [Virtual Exhibition](#).

In 2003 we scanned many maps but we couldn't link the scanned map to the record in Rex, since the manual catalogue project wasn't finished, and there was no record to link the map to. That taught us not to scan the maps before we have a record in REX, otherwise it gives you a lot of work afterwards. To scan the maps is quick, but the rest takes ten-times the amount of time.

Today the following map groups are available on the net, when searching in REX, together with a digitised map:

- Index maps
- Oversize maps

- Lafreri's Atlas
- Maps of Denmark, but not parts of Denmark dated before 1900.

The scanning machine used throughout the library (Zeutschel OS 6000 III) was very expensive and it has to be used all day, or the cost would be too big. So we had to think of new ways of working, to get a visible result faster.

Inspired by another department at the library we began working on the Digital Facsimile idea. [Frederik V's Atlas](#) was ideal as a starting point, the atlas contains 3535 engraved and manuscript maps and prospects bound in 55 volumes and are one of the treasures in the Map Collection ([Kejlbo, 1969](#)). The atlas is unique in many ways - all the maps have been in the Kings possession, the colouring is definitely contemporary and is of high quality as the maps were for the King.

Before the Digital Facsimile version, the atlas wasn't easily accessible to the public. To view it you needed special permission, since the atlas is stored in a special protective box, which only some of the staff has access to. The feedback to the online version is very positive. Our daily reference work is made easier, because we also use the online version/digital facsimile of Frederik V's Atlas, and last but not least the preservation department is happy because since we don't have to handle the volumes so often, the atlas will last longer. Some of the maps in Frederik V's Atlas also have a record in REX, if this is the case the title will appear beneath the map presentation on the net, there are a few examples in volume 36, page 1-5

WHAT NEXT?

In the future we plan to make a digital facsimile of our maps from Lafreri's Atlas. Today, as mentioned before, it is possible to view the maps in REX, but the digital facsimile presentation gives the possibility of connecting the maps and a written text in one place. The text could be: R. V. Tooley: "Maps in Italian Atlases of the sixteenth Century: a comparative list of the Italian maps issued by Lafreri, Forlani, Duchetti, Bertelli and others found in atlases". *Imago Mundi III*, 1939, 12-47. This could also be the start of a worldwide virtual collection / presentation of all the Lafreri maps, The Map Collection has only 70 maps, Tooley presents about 614.

Our other 65-volume atlas, Atlas Major, is a possible successor as a digital facsimile. Another project to make available on the net is a virtual collection with Danish cartographers as the subject, e.g. Johannes Mejer from 1650. The Mejer maps are split between two departments at The Royal Library, ours and the Manuscript Department. Or by mapmaker and collector as subject, e.g. Hinrich Rink 1880 - his interest was Greenland and the mapping of Greenland.

So digitisation is the future and the Danish Map Collection will probably concentrate its resources both on digitised maps together with a record in the bibliographic database REX and on digitised maps presented as a Digital Facsimile on the homepage.

REFERENCES

Kejlbo, IB Rønne: *Manuscript Maps in the Frederik den Femtes Atlas*. Copenhagen : The Royal Library, 1969.
<http://images.kb.dk/pdf/kejlbo.pdf>

WEB SITES REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

Exhibition "Denmark on the World Map". <http://www.kb.dk/kb/dept/nbo/kob/danmarkskort/eng.forsideramme.htm>

Frederik V's Atlas. <http://www.kb.dk/kb/dept/nbo/kob/Fr5Atlas/en.forside.htm>

Map Collections homepage: <http://www.kb.dk/kb/dept/nbo/kob/index-en.htm>