

**IGU COMMISSION ON THE HISTORY OF GEOGRAPHY. REPORT OF THE
ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN 2008-2012 AND WORK PLAN FOR 2012-2016**

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Chair of the Commission
Madrid, January 2012

1. MEMBERSHIP.

1.A) Commission's Steering Committee members.

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¹ Earlier versions of this document have been discussed with the members of the Commission's Steering Committee proposed for the period 2012-2016. Thanks are due to all of them, and particularly to Profs. Mike Heffernan, Jean-Yves Puyo and Charles Withers for their thorough reading and extensive contribution to the final document.

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1.B) Members of the Commission (apart from the Steering Committee's members) as of 1 January 2012.

-Honorary members: Presidents of the former Commission on the History of Geographical Thought (except for the period 2004-2008) are considered Honorary Members of the Commission on the History of Geography, namely: Profs. Philippe Pinchemel (1923-2008; Commission's Chair from 1968 to 1980), David Hooson (1926-2008; Chair from 1980 to 1988), Keiichi Takeuchi (1932-2005; Chair from 1988 to 1996) and Vincent Berdoulay (Commission's Chair from 1996 to 2004). Prof. Anne Buttimer, Secretary of the Commission from 1988 to 1996, was appointed honorary member in recognition of her valuable and longstanding engagement with the Commission since its creation in 1968.

-Other members: Prof. Berdoulay kindly provided the current Commission Steering Committee (henceforth CSC) with a list of nearly 300 members of the former Commission on the History of Geographical Thought (August 2004). Since August 2008, this list has been updated and extended with 238 new members, reaching a total of 458 members (as of 1 January 2012), including the Steering Committee's members and the Honorary members (see Table 1). The list includes members from 78 different countries, whose regional distribution is as follows:

Region	A: Number of members as of August 2004	B: Members added since 2008	Total (A+B)	% of the total	Most represented countries by region
Europe	138	101	239	52	Spain (70); France (49), Italy (21), Germany (16), UK (15)
Asia	48	19	67	14,6	Japan (21), Israel (14), China (11)
Latin America	26	32	58	12,7	Brazil (33), Mexico (9)
USA & Canada	38	6	44	9,6	USA (33), Canada (11)
Africa	18	11	29	6,3	Cape Verde (11), Morocco (5)
Oceania	11	-	11	2,4	Australia (7), New Zealand (4)
Russia	9	1	10	2,1	
Total	288	170	458		

Table 1. Members included in the distribution list of the Commission, as of 1 January 2012.

This list has been mainly built on the basis of the attendees to the meetings held by the Commission since 1968, in order to disseminate information on the Commission initiatives. It should be considered not as a list of “official” corresponding members, but as a valuable directory of scholars interested in the Commission’s activities, that can be used as a distribution list. A list of official corresponding members is currently being prepared by the CSC on the basis of more selective criteria. The CSC expects to have this network of official corresponding members completed for the next International Geographical Congress (August 2012).

A more precise indicator of the Commission’s spatial reach is the number of authors (distributed by region) who have presented at least one paper or lecture in the meetings organised since its was re-launched in August 2008 (including the meetings planned for 2012), though this distribution is inevitably influenced by the locations where the meetings have taken place (see Table 2). A total of 187 contributors have attended, or plan to attend, the 8 meetings organised or sponsored by the Commission in this period (at which 178 contributions have been, or are planned to be, presented). These have come from 25 different countries, distributed as follows:

Region	Number of authors (*)	%	Number of countries of origin of authors (**)	Most represented countries (**)
Europe	116	62	11	Spain (61 authors), France (26), Germany (10), Italy (5), Romania (4), Hungary (2), UK (2)
Asia	31	16,6	5	Japan (13), Israel (10), India (6)
Africa	18	9,6	2	Cape Verde (17)
Latin America	12	6,4	3	Brazil (6), Argentina (3), Mexico (3)
Russia	5	2,7	1	
USA & Canada	4	2,1	2	USA (3)
Oceania	1	0,5	1	Australia (1)
Total	187 authors (for 178 contributions)		25	

Table 2. Number of authors who have presented at least one paper or lecture in the Commission Meetings (2009-2012), distributed by region.

Notes:

(*) This table includes the authors of the papers and lectures presented in the Meetings mentioned in item 2 of this report (tables 3 and 4). Except for the Meetings planned for 2012, authors whose paper proposals were accepted but who did not attend the Meetings are not counted. In the case of the Commission paper session planned for the 32nd IGC, that will be held in Cologne on August 2012, we have included authors of the 30 proposed abstracts (as of 9 January 2012), still being reviewed. The same procedure has been adopted in respect of the 19 paper proposals submitted to the pre-congress paper session (as of 9 January 2012) organized by the Commission to be held in Leipzig and Gotha on 21-23 August 2012.

- 21 authors who have presented more than one paper are counted once only.

(**): Countries being considered are those where the institution of the author is located, not the author's nationality.

2. MEETINGS.

2.A) Meetings organized and held by the Commission since its renewal in August 2008 until December 2011.

Table 3 summarizes the six meetings that have been organised by the Commission since the 31st IGC. The main themes and results of those meetings are discussed in item 2.B. Item 2.C considers the meetings planned by the Commission from 2012 onwards.

