

ICOHTEC NEWSLETTER



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Newsletter of the International Committee for the History of Technology ICOHTEC

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Editorial

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Our 40th Symposium in Manchester begins to take shape. The local organizers submitted confirmations for participants of ICOHTEC's Symposium – held as part of the ICHSTM in Manchester (21 – 28 July 2013) – about two weeks ago. Please contact us if you send in a proposal for an ICOHTEC paper in time and you didn't receive an answer until now. Please find the preliminary program on

<http://www.ichstm2013.com/programme/guide/index.html>.

The website for registration is <http://www.ichstm2013.com/registration/index.html>. An early-bird-fee is available until Sunday **14 April 2013**.

Just to remember: the deadline to apply for ICOHTEC travel grants is **15 April 2013**. Please visit our homepage <http://www.icohtec.org/annual-meeting-2013-travel-grant.html> for further details.

It will be a pleasure to meet you in Manchester!

Best wishes
Stefan Poser

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I. Book Presentation Report: *Metros, leguas y mecatres. Historia de los sistemas de medición en México. (Meters, leagues and ropes. History of measurement systems in Mexico). Mexico City*

Francesco Gerali, Post Doctoral Scholar, National Autonomous University of Mexico

The book *Metros, leguas y mecatres. Historia de los sistemas de medición en México* was presented at the *Casa Chata*, home of El Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, CIESAS (Centre for Research and Higher Studies on Social Anthropology)¹ in Mexico City. The conference room of this comfortable and typical colonial age building hosted about 70 people interested in this anthology comprised of thirteen essays. The book was announced as the most comprehensive analysis on the history of metrology in Mexico. The realization of this contribution on history of the measurement system in Mexico during the past four centuries represents the outcome of a joint research project coordinated by the CIESAS of Mexico City and the Centro de Ingeniería y Desarrollo Industrial, CIDESI (Center for Engineering and Industrial Development)² of Santiago de Queretaro, state of Queretaro. The objective of the project was the recompilation of selected studies on Mexican historical metrology, from the pre-Hispanic measurement to the modern decimal metric system. The contributors to the project and book are historians, anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, engineers and mathematicians from Mexico, France and the United States. They analyzed Mexican adoption and use of socially defined measures in cartography, architecture, commerce, tax collection and many other common activities of the daily life.

Dr. Evelyn N. Castro (CIESAS) moderated discussion of the book by Dr. Hector Nava Jaimes (National Centre of Meteorology, Mexico), Dr. Hector Mendoza Vargas (Geography Institute, UNAM), Eng. Fernando Motolinia (CIDESI) and the two editors, Hector Vera (PhD Candidate at the New School of Social Research) and Virginia Garcia Acosta (CIESAS). Castro opened the discussion by explaining that the book celebrates 150th anniversary of the introduction of the metrical system in Mexico and marks an important updating of the history of Mexican measurement systems.

¹ <http://www.ciesas.edu.mx/>

² <http://cidesi.com/joomla/index.php>

Nava and Motolinia talked about the background of the project. They pointed out that the research group's decision to involve scholars from other countries who specialized in measurement and statistics made possible the untying of crucial knots discovered in the long archival that was work done in Mexico and Spain to analyze the *meeting-clash* between the native and the Spanish measurement system in the quantification of grains, flours, arable land and distances.

The editors have focused their comments on some representative contributions proposed in the anthology, and the subdivision of the book in the three chapters: *La medidas prehispánicas y coloniales* (The pre-Hispanic and colonial measures), *Medidas modernas: el sistema métrico* (Modern measures: the metric system) and *Historia de la moneda decimal en México* (History of decimal currency in Mexico).

