



WP 18

Agenda Item: 2.5.4

Person Responsible: Mike Sparrow

EXCOM 2013

Barcelona, Spain 22/23rd July 2013

History Expert Group

2012-13

Executive Summary

Title: History Expert Group

Authors: Cornelia Lüdecke

Introduction/ Background:

The Expert Group was founded as an Action Group in 2004, with 24 individuals present at the first meeting in Germany in 2005. Since then the Group has flourished and membership of the Expert Group has steadily increased, as has the geographical and disciplinary diversity of the participants. The Group's meetings continue to serve as a valuable discussion space for junior and senior members alike. Meetings have been held across four continents, permitting the core group of academic historians to be joined by local researchers who would likely not otherwise have joined the Group. With more than 70 attendees, the last meeting in Portland (USA) was the largest and most diverse yet – a sign of our ongoing vitality. Rather than just passively sharing their findings, the SCAR Expert Group provides a unique and irreplaceable site for scholars to exchange ideas and develop historical research related to the Antarctic. The group's dynamism has been demonstrated by collaborative research projects undertaken by group members.

Important Issues or Factors:

Previously rare early published sources are becoming globally available, and members of the Expert Group are contributing to their publication through forums such as the South African National Antarctic Program's online database;

More and more documents held in restricted archives are being released, including in the former Soviet Union, but also from national archives elsewhere;

New methods of social and archaeological investigation are being developed and resources created;

Opportunities for collaboration between historians and scientists are increasing.

Recommendations/Actions and Justification:

We wish to continue the SCAR History Expert Group in its current form.

Expected Benefits/Outcomes:

The current high level of publications by Group members will continue, both individually and through collective forums such as special journal issues and a planned edited volume.

Partners:

The SCAR Social Sciences Action Group as well as the history group of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC).

Budget Implications:

US\$5000 as support of the annual workshops for travel support for PhD students and scholars of low income.

History Expert Group

1. Chief Officers

Cornelia Lüdecke

2. Major Future Initiatives and Actions

The first joint workshop of the SCAR History EG and the SCAR Social Sciences AG will take place at the British Antarctic Survey (Cambridge, UK) from 1-5 July 2013 on “Past, present and future of human connections to the Antarctic (and the polar regions in general)”. The programme consists of 39 talks and visits of the archives of the British Antarctic Survey and the Scott Polar Research Institute.

A special workshop will take place at Stockholm in early September 2013, as a step toward producing an edited volume showcasing the state of the field in historical research concerning the Antarctic. Group members will continue to work on original research projects, which also enlarges the pool of source material through oral history collection, the digitization of archival documents, and archaeological fieldwork.

3. Major Activities and Significant Progress

XXXII Open Science Conference of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research Portland (Oregon, USA), 17 July 2012

During the XXXII Open Science Conference of the Scientific Committee on Antarctic (OSC SCAR) in Portland (Oregon, USA) the SCAR History Expert Group organised two sessions on “Historical views on Gateways to Antarctica” and “Voicing Silences in Antarctic History” on 17 July 2012. The first session focused on the significance of port cities – the so-called “gateways” – in the history of the Antarctic continent and that of the rest of the world. The session explored Antarctic logistics, science, and rescue expeditions, and asked questions about the role of “gatekeepers” in these histories. It also paid particular attention to the history of exchanges between Antarctic expeditions and local communities.

The keynote lecture, on the Third German Antarctic Expedition (1938/39), was given by Cornelia Lüdecke (Germany) and Colin Summerhayes (United Kingdom) and described the meteorological, oceanographic and geographical results which guided later expeditions to Dronning Maud Land. Adrian Howkins (USA) explained how a classroom can be used as a “Gateway to Antarctica” in the past and present, especially in interdisciplinary education focussing on the environment. Jason Kendall Moore (Chile) brought Antarctic theatre to the classroom for describing the political relations between Chile, Great Britain and the USA by comparing his own play “Tierra de San Martin” to Peter Greenaway’s film “The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover”. Aant Elzinga (Sweden) examined Punta Arenas in Chile and Ushaia in Argentine through the eyes of early polar explorers, and showed how these two settlements in southern Patagonia changed from colonial outposts to important harbour cities. Additionally, Rudolf Greku (Russian Federation) displayed a poster about three generations of his family devoting their work to Antarctica (1955-2012).

The second session addressed historical “silences” as opportunities to ask new questions to show the increasingly diverse – and sophisticated – nature of historical scholarship on the Antarctic region. These included new methodological approaches like material culture, labour history, and environmental history in addition to new contributions in fields such as the history of science, Cold War geopolitics, and the history of European imperialism.

Papers addressed various time periods and national contexts or employed perspectives from cognate disciplines such as archaeology or science studies.

