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Boreal Histories, Environments, and Narratives: The Making and Uses of Knowledge

A BOREAS – ESF Workshop

REYKHOLT, ICELAND, 21-26 OCTOBER 2008

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER

0900: Depart from Reykjavík to Reykholt by chartered bus.

On the way we will visit the ancient Parliament site of Þingvellir (pronounced “Thingvellir”). All major events in the history of Iceland have taken place at Þingvellir. Today Þingvellir is a national park. See <http://www.thingvellir.is/english>

Lunch. We will have lunch at a place called Fossatún (see <http://steinsnar.is>). *“I find one of the most beautiful places by the rivers of Borgarfjörður, to be in the Fossatún area by the Grimsá-river”* (Icelandic author Gísli Sigurðsson, in his book *Magic Spell of Land and History*).

We will arrive at Reykholt after lunch and settle in to our hotel there, the Fosshotel (see http://www.fosshotel.is/en/hotel/fosshotel_reykholt.html). Sessions will begin that afternoon.

1530-1600. Tea and Coffee at the hotel. (*Otherwise served in the School where the main part of the conference will take place.*)

Session 1. Introduction to Workshop, and Setting the Scene Chair: Astrid OGILVIE

The site of Reykholt has been chosen for our workshop because it is traditionally one of the main centres of intellectual life and the writing of history in Iceland, as well as an acclaimed conference centre. We will begin with some information on our location.

1600-1615: Introduction, Workshop Orientation and Welcome. Astrid OGILVIE and Ron DOEL. Location: **Reykholt Library**

1615-1645: Introductory Keynote: “The History of Reykholt”. BERGUR ÞORGEIRSSON, Director, Reykholt). (*Time for a few questions*).

1645-1715: Introductory Keynote: “The life and times of Snorri Sturlason”. ÓSKAR GUÐMUNDSSON, Icelandic historian. (*Will address the famous historian who lived at Reykholt in the twelfth century.*) (*Time for a few questions.*)

1715-1830: Welcome Reception in the **Reykholt Museum** (courtesy of Stefansson Arctic Institute). Introduction to the exhibit and location by Project Manager EVY BEATE TVETER.

2100: Dinner at Hotel.

WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER

LOCATION: CONFERENCE ROOM, THE SCHOOL REYKHOLT*

**All talks and panel discussions will take place here.*

INTRODUCTION TO OUR WORKING SESSIONS.

Chair: Astrid Ogilvie

0845-0855: Doubravka OLSAKOVA/PIERS VITEBSKY, “What is BOREAS?”

0855-0905: Ron DOEL, “What is CEE?”

0905-0915: Astrid OGILVIE “What is NORSAGA?”

Session 2. 0915-1030.

Introduction to Multidisciplinary and Methodological Challenges: How do we know what we know? How do we pose questions, and feel confident we have answers? Approaches from the humanities, social sciences, and the natural sciences.

These fundamental questions will form a basis for discussion throughout the workshop.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS.

0915-0945. Gunnar KARLSSON, “A Brief History of Iceland” (*Time for a few questions*)

0955-1025. Sumarlíði ÍSLEIFSSON, “Iceland and Images of the North” (*Time for a few questions*)

1030-1055. Coffee/tea

1050-1125. Gísli PÁLSSON, “Genomic anthropology: Coming in from the cold?” (*Time for a few questions.*)

Session 3. 1130-1240.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION. Questions, Methods, and Underlying Assumptions: What are the Emerging new Histories of the North?

Discussants: André COSTOPOULOS, Ron DOEL, Lee HUSKEY, David KOESTER, Peter SCHWEITZER (Boreas PLs and representatives), and this morning’s speakers.

1240-1400. Lunch at hotel.

Session 4. 1400-1530**Workshop/Discussions****Archives, Oral History, and Historical Practice: What is Field Work in History?**

Chair: Urban Wråkberg

Speakers/discussants: Kris HARPER, Urban WRÅKBERG, Ron DOEL, Suzanne ZELLER, ASTRID OGILVIE .

1530-1600. Coffee/Tea

Session 5. 1600-1730.

PANEL

Perspectives on Global Change (I): Historical Climatology, Environmental History and Future Change. Chair: Gaston DEMARÉE**KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS**

1600-1630: Phil JONES, “Historical Climatology: The State of the Art”

1630-1650: Dennis WHEELER, “Historical Climatology, environmental history and future change”

1650-1710: Sjöfn KRISTJÁNSDÓTTIR, “Historical climate data in the National Library of Iceland”

1710-1730: ASTRID OGILVIE, “Environmental and Human Dynamics in Mývatnssveit, Iceland, from the settlement to the present”

 1900. Dinner. At hotel.
Session 6. 2030-2200.

ROUNDTABLE/WORKSHOP

Why was it *there*? Geographic approaches to understanding spatial and temporal patterns in human activity, natural phenomena, and scientific research in the north.

Chair: Ezra ZUBROW

Discussion leaders: Tiffany VANCE, Alexander NAKHIMOVSKY, Julia LAJUS; interactions with all.