Location (Country and municipality)	Dates	Number of Papers and authors	Additional information
1.SPAIN: Miraflores de la Sierra (Madrid province)	5-8 February 2009	44 papers + 2 lectures (by 48 authors)	Symposium organized jointly with the History of Geographical Thought Working Group of the Association of Spanish Geographers, on the topic “Languages and visions of landscape and territory”, locally coordinated by Profs. Jacobo García and Nicolás Ortega. It included also two one-day excursions around the city of Toledo and the Sierra de Guadarrama. Most of the papers which were presented have been published in a book (see item 4 of this report). For a more detailed report of this meeting and the publication derived from it, see Commission Newsletters no. 24 (December 2009) and 25 (January 2011).
2. HUNGARY: Budapest	1 August 2009	4 papers (by 4 authors)	Paper session held in the 23rd International Congress of the International Union of History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS). The possibility of organising a specific Symposium within the Congress was closed when the current Commission’s Steering Committee (CSC) was elected in August 2008, so the CSC was only able to patronage a paper session devoted to the History of Geography in the Contemporary Period, chaired by Prof. Alexei Postnikov. For a more detailed report of this meeting, see Commission Newsletter no. 24 (December 2009).
3. ISRAEL: Tel- Hai	10-12 July 2010	8 papers (by 9 authors)	Pre-Conference paper session related to the IGU Regional Conference, on the topic “Geography, Civilizations, and Cultural Identities in Historical Perspective”, locally coordinated by Prof. Haim Goren. It included a field trip around the “Historical Geography of the Galilee”. For a more detailed report of this meeting, see Commission Newsletter no. 25 (January 2011).
4. ISRAEL: Tel- Aviv	13 July 2010	13 papers (by 17 authors)	Paper sessions held within the framework of the IGU Regional Conference, focused on the same topic of the pre-conference held at Tel-Hai. For a more detailed report of this meeting, see Commission Newsletter no. 25 (January 2011).
5. CAPE VERDE: Praia (Santiago island)	15-17 June 2011	31 papers + 3 lecturers (by 42 authors)	Symposium organized jointly with the University of Cape Verde Department of Science and Technology, on the topic “History of Geography and Colonialism”, locally coordinated by Prof. Judite Nascimento. It included a one-day excursion around the city of Praia and the Santiago island. A selection of the papers which were presented are being reviewed in order to be published in a book (see item 4 of the report). For a more detailed report of this meeting, see Commission Newsletter no. 26 (forthcoming).
6. CHILE: Santiago de Chile	18 November 2011	14 papers (by 24 authors)	Paper sessions held within the framework of the IGU Regional Conference. Those sessions included a thematic seminar on “Geography and territorial policies: past and present”. For a more detailed report of this meeting, see Commission Newsletter no. 26 (forthcoming)

Table 3: Meetings organised and held by the Commission (August 2009- December 2011)

2.B) Summary of the questions addressed in the meetings and the main outcomes and conclusions resulting from them.

The International Geographical Union General Assembly held in Tunis in August 2008 approved the renaming of the former Commission on the History of Geographical Thought to the Commission on the History of Geography (IGU C08.20). With this slightly different name and a renewed program, the new Commission has reactivated the work of the Commission on the History of Geographical Thought, originally established at the 21st International Geographical Congress, held in New Delhi in 1968. As the activity of the former Commission was almost totally interrupted between August 2004 and July 2008, the current CSC has focused not only on developing its own work plan for the period 2008-2012, but also in re-establishing the scientific programs and institutional links which had been much weakened in the previous four years.

In the three years and a half since the revival of the Commission, the goals and commitments outlined in the work plan for 2008-2012 have been accomplished. Six successful scientific meetings have been held since August 2008. Five out of these six meetings have been organized by the Commission: three within the framework of the IGU regional Conferences held in Chile and Israel; and the other two, in Spain and Cape Verde, as independent initiatives, in cooperation with local national institutions. One event was sponsored within the 23 International Congress of History of Science, held in Hungary in August 2009.

In these six meetings, a total of 119 contributions (114 papers + 5 lectures) have been presented by 138 authors (coming from 21 different countries), 21 of which have presented more than one contribution. In addition to this, as specified in paragraph 2.c, the Commission has also organized two scientific meetings (plus one fieldtrip) on the occasion of the 32nd IGC, which have jointly received a total of 49 paper proposals, submitted by 64 authors (from 13 different countries), 15 of which have already contributed to 2008-2011 Commission meetings. If we consider together the six meetings organized through 2008-2011 and the two call for papers launched for 2012, currently under review, we can conclude that the activities of the Commission have given rise, in these four years, to a total of 178 contributions by 187 authors (from 25 different countries), 24 of which have submitted more than one contribution throughout the period. Five field trips have been organised by the Commission as an important, complementary activity in four of those meetings.

In addition to other figures and achievements reported in this document, the data on attendance represents significant evidence that the Commission has been successful in restoring and maintaining a high level of scientific activity as a forum to meet and exchange ideas and results on the history of the discipline. Commission relationships with the IGU, the IUHPS, as well as with other national institutions and groups interested in the field have been revived, normalized and expanded (see item 3 of this report); *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies*, the “flagship” publication of the Commission, has brought four more volumes between 2008 and 2011 (see item 4); and the two meetings organised by the Commission under its own initiative have resulted in new publications and attracted a broad response, very similar to the audience achieved by the former Commission on History of Geographical Thought, whose history and activity were exemplary in many ways.

Beyond these numbers, the meetings held by the Commission during the period 2008-2011 (whose main contents and conclusions can be consulted on the respective reports published in the last Commission Newsletters) have shown the vitality of the research in history of geography in different countries and world regions, and allowed contact between scholars (such as the geographers of Cape Verde, Israel and Chile) who have tended to remain peripheral or even absent from the main circuits of international academic exchange. The meetings have also allowed for the exchange of ideas and results which has proven useful and important in: (i) shedding light on new facets of the discipline's past, as well as in raising new questions, promoting new research themes and theoretical approaches and revising certain hegemonic interpretations; and (ii) providing useful insights for understanding some of the main dynamics, problems and challenges of the contemporary world.

From the point of view of the first of the two aspects above considered, the Commission has addressed, firstly, the contribution of geographical knowledge to the making of "Languages and visions of landscape and territory", which was the thematic backbone of the symposium held in Miraflores de la Sierra, Madrid, in February 2009. The papers presented at it focused especially their attention on the spatial dimensions of memory and identity, as well as on the formation processes of geographical rhetoric, language and iconography². A further symposium, held in Praia, Cape Verde, in June 2011, approached the relationship between history of geography and colonialism from a perspective which paid careful attention not only to the processes of domination that chaired this relationship, but also to the (traditionally less considered) processes of exchange between European and indigenous knowledge, the contribution of geographers to the spatial planning of colonies, and the development and institutionalization of geography in some African countries³. The public dimension and perception of geography outside academic circles constitute another important concern for the Commission, some aspects of which will be addressed at the meeting organised in Leipzig and Gotha in August 2011, devoted to "cartography and geographical knowledge in the public sphere".