Hector Mendoza concluded the discussion with an interesting overview of the definition of weights and lengths in Mexico. The imposition of new measurement standards in Mexico by the Spanish in the 16th Century caused serious social unrest among the indigenous people and resulted in popular resistance. This occurred again in 1856 when the Mexican government decided to impose the metric system throughout the Republic. This happened, of course, because measurements in Mexico had not only an economic and statistical meaning but also strong human and social meanings rooted in sayings and songs and other aspects of popular culture. Nevertheless, social tension arising in the achievement of uniformity in the national goods interchange system was accepted as a necessary, transitional social evil. The Mexican political class saw in the measures' standardization an important aspect of social order. Mexico was an heterogeneous and disorganized country, where regional customs and traditions prevailed over every dictate of the federal government. Additionally, there was a ubiquitous and ineradicable folk tendency to despise all that was alien to the people's local culture. The unification of the measuring code was an important step towards achieving real national unity and an advantage to the economic, technical and scientific dialogue of Mexico with other countries. Time mitigated the criticalities of the passage, and the introduction of the national currency calculated on decimal system represented the last great change.

Hector Vera concluded the description of the book, describing its appendices and the bibliographic selection of publications on Mexican historical metrology issued between 1825 and 2008. In such a comprehensive book on a little explored topic, I had hoped to find an appendix containing a synoptic table crossing the numerous past measurement systems in Mexico and showing conversion into metrics. Unfortunately, while this is missing, readers can find this data in the various chapters of this well done anthology.

Bibliographic Information

Hector Vera y Virginia García Acosta (eds.): *Metros, leguas y mecatres. Historia de los sistemas de medición en México.* (illustrations in b/w; 23 cm, pp. 282), Publicaciones de la Casa Chata, Mexico City 2011.

II. Conference Announcements

11 – 12 April 2013

The Crisis, Displacements, Cities, and Migrants

IFK an der Kunstuniversität Linz/Wien

This conference addresses the varying and differential relationships between migrants and cities, which are differently positioned within the crises-ridden processes of the current neoliberal globalization. The conference focuses on impacts of the crisis on urban-based cultural industries as they are shaped by the restructuring of national and local economies, politics, and cultures.

Please visit: <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/termine/id=21431>

Please contact: Ingrid Söllner-Pötz, IFK, soellner-poetz@ifk.ac.at

20 April 2013

2013 Hagley Fellows Conference; “Ways of Knowing the World: History and the Senses”

Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, DE

On Saturday, 20 April 2013, the Hagley Museum and Library will host, “Ways of Knowing the World: History and the Senses,” a conference sponsored by the Hagley Fellows of the University of Delaware.

The conference will bring together a diverse group of scholars and the public to explore the historical and cultural role of sensory perception in the human experience—including those that look beyond the Aristotelian conception of the five senses.

Please find the program on: <http://shotnews.net/>

3 – 4 May 2013

Materiality: Objects and Idioms in historical Studies of Science and Technology

York University, Toronto, Canada

Registration is now open for Materiality: Objects and Idioms in Historical Studies of Science and Technology. It will be updated with exhibit information in the coming weeks. Spaces are very limited, so register soon if you’re planning to attend. The Conference will be preceded by a public lecture by Peter Galison. Please see details of conference and lecture below.

Please visit the conference website <http://materialityconference.wordpress.com/>

Please contact: Eleanor Louson, elouson@yorku.ca.

21 – 23 August 2013

Third and Final Call for Proposals: **History of Chemistry**

Uppsala, Sweden

CFP – Attention, deadline **31 March 2013**

The 9th International Conference in the History of Chemistry (9ICHC) will be held in Uppsala 21-23 August 2013.

The theme of the conference is: CHEMISTRY IN MATERIAL CULTURE and papers might address:

- Chemical sites, objects and practices as cultural heritage.
- The philosophical meaning of chemical “materiality”.
- Chemical industry and the commodification of chemicals.
- The cultural and economic significance of elements and other chemical “objects”.
- Museum collections of chemical instruments and other chemistry-related objects.
- Laboratories and experiments.

