

Expert Group “Long-term socio-ecological research (LTSER) and Environmental History”

Activity report to the 14th Joint Meeting of IAD National Representatives & Expert Group Leaders; September, 13, 2016, Lucian Blaga University Sibiu, Romania

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Since its establishment after the IAD-Meeting 2014 in Sofia, this **youngest of all IAD-EGs** has commenced a range of activities within IAD and beyond. We pursue **two general aims** in the current and ongoing phase of setting-up and consolidating this new field of expertise:

- I. To establish and strengthen long-term and historical, socio-ecological approaches that bridge the ‘great divide’ between natural sciences and social sciences and humanities within IAD, and in current and future Danube research.** How we pursue this goal, shall be exemplified by the following, selected activities:

I.1. The new EG was introduced in a **series of contributions to “Danube News”** (DN): Schmid & Haidvogel 2015 in DN 31; Winiwarter & Haidvogel 2015 in DN 32; to demonstrate as concrete as possible how LTSER and environmental history contribute to future current interdisciplinary Danube research, the co-ordinators have discussed JDS 3 from a social science and humanities perspective in Schmid & Haidvogel 2015 in DN 32, a second part of this work has already been submitted and will be published probably in DN 34. We are grateful to Prof. Georg Janauer, who as the journal’s editor supported this series of contributions most effectively!

I.2. We raised attention for the **IAD-conference** in Sibiu in our professional networks, among our students, colleagues and respective academic communities. In the program of this year’s conference, LTSER and environmental history approaches are represented with several papers (by Hohensinner, Schoder and others) and a poster (Haidvogel, Pont, and Schmid). For the next IAD conference we aim for an even stronger presence, if possible also in alternative formats (young researchers’ workshop, specific session etc.).

I.3. Members of this EG are continuously involved in the activities of the national **Austrian Committee (AC-IAD)**. In 2014, Severin Hohensinner was awarded with the “Liepolt Preis 2013” for his works on historical river morphology. In summer 2014, Martin Schmid facilitated a public workshop in Vienna, entitled *Danube goes science* and focusing on ‘flagship projects’ of the EU’s Danube Strategy.

I.4. Several members of this EG were involved in the process of proposing a fully financed **Doctoral Programme** “Human-River-System in the 21st century” to the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) in 2015/16; this process was led by Thomas Hein most effectively; although this highly original and interdisciplinary proposal failed in a first attempt, we are further committed to develop and realize common attractive learning environments for high potential young Danube researchers from a wide range of disciplines, including Environmental History and Social Ecology.

- II. In academic communities new to IAD (particularly in the social sciences and humanities), we make IAD visible as an academic association with high professional and diversified competences, long experience in and attractive networks for inter- and transdisciplinary Danube research.**

II.1. Members of this EG together with Stefan Dorondel (“Francisc I. Rainer” Anthropology Institute of the Romanian Academy, Bucuresti) cooperated with the Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (IOS) in Regensburg in proposing a project entitled *Taming the Danube: Local Communities, State and Modernity (TAMIDANUB)* to the German Research Ministry. If successful (decision is expected for end of 2016), this project will establish a consortium to prepare an application in Horizon 2020 (lead: Prof. Ulf Brunbauer, Regensburg); the HORIZON-project would focus on the environmental history of the Danube, particularly since the 19th century.

II.2. Together with Peter Szabo, an environmental historian specialized on vegetation and forests, Gertrud Haidvogel submitted a project proposal *Long-term biodiversity change in riverine landscapes: modelling the past as a mean to understand the future (RIVERPAST)* to the bilateral call for Joint projects issued by the Austrian and the Czech Science Funds FWF and GA-CR, respectively. Peter Szabo works at the **Institute of Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Department of Vegetation Ecology, Brno**. A decision is expected for November 2016. If funded, this project would be one of the first attempts to investigate the historical change of fish and vegetation and interactions.

II.3. Martin Schmid has presented IAD and particularly the approach of this EG in several (keynote) lectures along the Danube, of which two shall be mentioned here, exemplifying new nodes in an **emerging network** of institutions interested in our activities: *Le Danube, un site socio-naturel. En quoi les historiens du Danube ont besoin des sciences naturelles et vice-versa* at the **Centre Régional Francophone de Recherches Avancées en Sciences Sociales, Bucarest** in October 2015; and *The Danube as an Organic Machine: On energy, long-term legacies and the transformation of a socio-natural site since 1500* at the **Translocal Institute for Contemporary Art of Central European University (CEU), Budapest** in October 2014.

II.4. Together with Severin Hohensinner, the EG organized a session *Sozial-ökologische Langzeitforschung (LTSER) und Umweltgeschichte von Fließgewässern/Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research (LTSER) and Environmental History of watercourses* for the Annual Meeting of the **German Society of Limnology and the SIL Austria** to be held at BOKU, Vienna end of September 2016.

II.5. The EG wants to attract **new IAD-members**, in particular promising young (PhD) students. Angelika Schoder, recipient of a prestigious DOC-fellowship of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, in her PhD "FLOW REGIMES" investigates the history of hydropower and the transformation of fluvial landscapes in Austria "through the lens" of engineers and other experts; we strongly recommend her application for IAD membership.

II.6 Within the interdisciplinary scholarly network „**Danube:Future**“ established as flagship project under EU-SDR Priority Area 7, Knowledge Society, the activities of IAD are regularly presented and referred to. Danube.Future is an activity for the **Danube Rectors Conference (DRC)** and facilitates thus exchange between IAD and DRC. In summer 2016, the **Danube:Future Knowledge base** (<http://www.danubefuture.eu/danubefuture-knowledge-base>) was released. It offers among others the possibility to make publications and grey literature which are published in one of the many national languages of the Danube River Basin available to a wider audience via short English summaries.