With regard to the second aspect mentioned above, meetings promoted by the Commission in recent years have also served to stimulate awareness and debate on the contributions of the history of geography to understanding of issues of contemporary social relevance. The two meetings held in Israel (at Tel-Hai and Tel-Aviv) in July 2010 were devoted to the relationship between geography, civilizations and cultural identities (see Commission's Newsletter No. 25). The meeting recently held in Santiago de Chile devoted several sessions to examine the historical role played by geographers in various territorial policies that have been crucial for the building of modern states and, reciprocally, the ways by which the implementation of some of these policies has strongly influenced the concepts and imaginations of modern geography. In a similar

² ORTEGA-CANTERO, Nicolás; GARCÍA-ÁLVAREZ, Jacobo; MOLLÁ, Manuel (eds.) (2010): *Lenguajes y visiones del paisaje y del territorio / Langages et visions du paysage et du territoire / Languages and visions of landscape and territory*. Madrid, Universidades Autónoma y Carlos III de Madrid / Grupo de Trabajo de Historia del Pensamiento Geográfico de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles, 516 pp.

³ As indicated in item 4 of this report, a book based on the contributions presented in this Symposium is currently in preparation, coedited by J.C García and J.García-Álvarez with the publishing support of the University of Lisbon's Centre of Geographical Studies.

way, the sessions organised by the Commission within the framework of the next IGC, to be held in Cologne, will focus on conceptions and representations of Nature in the history of geography. Subjects listed in the call for papers include contributions dealing with the interest of the history of geographical thought within the context of contemporary debates about global environmental change, nature conservation policies and the concept of sustainable development.

C) Meetings planned to be held in 2012 and later years.

Table 4 summarizes the meetings planned by the Commission for the 2012-2016 period, within the framework of the aims and work plan described in items 2.B and 6.D. of this report. These include the pre-congress and congress activities organised in the framework of the 32nd IGC, as well as the Commission's plans concerning the 24th International Congress on History of Science, the 2013 IGU Regional Conference and the organisation of two specific thematic symposia in 2014 and 2015. Details on the concrete meeting topics to be dealt at the IGU Regional Conferences that will take place in 2014 and 2015, as well as in the 33rd IGC, are still not decided.

3. NETWORKING.

3.A) In the period 2008-2012, the current CSC has focused its networking efforts on re-establishing and extending collaboration activities related to items 3.B and 3.C (see Table 5). The Commission has not organized joint events with other IGU Commissions and Task Forces during the period. This said, the CSC is aware that the Commission's holistic and cross-thematic approach lends itself to cooperation with other Commissions and Task Forces, and we will work to foster these developments during the 2012-2016 period, either within the framework of the IGU Regional Conferences to be held in Krakow and Moscow or in the 33rd IGC, in Beijing.

3.B) As noted above, networking strategies followed by the current CSC have put particular emphasis on strengthening and multiplying relationships with national organisations and research groups specifically concerned with the history of geography and cartography. This approach has been very fruitful and successful, as evidenced by the various meetings co-organized by the Commission over the past three years, as well as by most of the meetings planned for the 2012-2016 period (see Table 5). In this regard, the commission has already collaborated – or is beginning to collaborate – with institutions from Europe (such as the Spanish Association of Geographers's History of Geographical Thought Working Group; the University of Lisbon's Centre of Geographical Studies; the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography at Leipzig; and the History and Philosophy of Geography

Location (Country and municipality)	Dates	Number of Papers and authors	Topics to be addressed and other relevant information
1.GERMANY: Leipzig & Gotha	21-25 August 2012	Submission period of proposals to the paper session closed on 8 January 2011 Number of submitted paper proposals: 19 (by 26 authors)	Two main pre-congress activities organized jointly with the Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (Leipzig), locally coordinated by Drs. Ute Wardenga and Bruno Schelhaas: 1.1) A Pre-Congress paper session on the topic "Cartography and Geographical Knowledge in the Public Sphere", that will take place in Leipzig and Gotha on August 21-23, 2012 1.2) Pre-Congress Field Trip will take place from August 21 to August 26, 2012, including visits to Leipzig, Gotha, Eisenach and the Rhine Gorge, among other locations, with a final rail ride to Cologne. More info in: http://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGIHG/
2. GERMANY : Cologne	26-30 August 2012	Submission period of paper proposals closed on 8 January 2012 Number of submitted paper proposals: 30 (by 43 authors)	Paper session to be held within the framework of the 32nd International Geographical Congress. Session topic: "Society and Environment: conceptions and representations of Nature(s) in the History of Geography". More info in https://igc2012.org/ and http://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGIHG/
3.UNITED KINGDOM: MANCHESTER	22-28 July 2013	Registration period still not opened	Symposium on the topic "Geography and its Publics", jointly organised with the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers, within the framework of the 24th International Congress of History of Science and Technology. The convenors of the Meeting will be Drs. Richard Powell and Heike Jons (on behalf of the RSG-IBG) and Profs. Mike Heffernan, Jacobo García and Jan Vandersmissen (on behalf of the IGU Commission on the History of Geography)
4.JAPAN: KYOTO	4-9 August 2013	Registration period still not opened	Paper sessions to be held within the framework of the IGU Regional Conference. The local coordinators on behalf of the Commission will be Profs. Tamami Fukuda (Osaka Prefecture University) and Toshiyuki Shimazu (Wakayama University).
<p>OTHER MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR 2014-2016</p> <p>In addition to participating in the IGU Regional Conference and Congress scheduled for 2014-2016 (Kracow in 2014, Moscow in 2015 and Beijing in 2016), the Commission plans to organize at least to specific Meetings within this period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014 (precise dates and place still not decided): Symposium on "History of Geography and Historical Geography in Latin America", to be held in Brazil. The first steps to organize this meeting, in cooperation with the Brazilian Historians of Geography Working Group, are under way. • 2015 (precise dates still not decided): Symposium on "The historiography of Geography", to be held in Quebec (Canada). 			