Please visit: <http://www.9ichc.se>

Please contact Ulrika Örn at the Swedish Chemical Society, ulrika@chemsoc.se

1 – 3 November 2013

Energy and Society, an Energy Rich Canada in an Energy Hungry World. Conference of the Canadian Science and Technology Historical Association / L'Association pour l'histoire de la science et de la technologie au Canada

UQAM, Montreal

CFP – Deadline **31 August 2013**

Economies rise and fall on energy sources. From the founding of Louisbourg and exploitation of its local coal fields, to the Le Grande Complex, to the oil sands, nuclear energy, to Arctic sovereignty, energy has been a constant focus of activity in Canada. Our northern geography and climate dictate an insatiable need for energy. Energy can pit provincial governments against each other, while federal energy policies can create additional tensions. Contemporary debates around climate change, carbon sequestration and “cap and trade” reflect the consequences of living in an energy-intensive world with an insatiable need for energy. Energy production in Canada has relied on discoveries, innovation and pushing boundaries.

We encourage papers for the forthcoming CSTHA/AHSTC conference which address any topic related to energy from the history of the various sectors to social perceptions of various energy sources, R&D, energy consumption and conservation, to histories of personalities and companies. We also seek papers with an international perspective.

CSTHA welcomes proposals for both individual papers as well as thematic sessions, in English and/or French. Individual proposals must include a title, an abstract of about 150 words, and a short résumé for the presenter(s). Session proposals must include a title, a brief summary of the theme, titles and abstracts for each paper, and a short résumé of each speaker. Posters can also be presented and will be available for the duration of the conference.

Deadline 31 August 2013

Presenters at this conference must be members of CSTHA. Become a member or renew your membership at <http://cstha-ahstc.ca/membership-adhesion/>.

Please visit: <http://cstha-ahstc.ca/conference-colloque-2013/>

Please contact: Dorotea Gucciardo, CSTHA communications coordinator, conference@cstha-ahstc.ca.

27 – 29 November 2013

Perspectives on Progress

University of Queensland, St Lucia, Australia

CFP – Deadline **31 May 2013**

In 1968, historian Sidney Pollard defined the Victorian ideal of ‘progress’ as, “the assumption that a pattern of change exists in the history of mankind... that it consists of irreversible changes in one direction only, and that this direction is towards improvement.” Despite the increasingly problematic nature of this ideal, the ‘progress myth’ still remains pervasive in the Western cultural tradition.

This postgraduate and early career researcher conference seeks to promote innovative interdisciplinary dialogues interrogating the concept of progress by bringing together scholars from across the humanities and social sciences.

Contributions are invited from disciplines ranging from history, classics, religion and philosophy through literary, media and cultural studies to anthropology, psychology and political science. Conference delegates will be invited to consider how the idea of progress influences their own work, while being given the opportunity to explore how this intersects with scholarship in other disciplines.

The conference committee invites proposals for papers in the form of an abstract of between 250 and 300 words to perspectivesonprogress2013@gmail.com by 31 May 2013.

Paper format is a 20 minute paper with a 10 minute period for questions and answers.

Possible areas of inquiry will include, but will not be limited to:

- the relevance of progress as a methodological framework
- philosophical and cultural understandings of scientific and technological change
- conceptions of national and cultural progress throughout history; notions of degeneration and regeneration
- relations between human progress and environmental transformation
- perspectives on the past as a golden age; progress as teleology
- progress and identity
- political and geopolitical evolution and revolution

Please visit: <http://perspectives2013.org>

Please contact: perspectivesonprogress2013@gmail.com

19 – 22 June 2014

First International Conference on Early Main Line Railways

Caernarfon, North Wales, UK

CFP – Deadline **30 September 2013**

Abstracts are invited for 30-minute papers to be delivered at the First Early Main Line Railways Conference. The Conference will cover the pioneering period of the public main line railway, up to the establishment of a regular network of routes with agreed or amalgamated running rights. (this period extends from the opening of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway in 1830 to the major consolidation of companies which had taken place by about 1870; start/end dates will differ for other countries).

The emphasis of the event will be on the formation, cultural impact and effects (financial, social, technical etc.) of the early main lines in all their aspects. Papers are particularly sought on:

- Political influences and implications, Capitalisation and Finance, Management, staffing and administration of Early Main Lines
- Technology, with respect to all aspects of the Civil and Mechanical
- Engineering of Early Main Line Railways, including Engines, Rolling Stock, Infrastructure and Buildings
- Social Context and Cultural Impact
- International Context

This event will alternate with the existing Early Railway Conference (www.earlyrailways.org.uk) on a 2-year cycle.

Please visit: <http://www.earlymainlinerailways.org.uk>.

Please contact: Mike Chrimes, Institution of Civil Engineers,
early.main.line.railways@gmail.com

11 – 12 July 2014

Computer Security History Workshop

Charles Babbage Institute, University of Minnesota

CFP – Deadline **13 September 2013**

The Charles Babbage Institute (CBI) is currently engaged in a three year National Science Foundation-sponsored project “Building an Infrastructure for Computer Security History.” In conjunction with this project, CBI is hosting a workshop on computer security history on 11-12 July 2014 and is seeking paper proposals. Preliminary plans have been laid to publish many of the revised papers from the workshop in a 2015 *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* special issue on computer security.

All papers must be historical studies—technical, scientific, political, legal, social, business/economic, or cultural history of computer security.

Requirements and logistics: To be considered for workshop participation, authors should send a 500-750 word abstract detailing their proposed paper, which includes discussion of the key sources for the study. Authors must also submit a 2-page curriculum vitae. Applications should be sent to cbi@umn.edu as PDF documents no later than Friday, 13 September 2013. For accepted proposals, full papers (6000 to 8000 words including footnotes) must be submitted for pre-circulation to the workshop’s participants by 15 June 2014. Travel assistance will be provided to all accepted applicants, as well as lunches and an event dinner on 11 July 2014.

Please visit: <http://www.cbi.umn.edu/research/cfp.html>

Please contact: cbi@umn.edu

III. Summer Schools and Research Grants

23 – 25 September 2013

Summer school ‘Between International, Transnational and Global History’: Information Technologies at Borders, 19th – 21st C.

Pleumeur-Bodou, France

Deadline for application **26 April 2013**

Andrea Giuntini (Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia), Pascal Griset (University Paris-Sorbonne), Léonard Laborie (CNRS Irice-CRHI) are jointly organizing the third « Cité des Télécoms » Doctoral Summer School in Pleumeur-Bodou (France).

Presentation

Dealing with the history of electric and electronic informations' borders crossing, the summer school will evocatingly take place where one of the very first transatlantic television transmissions occurred, in 1962 in the northern part of Brittany. Organised jointly by the Cité des Télécommunications (Orange), Paris-Sorbonne University, and Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia, it aims at providing doctoral students with an overview of relevant research results and of innovative tools and methodologies in the field of communication history in an international / transnational / global perspective.

Students (including mostly PhD candidates and a limited number of post docs) will spend 3 days at the Cité des Télécommunications (www.cite-telecoms.com). They will present and discuss their research in conjunction with lectures given by scholars. Each half-day session will be based on a keynote lecture by an invited scholar and followed by students presentations and discussions of their work in progress. Social events and visits will give the opportunity to discover either traditional or modern faces of this high tech part of Brittany.

Daily language will be English.

The summer school will focus on the interactions between communication technologies, power and global trends seen from a long-term perspective. A solid tradition of studies interpreted and is still interpreting international communications networks primarily as national tools of power operating in the tough geopolitics of information. This interpretation has been somewhat recently challenged in a wave of books and journal special issues emphasizing transnational and global dynamics at stake. Said to be stato- and euro-centric, the so-called « struggle for control » approach would suffer from a « methodological nationalism » ; it would downplay other actors' autonomy and bypass important historical facts linked to the globalisation of communications. Rather than to oppose them, the summer school will tend to combine and articulate these interpretations and their respective heuristics, mainly drawn from the history of technology, the history of international relations, global history and media studies. While most of the discussion concentrates on the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the summer school will extend its prospect up to the advent of the web in the early 1990s.

The organizers encourage applications which could address these debates broadly, with topics ranging from the deployment and maintenance of technical networks, their regulation and call for reform, their uses in peace and war times, the production and impact of

informational flows at local level and their connexion with broader ideas of international society, the rise of transnational movements and opinions, knowledge sharing or piracy.

Teaching team

Andreas Fickers (Maastricht University) ; Andrea Giuntini (Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia) ; Pascal Griset (University Paris-Sorbonne, UMR Irice) ; Léonard Laborie (CNRS, UMR Irice) ; Tristan Mattelart (Université Paris 8) ; Simone Müller-Pohl (Freie Universität Berlin, John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies) ; Dwayne Winseck (Carleton University, School of Journalism and Communication)

Participation to the program, including social events, is free. All local costs (accommodation and food) will be covered by the organizers. Participants are expected to pay their own travel to and from Lannion, the closest railway station linked to Paris by TGV. There is a limited amount of travel stipends available. The Summer School will be held just after the 6th Tensions of Europe conference, « Democracy and Technology. Europe in Tension » (Paris, 19-21 September 2013). In order to integrate both events, participants to the Summer School who would present a paper at the conference would have their registration fees to the conference covered (see toe2013paris.sciencesconf.org for submission).

Application : terms and calendar

Deadline : April, 26 2013.

Please direct queries and send your application to leonard.laborie@gmail.com with

- a curriculum vitae
- a summary of the PhD dissertation project or a summary of their project for post doc candidates
- a written sample of the work in progress (provisional chapter of the dissertation or a published article in any language)

Selection committee : Andrea Giuntini, Pascal Griset, Leonard Laborie

Accepted participants will be notified before May 17th 2013.

Please contact: Leonard Laborie, Maison des sciences de la communication et de l'interdisciplinarité du CNRS, leonard.laborie@gmail.com

Reminder: Mercurians' Pam Laird Research Grant

Deadline for application: **1 May 2013**

The Mercurians, a Special Interest Group of the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT), is offering the Pam Laird Research Grant, US\$1,000 to defray the cost of travel and housing to use a research collection. Please find the announcement in ICOHTEC-Newsletter, no 94, p. 16, or visit: <http://www.mercurians.org/Prize-Grant.htm>

For further information or questions, please contact Andrew Butrica at abutrica@earthlink.net

IV. Awards

Best Article Prize of the European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) 2013

Deadline for application **1 May 2013**

The European Society for Environmental History (ESEH) welcomes submissions for its Best Article Prize. The prize is intended to identify and encourage innovative and well written research in the field of environmental history of Europe. It will be awarded to an article published in 2011 or 2012. Applications are welcomed from senior and junior scholars from all countries, even though some preference may be given to junior scholars from Europe. The prize will be awarded at the 7th ESEH Conference, 20-24 August 2013, in Munich, Germany.

The ESEH publication prize is intended for an article on any subject in European environmental history and in any European languages. The winner will receive a money prize worth of Euro 500 as well as travel grant (if needed) to attend 7th ESEH Conference, 20-24 August 2013, in Munich, Germany. Applicants are asked to submit their published article (including book chapters that are read as stand-alone work) by e-mail as a PDF-file to [rhoelzl\[at\]gwdg.de](mailto:rhoelzl@gwdg.de). If the language of publication is not English, applicants should include a one-page English summary.

Complete applications must be received by **1 May 2013**. The winner will be contacted in the end of June 2013.

ESEH Best article Prize

Dr Richard Hölzl, Seminar for Modern and Medieval History, Georg-August-University
Göttingen, rhoelzl@gwdg.de

Computer History Museum Prize

Deadline for application **30 April 2013**

The Computer History Museum Prize is awarded to the author of an outstanding book in the history of computing broadly conceived, published during the prior three years. The prize of \$1,000 is awarded by SIGCIS, the Special Interest Group for Computers, Information and Society. SIGCIS is part of the Society for the History of Technology.

In 2012 the prize was endowed in perpetuity through a generous bequest from the estate of Paul Baran, a legendary computer innovator and entrepreneur best known for his work to develop and promote the packet switching approach on which modern networks are built. Baran was a longtime supporter of work on the history of information technology and named the prize to celebrate the contributions of the Computer History Museum to that field.

