



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORY OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES (INHIGEO)

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INHIGEO CIRCULAR 2021, Number 1 March 2021

Dear INHIGEO members and friends,

Welcome to our March 2021 Circular, which provides you with an update on our online INHIGEO Symposium in July and the likewise virtual IUHPST/DHST Conference. It also contains a final call for the 2021 INHIGEO Membership Ballot.

Thank you very much to those who have responded to our call for INHIGEO membership renewal. This circular is mailed using the updated mailing list. As usual, you will receive the current list of INHIGEO members at the back of our next Annual Record. **Please check your personal entry and report any error, you may notice, to me.**

Also: Please **make sure to send your annual reports to our editor John Diemer** by the end of this month.

Best wishes to all of you: stay safe!

Martina Kölbl-Ebert
INHIGEO Secretary General

Anniversaries Series for the IUGS Website and E Bulletin

STEPHEN ROWLAND: Charles R. Knight (1874–1953): Life Through the Ages

Seventy-five years ago, in 1946, American artist Charles R. Knight published a book titled *Life Through the Ages*, an excellent example of a genre of paleoart that I call the "pageant-of-life-through-time".

For the full paper see

http://www.inhigeo.com/anniversaries/INHIGEO_Anniversary_Rowland_Knight.pdf

46th INHIGEO Symposium 2021

46th INHIGEO Symposium, Poland (online meeting), 18–24 July 2021

Conference topics are

1. History of geological surveys and biographies of their creators
2. History of geological societies
3. History and development of geological cartography
4. Mining history
5. General contributions and biographies of famous geologists

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the meeting will be conducted online.

Expressions of interest to inhigeo@pgi.gov.pl can still be voiced until **April 1st, 2021**.

The new deadline for submission of abstracts and other information will be included in the 2nd circular, which will be available soon and not later than the end of March.

Early Bird registration fee will be 50 Euros (25 € for students and PhD students). Information on how to pay will be provided in the 3rd circular.

IUHPST/DHST Conference in Prague, Czech Republic, 25–31 July 2021

In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, all scientific events of the 26th ICSHT and the DHST General Assembly will be held online.

Gregory Good (USA) and Marianne Klemun (Austria) are organizing a Symposium on behalf of INHIGEO: "Great to Small: Spatial and Temporal Scales in the History of the Geosciences". Registration to the conference is now open. Please visit <https://ichst2021.confex.net/en/user-zone>

INHIGEO has **funds to support the attendance of students / post docs** to attend the online IUHPST/DHST Conference in Prague. Any student or post doc student may apply for assistance by sending in an informal letter of application and a CV including list of geohistorical publications, if available. Please send applications for financial assistance to the Secretary General **no later than 30 April 2021**.

Call for Papers | Call for panels

The Society for the History of Technology (GTG) and the Society for the History of Science, Medicine and Technology (GWMT) announce the topic of their joint annual conference in Vienna

Scales, Norms, and Limit Values in Times of (Digital) Change

Technical Museum Vienna | University of Vienna, 17–19 September 2021

Scales, norms and limit values regulate procedures within production lines and transnational infrastructures; they pervade hospital wards and university lectures; they fill scientific journals and bureaucratic regulations. Scales occur in science, medicine and technology alike, and have become ubiquitous in everyday life. Scale readings help to control devices and machines. They are often the interface that users rely on. Norms, for the most part, are based on combined scales, for example technical measures and medical indicators. This is true regardless in which format a standard was defined (DIN, ISO, TGL or the GOST-formats of the former USSR). Limit values are legal and technical specifications; they play an important role in long-term planning, but also in risk communication and the regulation of public life. Not least, the format of this planned conference depends crucially on the R-value in late summer. Limit values make it possible to read the environment in terms of infectiousness, toxicity or radiation exposure. But how are threshold values implemented? Does the »counter-knowledge« of citizens' action committees or the citizen science movement contribute to their formulation?

Measurement and evaluation procedures pervade sciences and humanities alike. But a differentiated study of the scales employed in this process is still pending in the history of science, medicine and technology. And what is more, ratings, rankings and indicators draw criticism. Established scales hide possible alternatives and spaces for negotiation. In the data age, however, they are becoming more and more widespread, and are more and more freely available. It is easy to lose sight of how indeterminate many natural dimensions still were in the early modern era or the 18th century. An exact measurement scale of temperature, for example, was not available at that time.

It first had to be developed and demanded laborious intellectual and contractual negotiation. Many universal measurement units and standards arise from competitive situations, which are surprisingly national and spearheaded by industry. However, once established, the scale of temperature enabled new practices. In the 19th century, the clinical thermometer changed the view of the body and translated symptoms into data. It had ramifications as far as India, where Ayurvedic medicine and colonial medicine were newly conciliated through this instrument. The complex relationships that scales are able to mediate are brought to light when practices of scaling or data practices are investigated.