Table 4: Commission Meetings planned for 2012-2016.

Region	Country	Institution/ Group	Type of Cooperation
INTERNATIONAL (ICSU)		International Union of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IUHPST) – Division of History of Science	The IGU-CHG is full member of the IUHST – DHS since 1976, as one of the Inter-Union Commissions. Since August 2008, the IGU-CHG has participated or is going to participate in the following IUHPST meetings: -23 rd International Congress of History of Science and Technology, Budapest, August 2009. IGU-CHG patronized a paper session on the topic “Geography in the Contemporary Period”. -24 th International Congress of History of Science and Technology, Manchester, July 2013. IGU-CHG will co-organize a Symposium on the topic “Geography and its Publics”.
EUROPE	Spain	Spanish Association of Geographers – History of Geographical Thought Working Group (GTHPG – AGE)	IGU-CHG and GTHPG – AGE did co-organize a Symposium on the topic “Languages and visions of Landscape and Territory” (held at Miraflores de la Sierra, Madrid, on February 2009), whose proceedings were published in 2010 by the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, co-edited by profs. Nicolás Ortega, Jacobo García-Álvarez and Manuel Mollá.
	Portugal	University of Lisbon – Centre of Geographical Studies (CEG-UL)	IGU-CHG was involved, by the active role of his full member Prof. Joao Carlos Garcia, in the centenary celebrations of Orlando Ribeiro’s birth (held mainly in Lisbonne and Porto in 2011). The CEG-UL will publish in 2012 a book based on the IGU-CHG symposium on “History of Geography and Colonialism”, held in Cape Verde in June 2011, which is being co-edited by Joao Carlos Garcia and Jacobo García-Álvarez.
	Germany	Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography / Leibniz – Institute für Länderkunde (L-IFL), Leipzig.	IGU-CHG and L-IFL will jointly organize, in August 2012, a pre-congress paper session on the topic “Cartography and geographical knowledge in the Public sphere”, as well as a pre-congress field trip, and have co-planned the topic of the paper session on History of Geography to be held at Cologne in the 32nd IGC. The local coordinators on behalf of the L-IFL will be Dr. Utte Wardenga, Dr. Bruno Schelhaas.
	United Kingdom	Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers – History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (RGS&IBG-HPGRS)	IGU-CHG and RGS&IBG-HPGRS will jointly organize a Symposium on “Geography and its publics” that will be held in the framework of the 24 th International Congress of History of Science and Technology (Manchester, July 2013). The organising Committee for this Symposium will be made up of the following convenors: Drs. Richard Powell & Heike Jons (on behalf of the RGS&IBG-HPGRG) and profs. Mike Heffernan, Jacobo García and Jan Vandersmissen (on behalf of the IGU-CHG).
AFRICA	Cape Verde	University of Cape Verde – Department of Science and Technology (UCP – DST)	IGU-CHG and UCP – DST did co-organize the Symposium on “History of Geography and Colonialism”, held at Praia in June 2011. Prof. Judite do Nascimento did coordinate the Local Organising Committee on behalf of the UCP-DST, whereas Prof. Joao Carlos Garcia launched the initiative of the meeting on behalf of the IGU-CHG.
ASIA	Japan	The Human Geographical Society of Japan - Geographical Thought Study Group (HGSJ – GTSG)	IGU-CHG and HGSJ – GTSG are cooperating in order to organize the paper sessions devoted to History of Geography at the IGU regional Conference to be held in Tokyo on August 2013. The local coordinators appointed for those sessions are two members of the HGSJ – GTSG, namely: Prof. Toshiyuki Shimazu (current leader of the group) and Prof. Tamami Fukuda (who has been also proposed to join the IGU-CHG Steering Committee from the 32nd IGC onwards).
LATIN AMERICA	Brazil	History of Geographical Thought Working Group	IGU-CHG President gave the opening lecture of the II Brazilian Meeting of History of Geographic Thought (Uberlandia, December 2011), on the history, current work and prospects of the IGU-CHG. IGU-CHG is involved in the plans for organizing the first International Symposium of History of Geography in Latin America (provisionally scheduled for 2014).

Table 5: Collaboration of the IGU Commission on the History of Geography (IGU-CHG) with other institutions and groups (since August 2008 onwards).

Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers); Africa (University of Cape Verde's Department of Science and Technology), Asia (The Human Geographical Society of Japan's Geographical Thought Study Group) and Latin America (Brazilian History of Geographical Thought Working Group). Moreover, for the CSC, collaboration with such national research groups is strategically key in order to achieve three important objectives: to expand the reach of the Commission's initiatives; to set a global, dense and effective network of corresponding members (currently in preparation); and to think of world histories of geography that might overcome the traditional, Western-orientated and internalist approaches to the discipline's historiography. The Commission's maintenance and expansion of this cooperation with national and local groups and institutions will remain a priority within its networking strategies for the future.

3.C) Since 1976, the Commission acts as an international Commission not only within the IGU, but also within the Division of History of Science and Technology (DHST) of the International Union of the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology (IUHPST), which is part of the ICSU (<https://sites.google.com/a/dhstweb.org/www/>). Careful efforts have been made during the last years to re-establish and normalize the links of the Commission with the IUHPST, which, as noted in item 3.B, were interrupted between 2004 and 2008. In this respect, since its renewal in August 2008, the Commission has been present in the 23rd International Congress of History of Science and Technology (ICHST), held at Budapest on August 2009, where it sponsored one paper session devoted to Geography in the Contemporary Period; and it will also actively participate in the 24th ICHST, to take place in Manchester on July 2013, with a Symposium on the topic "Geography and its Publics".

4. PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITE.

In the last four years, the Commission has issued three different kind of publications (see Tables 6 a & 6b). The Commission has continued to edit the annual serial collection *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* (four volumes published between 2008 and 2011, one more forthcoming for October 2012), and the Commission's annual *Newsletter* (which is published in English and French). Two of the Commission's thematic symposia held in this period have resulted in two books (one published in 2010, on the topic "Languages and visions of landscape and territory", and the other one in preparation, on the topic "History of geography and colonialism"). Since we have already referred to the symposia which resulted in those monographs in item 2 (a summary of the first of these books may also be found in the Commission's *Newsletter* no. 25), in the following lines we shall focus the attention on the *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* series (henceforth *GBS*), the main and most distinctive publication of the Commission since 1977⁴.