The session began with the inaugural **Lewander Lecture**, an annual event in memory of Lisbeth Lewander (Sweden), a founding member of the SCAR History Expert Group who passed away early last year (2012). The lecture aims to showcase the value of dealing with polar history from different points of view, as well as the importance of sharing ideas and experiences with the next generation of scholars in order to widen involvement in the field, qualities that Lisbeth embodied in both her scholarship and her mentoring of younger colleagues. The lecture was presented by Heidi Prozesky and Lize-Marié van der Watt (both South Africa) and dealt with “The triple burden of masculinity: A gender analysis of South African Antarctic and sub-Antarctic science, c. 1961-2011”. It drew on bibliometric analysis as well as more traditional historical methods to examine the continued gender imbalance in Antarctic science.

Following the Lewander Lecture, Andrés Zarankin (Brazil) gave a keynote presentation on the “in-corporation” of the landscape as a phenomenological approach to the archaeology of the South Shetland Islands, and the power of material culture to reveal the unwritten past. Joanna Rae and Ellen Bazeley-White (United Kingdom) introduced the British Antarctic Oral History Project (BAOHP), run by the British Antarctic Survey, a new collection of interviews and recollections that promise to augment existing records. Peder Roberts (France) considered the unanswered question of who discovered Antarctica within the context of personal and international rivalries during the early twentieth century. Lize-Marié van der Watt (South Africa) concluded the session by considering the “White Continent” within the context of the racialization of Antarctica in South Africa in the period 1955 – 2005.

During the following poster session, Berry Lyons (USA) and Adrian Howkins (both USA) displayed Griffith Taylor’s “missing lake” as an example of how history can aid science in the McMurdo Dry Valleys. Ximena Senatore (Argentina) explored how archaeology can give voices to sealers and whalers who worked in the Antarctic during the early nineteenth century and who are otherwise under-represented in documentary records. Finally, Dora Scott (South Africa) presented the Antarctic Legacy Project, a digital platform for South African Antarctic history.

The second part of the session began with David Walton's (United Kingdom) presentation on the history of SCAR and its influence on the Antarctic Treaty during the past half-century. Brandon Luedtke (USA) discussed changing perceptions of Antarctic wildlife, showing how penguins were pliable symbols of more than the mythical pristine Antarctic landscape and indicator of global change. Consuelo León Wöppke (Chile) revealed the history of the personnel of the first Chilean Antarctic expeditions to the Base O’Higgins in 1948 as “unsung heroes” brought to light from army archives including accounts of individuals without scientific education. Finally, Alessandro Antonello (Australia) discussed the scientific and environmental diplomacy of Antarctica’s marine living resources and ecosystem in the period 1968-1980, using the negotiations of CCAMLR as case study of the relationship of scientific ideas with international environmental protection and management.

Publications

Proceedings of the 3rd SCAR History Workshop are finally published electronically:

Lüdecke, C., Tipton-Everett, L. and L. Lay (Eds.). 2012, National and Trans-National Agendas in Antarctic Research from the 1950s and Beyond. Proceedings of the 3rd

Workshop of the SCAR Action Group on the History of Antarctic Research. BPRC Technical Report No. 2011-01, Byrd Polar Research Center, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 160 pages. <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/53605>

Papers resulting from SCAR History workshops were published in the meantime:

Atkin, Andrew, 2012, Failures of the magnetic research on the Discovery Antarctic expedition 1901-1904. *The Polar Journal* 2 (2), 200-218.

Lüdecke, Cornelia, 2012, Investigation of the Unknown – The Flight Programme of the German "Schwabenland" Expedition 1938/39. *The Polar Journal* 2 (2), 312-333..

León Wöppke, Consuelo, 2012, The Chilean Army's participation in the nation's first Antarctica expedition. *The Polar Journal* 2 (2), 408-426

Kaup, Enn and Tammiksaar, Erki, 2013, Estonia and Antarctica, *Polar Record* 49 (248), 1-8.

Bulkeley, Rip, 2013, Bellingshausen's first accounts of his Antarctic voyage of 1819-1821. *Polar Record* 49 (248), 9-25.

Planned book

A proposed volume with contributions of SCAR History EG members and other scholars will demonstrate that just as natural scientific research in the Antarctic has illuminated questions of global relevance – not least those related to climate change – historical research based on Antarctic material is increasingly relevant to broader historical narratives. A first workshop on “Antarctica - a Continent for Humanities” will take place in Stockholm 8 September, 2013. It is supported by the Swedish Riksbanken Jubileumfond.

4. Budgetary Implications

An annual budget of US\$5000 will primarily be used to subsidize travel to the Expert Group's annual meeting, thus enabling the broadest possible participation from junior scholars and those outside the United States and Western Europe.