



Národní knihovna  
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National Library  
of the Czech Republic

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **The Klementinum in Dates and Depictions**

**„The Historical and Building Development of the  
Klementinum in the Times of the Jesuit Order“**

**The Klementinum Gallery  
8th October – 19th December 2010**

The Klementinum, an impressive Baroque area in the centre of Prague, is one of Prague's distinctive and important localities. It has been a long time since it united its fate with **the National Library of the Czech Republic**. The exhibition's objective is to present, first time in this range, the historical and artistic development of the building and to show both the cultural and social position of the phenomenon called the Klementinum, the former Jesuit college, including eminent personalities who lived and worked here in the past.

The display is located in beautifully decorated corridors along Křižovnická Street, reconstructed to form **the Klementinum Gallery** in 2006. Among the exhibits there are to be found also those temporarily moved from the places closed to the public at present.

**It is to be hoped that the exhibition will satisfy those who cannot visit the Klementinum historical areas at present due to the ongoing reconstruction.**

**The Klementinum as the Centre of Culture and Education –  
„Insula nostra Clementina – Our Klementinum Island“**

The Jesuit Order was established in 1534 (approved by Pope in 1540), as one of the results of a deep crisis of Catholicism of the time. It became one of the symbols of fight against Protestant Reformation and in our country it decisively helped establish the dominance of the Catholic Church in the period after the Battle of White Mountain. The first Jesuits arrived in Prague as early as 1556 and the Klementinum is the oldest Jesuit college in the Czech lands.

The display features, among others, a unique copy of a **letter with the signature of St. Ignatius of Loyola**, the founder of the Jesuit Order, and a copy of the **foundation charter of Emperor Ferdinand I**, by which he established the „college“ and school at St. Clement.

## **The Cultural and Political Activities of the Jesuits**

Individual display panels map **cultural and political activities of the Jesuits**, extremely progressive at the time. **The complex of Church and school buildings included for example, classrooms, a library, cabinets, a pharmacy, printing works, churches, chapels and an astronomical observatory.** The building development of the Klementinum went on for nearly all the time the Jesuits lived and worked here. It is presented in the form of the Jesuits' construction plans. Among them, there is an interesting copy of a **groundplan of the Klementinum from the end of the 17th century, from the Jesuit Archives in Rome, with descriptions of individual areas of the building.**

Among many Jesuits' activities, the attention is focused on **the Jesuit printing works**, acquired from the heirs of Daniel Adam of Veleslavín that served not only to the needs of the Order but also of University. The displayed **St. Wenceslas Bible, the first bible printed in Czech**, testifies to the high level of the Jesuit printing works.

**An inseparable part of the Jesuit education and promotion of the order was theatre.** For the Jesuits, the most significant theatrical performances were allegorical homage plays. On the occasion of festive events, a big stage was built in the Klementinum courtyard for declamation of fifty or more students and an auditorium for hundreds of spectators. A report has been preserved on the first Czech theatre play about St. Wenceslas (1567) and on the theatrical performance about Prophet Elias (1610). There was also a well equipped **pharmacy** that served not only to the college members, but also to the poor for free. A lot of preserved vessels and containers for medicine, for instance **a wooden box and a majolica pharmaceutical vessel called albarello (both from the 18th century)**, reminds of the period pharmaceuticals.

## **Jesuit Schools and Personalities**

**The level of the Jesuit schools and education was exceptional.** They served not only to the boys from the noble families, but also to those of humble origins. Only three months after the arrival of the Society of Jesus in Prague the Jesuit fathers started the lessons. In 1562 the Klementinum was the place of residence of a college, a grammar school and university - the Arts (Philosophical) and Theological Faculties. **In the first third of the 18th century, when the construction of the Klementinum was completed, there were about 200 members of the Jesuit Order and about 2000 boys and young men living and studying here.**

The exhibition also features **the eminent personalities of the order: Peter Canisius**, the founder of the Klementinum College, **Edmund Campion**, a profesor and orator, **Bohuslav Balbín**, a historian, **Roderigo Arriaga**, an outstanding philosopher and theologian („Videre Pragam et audire Arriagam“ – See Prague and hear Arriga) etc.

## **Exhibits from the Areas Closed due to Revitalisation**

The display also **presents to the public the exhibits** placed usually in the Klementinum historical rooms – **in the Baroque Library Hall, the Astronomical Tower and the Mirror Chapel**. Among them there are for example instruments from the former **Mathematical Museum** (the oldest museum in the Czech lands). several unique astronomical clocks made by the **Jesuit mathematician and mechanic Johann Klein**, instruments of the **astronomer and physicist Joseph Stepling**, Baroque geographical and celestial **globes by Valck**, sextants etc.

## **Revitalisation and the Klementinum History**

There are also **the exhibits found during the reconstruction** works done recently in the Klementinum area. Within the archeological reserch under the Mirror Chapel, conducted by the Archeological Department of the National Preservation Institute, the remnants of medieval houses were found as well as a unique glass vessel from the first half of the 15th century (**the so-called kuttrolf**). Exhibited is also a wooden chest found in the floor of the wing onto Platněřská Street.

**Curious are finds** from the third floor of the wing onto Seminářřká Street discovered during the works on roof insulation: **a bowler hat and a plank with inscription „bulit in 1923“** (the Machoň reconstruction) together with the name of the worker, who hid them there.

## **About the Author of the Exhibition**

PhDr. Petra Oulíková, Ph.D. (nee Nevímová)

Born: 1970

Occupation: Národní archiv v Praze /The National Archives in Prague/ (from r. 2001)

Ústav dějin křesťanského umění na Katolické teologické fakultě v Praze /The Institute of Christian Art History of the Catholic Theological Faculty in Prague/ (from r. 2005)

Studies: Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague, field of study: archiving and supporting historical sciences – doctorate (2002), Art History at Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague

Study stays abroad: Vienna, Bamberg, Rome, Paris

Specialized in: Baroque art, art of the Jesuit Order; she published a lot of essays and research papers in Czech and foreign journals. She is the author of „The Klementinum – Guide“ from 2006, published by the National Library in Czech, English and German. She devoted several of her essays to the decoration of the Italian Chapel and the Mirror Chapel, both in the Klementinum area.

**Centre for Communication  
National Library of the CR**

About the Exhibition

## THE KLEMENTINUM IN DATES AND DEPICTIONS

„The Historical and Building Development of the Klementinum in the Times of the Jesuit Order“

The National Library of the CR - The Klementinum Gallery  
8th October – 19th December 2010

Author of the Exhibition: PhDr. Petra Oulíková, Ph.D.  
Production and Installation: Exhibition Department of the NL CR

Open: Tuesday – Sunday 10,30 am – 6,00 pm

Admission fee: Adults 60 Kč,  
Senior citizens, students and children 10-15 40 Kč,  
Group of 10 people and more / 1 person 40 Kč; Children under 10 free

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