⁴ The comments on *GBS* included in this report mostly owe to Prof. Charles Withers, who is currently member of the Commission Steering Committee and co-editor of *GBS* on behalf of it. Acknowledgements are due to him and to Dr. Hayden Lorimer for their valuable work for *GBS*. For an account of the history of this series until 2000, see ARMSTRONG, Patrick & MARTIN, Geoffrey (2000): "Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies, 1977-2000". *Geographical Review*, vol. 90 (2), pp. 256-259.

Type of Publication	Title of the publication (complete citation)	Summary of Contents
Book (annual serial collection)	<i>Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies</i> , vol. 27, 2008, London & New York, 176 pages. Published by Continuum on behalf of the IGU -CHG . Co-editors: Charles WITHERS and Hayden LORIMER.	8 essays on the following figures: Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), William Camden (1551-1623), William D. Cooley (1795-1883), Kate Marsden (1859-1931), Max Sorre (1880-1962) Jiro Yonekura (1909-2002), James Blaut (1927-2005) and Howard Gregor (1920-2000).
Book (annual serial collection)	<i>Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies</i> , vol. 28, 2009, London & New York, 192 pages. Published by Continuum on behalf of the IGU- CHG. Co-editors: Charles WITHERS and Hayden LORIMER.	10 essays on: Peter Heyleyn (1599-1662), Hugh Clapperton (1788-1827), Charles Patrick Daly (1816-1899), Marion Isabel Newbigin (1869-1968), W. Karl Oestreich (1873-1947), Gudmund Hatt (1884-1960), Tibor Mendöl (1905-1966), Koji Iizuka (1906-1970), Jacqueline Beaujeu-Garnier (1917-1995) and Richard Chorley (1927-2002).
Book (annual serial collection)	<i>Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies</i> , vol. 29, 2010, London & New York, 208 pages. Published by Continuum on behalf of the IGU - CHG. Co-editors: Charles WITHERS and Hayden LORIMER.	8 essays on: Alan Grant Ogilvie (1887–1954), Pierre George (1909–2006), Philippe Pinchemel (1923–2008), Denis E. Cosgrove (1948–2008), Leslie Wilson Hepple (1947–2007), Andrew Learmonth (1916–2008) and Allan Pred (1936–2007).
Book (annual serial collection)	<i>Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies</i> , vol. 30, 2011, London & New York, 224 pages. Published by Continuum on behalf of the IGU - CHG. Co-editors: Charles WITHERS and Hayden LORIMER.	9 essays on: William Lyde (1863–1947), Norman John Greville Pounds (1912–2006), Michael Williams (1935–2009), Mary Arizona (Zonia) Baber (1862–1956), Luna Bergere Leopold (1915–2006), Juan Carandell y Pericay (1893–1937), Marcel Dubois (1856–1916), André Siegfried (1875–1959) and Pierre Deffontaines (1894–1978).
Book (annual serial collection)	<i>Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies</i> , vol. 31, London & New York (scheduled to be published in October 2012). Published by Continuum on behalf of the IGU - CHG. Co-editors: Charles WITHERS and Hayden LORIMER.	9 essays on: Eva Germaine Rimington Taylor (1879-1966), Orlando Ribeiro (1911-1997), Aimé Vincent Perpillou (1902-1976), Two Vidalians: Antoine Vacher (1873-1920) and René Musset (1881-1977), Jean Dresch (1905-1994), Andre Cholley (1886-1968) , Daniel Faucher (1882-1970), Kenneth Cumberland (1913-2011) and Richard Lawton (1925-2010)

Table 6a. Commission's Publications, 2008-2012 (1).

Newsletter	IGU – CHG Newsletter / Bulletin no. 24 (December 2009), 12 pp. Published online at the Commission’s website: http://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGIHG/05_Bulletins/bulletins.html	1) Commission’s Full Membership; 2) Commission’s renaming, precedents and main goals for 2008-2012; 3) Reports on the Meetings held in 2009; 4) Forthcoming Meetings: 2010 IGU Regional Conference, Israel; 5) Commission’s Publications: <i>Geographers. Biobibliographical Studies</i> , vol. 28 (2009); 6) Other activities: the Commission Website.
Newsletter	IGU – CHG Newsletter / Bulletin no. 25 (January 2011), 12 pp. Published online at the Commission’s website. http://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGIHG/05_Bulletins/bulletins.html	1) Commission’s Full Membership; 2) Report on the Meetings held in 2010; 3) Forthcoming Meetings: Praia, Cape Verde (June 2011) and Santiago de Chile (November 2011); 4) Commission’s Publications in 2010.
Newsletter	IGU - CHG Newsletter / Bulletin no. 26 (2012, forthcoming)	1) Commission’s Full Membership; 2) Reports on the Meetings held in 2011; 3) Forthcoming Meetings: Commission plans for the 32 IGU Congress and pre-congress (August 2012); 4) Commission’s Publications in 2011.
Book (based on Symposium Proceedings)	ORTEGA-CANTERO, Nicolás; GARCÍA-ÁLVAREZ, Jacobo; MOLLÁ, Manuel (eds.) (2010): <i>Lenguajes y visiones del paisaje y del territorio / Languages et visions du paysage et du territoire / Languages and visions of landscape and territory</i> . Madrid, Universidades Autónoma y Carlos III de Madrid / Grupo de Trabajo de Historia del Pensamiento Geográfico de la Asociación de Geógrafos Españoles, 516 pp. ISBN: 978-84-8344-174-9.	This book, which is based on the papers presented at the International Symposium held in Miraflores de la Sierra, near Madrid, in February 2009 (see Tables 3 and 5 of this report), includes a total of 42 contributions written by 46 authors (mainly in French, Spanish and English). The book is divided into four sections: 1. Landscapes, territories, identities; 2. Sites of memory; 2. Languages and images of landscape and territory; 4. Cartographies
Book (based on Symposium Proceedings)	GARCIA, Joao Carlos & GARCÍA-ÁLVAREZ, Jacobo (eds.): <i>Historia da Geografia e colonialismo / History of Geography and Colonialism / Histoire de la Géographie et Colonialisme</i> , Lisboa, Centro de Estudos Geográficos (in preparation).	This book is based on most of the papers and lectures given during the International Symposium held at Praia, Cape Verde, in June 2011 (see Tables 3 and 5 of this report). As of January 2012, the 17 manuscripts submitted for publication were being blindly reviewed by international scholars.
URL Commission’s website	http://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGIHG/index.html	

Table 6b. Commission’s Publications, 2008-2012 (2).