The joint annual conference of the GTG and the GWMT is therefore dedicated to the role of scales in science, medicine and technology, in particular with regard to the formation of technical norms, standards and limit values. Which are the intellectual and social negotiations necessary to produce scales of measurement? Conversely, how do they influence how we conceive of nature, the body, technology, social conditions and the individual? How did standardization and norm-setting processes take course in the Middle Ages or in data-based genetics? What role is ascribed to indicators in generating a semblance of objectivity? In what way and with which consequences do scales create coherence in visualized representation (graphs, diagrams, temperature curves, maps, timelines, etc.)? What does the layer of control expressed in scales, norms and limit values constitute, given that this regulation pervades our living environment and the assembled machines and apparatuses of the Technosphere? Which individual and collective practices can be observed in digital data regimes? What conclusions

does the history of big data provide for science and administration? How and by whom were data generated in the history of statistics? How does the interaction of pragmatic warning levels with complex statistical scales work out in the current pandemic? How do we interact with scales and vice versa?

Three subject areas deserve special attention:

- 1) Scales and the Indexing of Materiality in Environmentalism and Economics
[...]
- 2) Human Scales and Human Proportions
[...]
- 3) Global and Planetary Scales

Within the range of subdisciplines present at the joint annual conference, there is a trend towards large scale research perspectives: historical pandemic research reconstructs transcontinental epidemics of the last millennia. Infrastructures cross national borders and are strategically expanded by Europe in the colonial era. The objects of research themselves can be of considerable dimensions. The history of astronomy and geology have inevitably dealt with deep time and vast spatial dimensions. As of late, geologists have begun defining the new geological epoch of the Anthropocene based on stratigraphic markers. Global histories of science, medicine and technology question familiar narratives and supposedly »universal« explanations. However, does the investigation of non-European knowledge lead to new universalisms? How is it possible nevertheless for non-European technologies and forms of knowledge to be appreciated beyond colonial perspectives? Which conceptions of time do different scientific disciplines employ?

Another focus of the conference, which runs through all three subject areas, is the linking of scales with the material heritage. This strong nexus is documented in the extensive collections of the Technical Museum Vienna, and other scientific and medical history museums. A day of collections and archives will be offered in the run-up to the joint GTG and GWMT conference (16.9.2021, please refer to the conference website). There are also excursions and object lessons on the program (17.9.21). Separate calls for topics are circulating for the Forum History of the Life Sciences and the meeting of the Driburger Kreis, which this year is being held together with the GTG's young scholars conference.

Deadline, abstracts, and the question of presence

Submissions of individual papers (30 minutes per paper including discussion) or panels (for four papers of 30 minutes each including discussion, three papers usually with commentary) are welcome. Suggestions for innovative formats will be examined with interest.

If the quality is the same, preference is given to panels that span academic generations and reflect diversity. Interdisciplinary papers are expressly invited. Contributions beyond the conference topic are possible to a limited extent. The two societies invite the presentation of newly approved research projects relating to the history of science, medicine and technology. A reimbursement of travel expenses will not be possible. The conference fee is reduced for members of one of the two organizing societies.

If the overall epidemic situation will not allow face-to-face meetings in autumn, contributors will be informed after submission about the possible change to a full online format. We understand submitted contributions as binding offers for the two possible formats online or personal attendance. For proposals for individual papers, an abstract and a short biography are required (max. 1 page); in the case of panels, the abstracts of the individual contributions are supplemented by a general abstract and include a title for the whole panel.

Contributions must be submitted by 7th April 2021, via the conference website.

URL: https://www.technischesmuseum.at/scales_conference

E-mail: gtg_gwmt_uni_wien@tmw.at

Complete call for papers as PDF:

https://www.technischesmuseum.at/jart/prj3/tmw/data/uploads/Formulare/CfP_Skalentagung_GTG_GWMT_Wien.pdf

INHIGEO 44th Symposium (Italy 2019) proceedings

The proceedings of the meeting held in Varese and Como in September 2019 will be published in a special issue of *Physis*, the international journal on the history of science printed in Florence (Italy) by L.S. Olschki, with a support from the University of Insubria. The reviewing process of the submitted papers is presently in progress and the volume will be published at the end of 2021.

2021 INHIGEO Membership Ballot

The following annual election arrangements will operate for the 2021 membership ballot:

- The general membership is now asked for membership nominations with a **deadline date of 31 March 2021**.
- After the March deadline, the Secretary General will compile a dossier that is submitted to the Board for consideration during the period April–June 2021.
- The announcement of new members will take place in the June 2021 Circular with a welcome at the subsequent annual Business Meeting.

Under the current Terms of Reference, the INHIGEO Board may approve nominations as either a Full or Associate Member. INHIGEO Membership nominations supported by their country colleagues are preferred, although individuals may submit a direct nomination to the INHIGEO Secretary General.

Please find an INHIGEO Membership Nomination Form on the last page of this Quarterly Circular.

Contact Details of the Current INHIGEO Board

President: Prof. Ezio Vaccari (Italy) – ezio.vaccari@uninsubria.it

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Next Circular

Dear INHIGEO members, you will receive the next circular with information updates around June 23rd. Until then: Take care and stay healthy!

Kind regards

Martina Kölbl-Ebert



MEMBERSHIP NOMINATION FORM

NAME Country

Birth date:

Address:

Telephone:

E-mail:

Education:

Positions held:

Areas of interest / expertise in geology

Scientific Publications (summary in 1-3 lines):

Area of interest in the history of geosciences:

List of all publications in the history of geosciences:

Languages:

Indicate preference for either Ordinary Membership given demonstrated achievement in the history of geology or Associate Membership:

Nominators: