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Scientific Instructions for Travelers

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finished the workshop reminding the participants that independent of the discipline at stake we all had one goal: “We want to understand scientific processes.”

Scientific Instructions for Travelers

October 8 and 9, 2010, National University of Ireland, Galway.

Daniel Carey, National University of Ireland, Galway

The purpose of this conference was to discuss the development of inquiries, questionnaires, and directions for scientific travelers, which began to proliferate in the early modern period, ranging from the work of chorographers in the sixteenth century, surveying particular places in Europe, to the Ramist organisation of knowledge, and the remarkably thorough surveys proposed in Spanish *interrogatorios*. The Royal Society’s queries for destinations around the world are among the best known in the seventeenth century. The growth in this practice in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and into the era of professional anthropology is remarkable. The subject has not been studied systematically in English, though there are valuable edited collections in Italian, French, and Spanish.¹⁵

Papers on British sources in the seventeenth century included a discussion of William Petty’s demographic questions by Ted McCormick (Concordia), an account of the widespread use of questionnaires by chorographers and antiquarians in the seventeenth century by Adam Fox (Edinburgh), Edward Lhuyd’s parochial enquiries distributed in Wales by Nancy Edwards (Bangor), and Locke’s unpublished questionnaire concerning religion, by Daniel Carey (NUI Galway). The German tradition was discussed by Matthew McLean (St. Andrews) with a paper on the network of map-making correspondents created by Sebastian Münster in the sixteenth century and Gudrun Bucher’s analysis of Gerhard Friedrich Müller’s elaborate instructions for the second Kamchatka Expedition (1733-43). The French tradition was considered by Frédéric Tinguely (Geneva) with a paper on the advice received by François Bernier for his journey in Mughal India in the seventeenth century, and Efram Sera Schriar (Leeds) discussed De Gérando’s ‘Methods to Follow’ and the Baudin Expedition of 1799-1803. The emergence of geology as a field of study, with accompanying observational instructions for travelers, was described by Ezio Vaccari (Insubria), and two papers addressed the protocols established for collecting the natural world, by Dominik Collet (Göttingen) on German and English practices, and Marcelo Figueroa (National University of Tucumán) on Spanish directions for travelers to the New World. The conference featured two wide-ranging contributions on questions of method – Charles Withers (Edinburgh) on the Royal Geographical Society in the nineteenth century, and Henrika Kuklick (Pennsylvania) on anthropology and the disciplinary method of fieldwork.

¹⁵ Maurizio Bossi and Claudio Greppi, eds., *Viaggi e scienza: le istruzioni scientifiche per i viaggiatori nei secoli XVII-XIX* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2005); Claude Blankckaert, ed., *Le terrain des sciences humaines: instructions et enquêtes (XVIIIe-XXe siècle)* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996); Francisco de Solano, ed., *Cuestionarios para la formación de la Relaciones Geograficas de Indias siglos XVI/XIX* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988).