The publication of volumes 27-30 (2008-2011) of *GBS* brought into the public domain essays on the lives and works of a further 34 distinguished geographers. With the publication in October 2012 of volume 31, the total will be increased to 44 new *GBS* essays between 2008 and 2012. The overall total of *GBS* essays now stands in excess of 460 essays, from Volume 1 in 1977. This represents the single greatest and continuing scholarly resource in print on the lives and works of geographers in the world today. Whilst the Commission is proud to recognise this achievement, and is committed to the continued success and further development of *GBS*, several issues should be noted. The co-editors of *GBS* (Dr Hayden Lorimer, University of Glasgow, UK) and Professor Charles W J Withers, University of Edinburgh, UK) are always pleased to receive new contributions and suggestions for biographical essays. It is important that new people be added, that important figures from the history of the discipline be the subject of biobibliographical review and that as full a record as possible be established. It is important that *GBS* should include geographers of all nationalities, especially of those from outwith the Anglo-American and European geographical worlds: more essays on women geographers and sub-Saharan African geographers would be particularly welcome. It is important that the geographical community helps publicise the role of *GBS*, that the volumes be the subject of critical review in relevant geographical journals across the world and that, where possible, universities and institutions should subscribe to *GBS* in order to extend the reach of the IGU and the Commission. Last, but by no means least, the co-editors are in discussion with the publishers over establishing *GBS* as an online web-based resource, and to do so in two ways. The first would be to digitise and have available all *GBS* volumes and essays to date. This will represent a significant scholarly resource for the reasons identified above. The second would mean the move of *GBS* from a print-only annual serial publication to an online publication. This would have the advantage that *GBS* would reach many more communities and scholars than it does now and include a range of different materials where appropriate. As the co-editors and the Commission for the History of Geography look to the future and to Volume 31 and beyond, we welcome contributions and suggestions for the further development of this important resource.

Along the lines of the former *Commission on the History of Geographical Thought*, chaired by Prof. Vincent Berdoulay (from 1996 to 2004), the current IGU-CHG has also relaunched, since August 2008, a website to spread its own works and activities: <http://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGIHG/index.html>

Hosted by the CNRS scientific laboratory SET (Society, Environment and Territory) of the University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour and edited by the Commission's Secretary, Prof. Jean-Yves Puyo, the website gives account of the main news and information concerning the Commission's recent life, including not only its current activities and work plans for the next years, but also the newsletters and other relevant documents relating the period 1996-2004. The website welcomes any relevant news and meeting announcements about the History of Geography. The website has tried to report in three languages: English, French and Spanish. This is time-consuming to be sure, but we intend to continue this policy as we consider it an important challenge and a valuable step in order to disseminate the Commission's work across the international geographical community.

5. ARCHIVAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

Since its renewal in the 31st IGC to present, the CSC has reported regularly to the IGU Executive Committee on the Commission activities and publications and has transmitted a copy of the last to the IGU Secretary General (initially Prof. Woo-ik Yu; since 2010 Prof. Mike Meadows). In the coming months the CSC will also send other documents generated over the last four years that may be of interest for its publication in the E-archive for Contemporary IGU (<http://www.homeofgeography.org/>). The Commission's website (<http://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGIHG/>) also hosts an archive of all the Meeting circulars and calls for papers launched by the CHG since August 2008 onwards, as well as of all the Newsletters published since 1996 and several documents relating to *GBS* series (such as the alphabetical list of subjects covered to date). Finally, efforts in order to inventory the historical archives of geographical interest and to disseminate this kind of archival materials between the international community have been among the concerns of the Commission since its early years and have been included in the proposed work program for the next four years too (see item 6.D. of this report).

6. CONTINUATION.

6.A) Commission's name.

The Commission on the History of Geography will retain its current name, as approved in the 31st IGC (August 2008).

6.B) Commission's mission.

The Commission on the History of Geography aims to be a forum for promoting and exchanging ideas and outcomes on both the history of the field and, more widely, the history of geographical knowledge, experiences and practices, and their consequences and usefulness for understanding the contemporary world, providing IGU as a whole with a reflective view on the practice and meanings of geography⁵.

Through its 44 years existence, the Commission has made important contributions to our understanding of, among other subjects, the life and work of leading figures on the field, both national and international; the formation of the main "national schools" of geography; the professionalization and social institutionalisation processes of the discipline; the role of geography itself within the processes of colonialism and nation building; the exchange and circulation mechanisms of geographical ideas at different scales; or the relationships between geography and territorial policies. In addition to this, the Commission has also considered the thematic and methodological challenges involved in the development of a world history of geography that might overcome the traditional, Western-orientated and internalist

⁵ For a more detailed account of the history, aims and contributions of the Commission, see: HOOSON, David & TAKEUCHI, Keichii (1992): "The International Geographical Union Commission on the History of Geographical Thought". *GeoJournal*, vol. 26 (2), pp. 216-217; BUTTIMER, Anne (1998): «Geography's contested histories: changing states-of-the-art». *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 89, pp. 90-99; and BERDOULAY, Vincent (2003-2004): "L'Histoire de la Pensée Géographique. Enjeux cosmopolitiques", *Inforgeo*, 18-19, pp. 21-36.

approaches to the discipline's historiography. Finally, the Commission has tried – and maintains as one of its defining goals – to clarify the antecedents and contribution of geographic discourse on various social and environmental contemporary challenges, and particularly on global change, fragmentation and diversity.