THURSDAY 23 OCTOBER**Session 7. 0900-1030.****Perspectives on Global Change (II): Linking Environmental History, History of Science and Palaeoclimate Studies.** Chair: Przemyslaw URBANCZYK*Presenters:*

0900-0920: Maxine VON EYE, “Sea-ice data from Greenland”

0920-0940: Steffen VOGT, “Historical climatology in Europe”

0940-1005: Gaston DEMARÉE, "Impacts of climate and sea-ice changes in Labrador/Nunatsiavut: evidence from Moravian missionary records"

1005-1030: Øyvind NORDLI, "A temperature reconstruction for southern Norway 1758-2006"

1030-1100 Coffee/Tea

1100: DEPARTURE FOR *FIELD EXCURSION* to *Landnámssetur Íslands* – The Settlement Centre – at Borgarnes (www.landnamssetur.is). Guided tour of the saga sites pertaining to Egill Skallagrímsson, hero of Egils Saga. (There is evidence to suggest that Snorri Sturluson was the author of this saga). We will also have lunch here.

1830-1930: INFORMAL DRINKS IN THE MUSEUM.

2000: Banquet at Hotel.

FRIDAY 24 OCTOBER

Some People have to depart today:(. They will be conveyed in our bus driver (Jón Kristleifsson's) jeep.

0900-1030 – *separate events*:

(a) BOREAS PANEL MEETING *Continues until ca. 5pm.*

(b) MEETINGS OF CEE AND NORSAGA TO ADDRESS CURRENT PUBLICATION PLANS / INFORMAL DISCUSSION TIME.

10.30-11.00. Coffee/Tea

*WORKSHOP SESSIONS RESUME
and PANEL MEETING CONTINUES, AS REQUIRED.*

Session 8: 1100-1230.

Uncovering the Industrial Heritage of the Arctic. Chair: Tiffany VANCE

Speakers/discussants:

1100-1130: RONALD E. DOEL, "Introduction: Linking Industrial Archaeology into Arctic Environmental History and History of Science"

1130-1200: Louwrens HACQUEBORD and DAG AVANGO, "The LASHIPA Project: The History of 400 years of resources exploitation in Polar Regions – and its consequences".

1200-1230: Urban WRÅKBERG, "Functions and Meanings of Polar Field Research Stations"

1230-1400. Lunch at hotel.

Session 9: 1400-1530:

The Field Sciences in the Arctic, and Beyond: Comparative International Perspectives” Chair: Yvon CSONKA

Speakers-participants:

1400-1420: Julia LAJUS and SVERKER SÖRLIN, “Science and Diplomacy: Connections of Hans W. Ahlmann with Soviet Scientists”

1420-1440: Christopher RIES, “Maps, armchairs, dogsleds, ships and airplanes: Field infrastructure, scientific institutions and geological knowledge in Northern and North Eastern Greenland, 1900-1935”

1440-1500: SUZANNE ZELLER, “The Historical Arctic: The Case of the Artist-Naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton (1860-1946)”

1500-1520: Urban WRÅKBERG, “Forming the Future of the Barents Region by Presentations of Geographical Knowledge”.

1520-1540: MAIKEN LOLCK, “The Origin of Ice Core Research”

1540-1600. Coffee/tea

Session 10: 1600-1730

Perspectives on Global Change (III): How to Conceive the Oceans as a Space for Historical Interactions and Change? Chair: Yvon CSONKA

Speakers-discussants:

1600-1630: Julia LAJUS, “Ocean has a history – and the history of including history into marine studies”

1630-1700: Dennis WHEELER, “How to conceive the oceans as a space for historic interactions an change”

1700-1730: Trausti Jónsson and Hilmar Garðarsson. “The Icelandic climate project of Jónas Hallgrímsson and the Icelandic Society of Letters in the 1840s”

1730-1800: KRIS HARPER, “Developing Numerical Weather Prediction: The Role of the Scandinavian Tag Team”. *Not given due to illness.*

1730-1830. Informal drinks, or time to otherwise relax.

1830-2000. DINNER

2030. Concert! It happens that there will be a concert in the Reykholt church this evening. This is a marvellous stroke of good luck, and all conference delegates are invited to attend. *Astrid Ogilvie has made a block booking at a reduced price, so it will cost around Ísk 2000 which at current exchange rates is practically nothing ☺.*

SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER

Some People have to depart today :(. They will probably be conveyed in our bus driver (Jón Kristleifsson’s) jeep.

Session 11: 0900-1030

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

“Focus on the Historical Arctic: who constituted the Arctic in past times, and why?”
–exploring the natural and cultural landscapes of the north

Facilitators and initial presenters: members of Colony, Empire, Environment

1030-1100. Coffee/tea

Session 12. 1100-1230

OPEN DISCUSSION (ALL)

Theme: How should we proceed on our edited book/other BOREAS publication plans?

1230-1400. Lunch

Session 13. 1400-1530

ROUNDTABLE AND AUDIENCE DISCUSSION

**Perspectives on Histories from the North from the Designers and Practitioners:
 What Have We Achieved? What Are the Emerging Big Questions?**

Participants: NORSAGA, CEE, Scientific Committee members, workshop guests

Moderated by: SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE members and others

1530-1600. Coffee/tea

1600–1900. Free time for casual conversations, wandering, and scheming

1900. Cash bar, followed by dinner at hotel

SUNDAY 26 OCTOBER

0900. All remaining conference participants depart after breakfast by chartered bus. Those wishing to go to Reykjavik will be taken there before we continue to the airport.

Conference concludes. *Possible sightseeing plans will depend on flight schedules.*