2013 Call for Submissions: Books published in 2010-2012 are eligible for the 2013 award. Books in translation are eligible for three years following the date of their publication in English. Publishers, authors, and other interested members of the computer history community are invited to nominate books. Send one copy of the nominated title to each of the committee members listed below. To be considered, book submissions must be postmarked by 30 April 2013. For more information, please contact the prize committee chair. Current information about the prize, including the most recent call and a list of previous winners, may always be found at <http://www.sigcis.org/chmprize>.

2013 Prize Committee Members

- Rebecca Slayton (chair): Lecturer in Public Polic, Stanford University, 616 Serra Street, Stanford, CA 94305-6055. rslayton@stanford.edu
- David Nofre: Research Affiliate, Centre d'Estudis d'Història de la Ciència at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Send books to him at Kleyn Proffijtlaan 47, 2343DB Oegstgeest, Netherlands d.nofre@gmail.com
- Jonathan Coopersmith: Associate Professor Department of History, Texas A&M University College Station, TX 77843-4326 j-coopersmith@neo.tamu.edu

Previous Winners

- 2009: Christophe Lécuyer, *Making Silicon Valley: Innovation and the Growth of High Tech, 1930-1970* (MIT Press, 2006)
- 2010: Atsushi Akera, *Calculating a Natural World: Scientists, Engineers, and Computers During the Rise of U.S. Cold War Research* (MIT Press, 2007)
- 2011: Paul N. Edwards, *A Vast Machine: Computer Models, Climate Data, and the Politics of Global Warming* (MIT Press, 2010).
- 2012: Eden Medina, *Cybernetic Revolutionaries: Technology and Politics in Allende's Chile* (MIT Press, 2011).

V. Miscellaneous

HoST

The Online Journal of History of Science and Technology, HoST, Volume 6, fall 2012, is now available on the web at: <http://www.iohost.eu/>. The volume is a special issue on “Communicating Science, Technology and Medicine”. The journal’s editor in chief is our member Ana Carneiro, CIUHCT, Faculty of Sciences and Technology, New University of Lisbon/Portugal

E-FAITH Memorandum for an European Industrial Heritage Year in 2015

In a resolution adopted on the 8th of March, by the Standing Committee meeting in Paris, the Assembly of the Council of Europe has made a series of practical recommendations to member States with a view to preserving Europe’s industrial heritage. To ensure that such protection is effective, the PACE has proposed that a European label for industrial heritage be developed. According to the conclusions of the rapporteur on this issue, Ismeta Dervoz (Bosnia and Herzegovina, EPP/CD), the Assembly has also invited the EU and UNESCO to consider the possibility of launching, together with the Council of Europe, a European Industrial Heritage Year in 2015, as proposed by E-FAITH.

The information on the E-FAITH campaign is on: <http://www.e-faith.org/home/?q=content/european-industrial-and-technical-heritage-year-2015>

If your association hasn't yet endorsed the memorandum, please do it now as soon as possible and send it back to our secretariat. Please ask other associations to endorse the memorandum too.

VI. Join ICOHTEC

An ICOHTEC membership makes you a member of the scholarly network of the UNESCO-based International Committee for the History of Technology, ICOHTEC.

The membership includes:

- Reduced fees for ICOHTEC’s conferences
- ICOHTEC’s reviewed journal ICON (published annually, ca. 200 pages)
- Electronic access to back issues of ICON (published since 1995)
- ICOHTEC’s electronic Newsletter (published monthly – available via mailing list and on the homepage)

Please share this subscription form with a colleague who is not a member or ask your library to subscribe!



Membership in ICOHTEC includes subscription to the journal ICON, access to back issues of ICON in electronic form on ICOHTEC's web site, reduced registration at ICOHTEC's annual symposium and a monthly newsletter.

ICOHTEC Subscription Form

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– or enclose a cheque payable to "ICOHTEC" and sent to Dr. Patrice Bret, 10avenue Joffre, F-94160 SAINT-MANDE, FRANCE