6.C) List of individuals of the new Commission's Steering Committee.

The CSC proposes to make some changes regarding its composition for the 2012-2016 period. Five current members of the CSC will remain in their positions: Profs. Jacobo García Álvarez, Mike Heffernan, Jean-Yves Puyo, Charles Withers, Joao Carlos Garcia and Dr. Jan Vandersmissen. The remaining current members will be replaced by the following individuals:

- a) Prof. Tamami Fukuda will replace Dr. Loan Thanh Ngo.
- b) Prof. Judite Nascimento will replace Prof. Ali Toumi.
- c) Prof. Guy Mercier will replace Prof. Anne Godlewska.
- d) Prof. Leon Yacher will replace Prof. Diana Davis.
- e) Prof. Perla Zusman will replace Prof. Silvina Quintero.

The new members, who have already agreed in principle to join the CSC, are scholars with extensive experience and recognition in the field of the history of geography in their respective geographical areas, and have already worked actively in initiatives organized by the Commission.

Finally, in addition to the new list of “regular” full members, the CSC proposes the appointment of Profs. Anne Buttimer and Vincent Berdoulay as Honorary Chairs, as a way of formally acknowledging their intense, decisive and longstanding engagement with the Commission throughout the last three decades, as well as to keep on counting with their valuable help and cooperation in the next future.

The complete contact information of the new CSC membership for 2012-2016 is listed below:

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6.D) Work plan envisaged for 2012-2016.⁶

The work plan proposed by the Commission on the History of Geography for the next four years will extend aspects already raised during the current period of activity (as, also, essential to the very mission of the Commission). In addition, other and new topics will be addressed that have been less or scarcely attended to in the Commission's recent history. The main objectives for 2012-2016, and the actions planned to implement them, are as follows:

1) To encourage reflection, discussion and the mutual sharing of ideas and results about the different traditions and historiographical trends existing at international level.

Special attention will be paid to the evolution of research on the history of geography in the last thirty years, which have been marked by major changes in the way of conceiving this field of study, as well as its philosophical basis, methods and sources. In addition to the fact that this kind of historiographical concern inspires and permeates the very nature of this Commission (as well as many of the objectives and specific measures proposed in the work plan for the coming years), the new CSC is determined to organize two symposia devoted specifically to sketch a the state of the issue and its research perspectives. First, the coming CSC is planning to organize a symposium to be held in Quebec, possibly in 2015, and locally coordinated by Professor Guy Mercier, on "The historiography of geography: developments, trends and challenges". In addition to this, the Commission's work plan foresees the organization of another specific symposium, to be held in Brazil, possibly in the second half of 2014, which would be mainly focused on the Latin American historiographical context. The first steps in order to carry out this project were discussed on the occasion

⁶ With regard to the Commission's Meetings planned for this period, see also Table 4 of this report.

of the Second Brazilian Symposium on the History of Geographical Thought, which took place in Uberlandia on December 12-16 2010. The proposal is still under study.

2) To promote a better contextual understanding of the relationship between geography and society, within and beyond the academy.

This kind of contextual concern has already motivated several symposia organized by the Commission in the past (such as those held in the framework of the IGCs of Washington, in 1992, and The Hague, in 1996)⁷, and involves enhancing a more careful attention towards the history of school geography and the so-called “popular geographies”, as well as on the official geographies and, more generally, the participation of geographers and geographical ideas in certain applied and political activities. In this regard, the current Commission has scheduled two meetings specifically dedicated to the public dimension of geography: the pre-conference to be held in Leipzig and Gotha on August 2012 (on the topic “Cartography and geographical knowledge in the public sphere”); and the symposium on “Geography and its publics” planned within the framework of the 24th International Congress of History of Science and Technology, to be held in Manchester on July 2013.

3) To deepen our understanding of the utility of geography as a "reservoir" of ideas and experiences with which to address some relevant social and environmental challenges of the contemporary world.

For the Commission, this issue has been another essential concern since the 1990s and involves investigating not only the “retrospective” dimensions of the history of geography (i.e., those which focus on the review of the past for understanding the present), but also, as the Commission’s former Chair has claimed in several occasions, its “prospective” dimension (i.e., its ability to provide useful insights for the formulation of proposals and solutions for a better future)⁸. All the symposia that have been proposed to hold throughout the period 2012-2016 could well shed light on this kind of prospective possibilities, which, for example, are explicitly present in the list of items proposed for the session organized by the Commission in the framework of the 32nd International Geographical Congress. As noted in item 2B of this report, this list include the call for contributions aiming to explore, in the light of the discipline’s past, the geographical roots of nature conservation policies, of the concept of sustainable development and of other crucial ideas for the present contemporary debates on global change and society-environment relations.

4) To help to build a history of geography that takes fully into account contributions from beyond the European and Anglo-American regions.

Some of the activities carried out in 2008-2012, as indicated in items 2 and 3, have largely sought to expand and strengthen the links between the Commission and the historians of geography from non European-regions, who, undoubtedly, still remain to

⁷ BUTTIMMER, A. (1998), *op.cit.*, pp. 94-95.

⁸ BERDOULAY, V. (2003-2004), *op. cit.* Also, and more recently: BERDOULAY, V. (2009): “Quelques réflexions sur l’histoire de la géographie au défi de la prospective et du patrimoine », in ORTEGA-CANTERO, Nicolás; GARCÍA-ÁLVAREZ, Jacobo; MOLLÁ, Manuel (eds.) (2010), *op.cit.*, pp.13-22.

be the least represented groups in the activities of the Commission (see Tables 1 and 2). As noted before, the Commission will try to reduce this gap through its participation in the IGU Congresses and Regional Conferences planned for 2012-2016, but also by organizing an special symposium in Brazil, in 2014, in cooperation with the Brazilian, and more broadly, the Latin American community of historians of geography, along the lines of other recent initiatives promoted by the Commission in cooperation with non-European regions (such as the meeting held in Cape Verde in June 2011). The dissemination and exchange of ideas and results with scholars from non-European regions will be also enhanced by other actions either ongoing or foreseen by the Commission for the next future, such as the institutionalization of a global network of corresponding members, currently in preparation; a more active policy to stimulate the participation of contributors from outside Europe and Anglo-America in *GBS*; and the inclusion of brief country reports within in the Commission's *Newsletter*, in order to summarize the state of research and the development of activities related to the history of geography in different world regions.

5) *To provide scholars, at an international level, with the resources and information necessary to conduct high quality research on the history of geography.*

In this regard, the Commission intends to carry out four main activities over the next four years:

a) The creation of an international directory of groups and associations concerned with the history of geography;

b) The creation of an international directory of archives (both personal and institutional) related to the history of geography;

c) The introduction of some changes in the *GBS* series in order to improve its spread and reach among the international community of geographers and historians. As indicated in item 4, the current co-editors of the series (Profs. Charles Withers and Hayden Lorimer) are already in discussion with the publishers over establishing *GBS* as an online web-based resource, in two ways: to digitise and have available all *GBS* volumes and essays to date and to move *GBS* from a print-only annual serial publication to an online publication;

d) Along the same line of the plans concerning the *GBS* historical collection, the Commission is seriously considering the possibility of creating an online archive of biographical interviews to geographers, on the basis of the precious materials collected within the framework of the well-known *International Dialogue Project* (1978-1988). This project, based at the University of Lund and undertaken by Prof. Anne Buttimer and Torsten Hägerstrand, entailed the conduction of numerous autobiographical interviews to leading international figures within the field, from academia and the profession, who shared insights from their career experiences as well as participated in group discussions on specific issues and periods. More than 200 people from 35 different countries were interviewed, and part of these video interviews were published in various monographs⁹, while other remain unpublished and even non-transcribed,

⁹ The main publications resulting from the project include: BUTTIMER, A. (1983): *The Practice of Geography*, London and New York, Longmans; HÄGERSTRAND, T. and BUTTIMER, A. (1988): *Geographers of Norden*, Lund, Lund University Press; GARCÍA-RAMÓN, M.D., NOGUÉ, J. and ALBET, A.

housed mostly in the Lund University Library Media, Prof. Buttimer's personal collection and, to a lesser extent, the Home of Geography archives at Villa Celimontana, in Rome, which received an important donation by Prof. Buttimer¹⁰. Counting upon the generous, enthusiastic support and cooperation of Prof. Buttimer, the Commission will try to make available this valuable archival resource for research and teaching on the history of geography via its own website. Naturally, other video-interview resources, as well as documentary films specifically focused on the life and work of geographers, will also be considered and welcome in order to build this kind of biographical audiovisual e-archive.

In addition to these initiatives, and as a means of spread its activities and outcomes, the Commission will continue to publish its annual bulletin written in (at least) the two IGU official languages (English and French), and will maintain its web site based at the University of Pau (<http://web.univ-pau.fr/RECHERCHE/UGIHG/>). The Commission will also disseminate the results of its main symposia through high-quality publications, as it has been frequent within the present and past periods of its activity.

6.E) Scholarly importance of the anticipated results of the Commission's work.

Since its foundation in 1968, the IGU Commission on History of Geography, formerly named Commission on the History of Geographical Thought, has carried out a prolonged active work within both the IGU and the IHUPST, reflected, for example, in the nearly 45 meetings held and the publication of more than 40 books up to present (including the 30 *GBS* volumes). Along with this intense and longstanding activity, the cross-thematic aims of the Commission and the holistic nature of its approach and field of study within the discipline constitute reason enough, in our opinion, to defend its continuity. As highlighted some time ago by two of the former Commission chairs, among the IGU Commissions this one still remains to be the only which “deals with the whole subject of Geography, not just with some branches, but the entire historical record of its scientific research”¹¹, providing IGU as a whole with a reflective view on the practice of geography. Moreover, its membership to IUHPST allows the Commission to act as a vehicle of representation, relationship, and dissemination of the achievements of the geographical community within the wider international scientific organizations and to demonstrate “the value of a bridge discipline among the sciences”¹².

The potential reasons that support the usefulness of the history of geographical knowledge within the scientific, social and educational contexts of the World today have been identified elsewhere¹³. To cite just some of those reasons, the history of geography helps to combat the risk of professional and epistemological extremism or

(1992): *La práctica de la geografía en España*, Barcelona, Oikos-Tau; BUTTIMER, A. (1993): *Geography and the Human Spirit*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press ;BUTTIMER, A. and MELS, T. (2006): *By Northern Lights: on the Making of Geography in Sweden*, Basingstoke, Ashgate.

¹⁰ <http://www.homeofgeography.org/uk/archives/video1.htm>

¹¹ HOOSON & TAKEUCHI, *op.cit.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ An interesting recent plea for the revival of the field, written within the context of Polish academic geography, might be found in WILCZYNSKI, Witold (1989): “On the necessity of the history of geographical thought”, *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, n° 11, pp. 5-13.

essentialism inside the discipline. As Carl Sauer's famous presidential address on "The education of a geographer" remarked more than 55 years ago, "what geography is, is [inevitably] determined by what geographers have worked at everywhere and at all times".¹⁴ The historical account and knowledge of this work serves decisively to fully understand, and extend awareness of, the subject's plural, complex and contested identity. Secondly, critical histories of geography are important in stimulating geographer's theoretical and reflective skills, as well as for inspiring innovative ideas and concepts within the discipline (for which it is first necessary to know well the ideas and concepts from the past).

Thirdly, a deep knowledge of the subject's rich and complex past constitutes a basic source for developing a spirit of critical enquiry that allows us to situate the history of geographical thought and practice within its wider – but always unique – socio-spatial context. Consequently, this vindicates the value of the discipline's achievements in thinking historically about some of the most important challenges that society faces today. In other words, the history of geography assists scholars to think of – and respond to – what Vincent Berdoulay, inspired by Immanuel Kant's *Zum ewigen Frieden* ("Perpetual Peace", 1795), has called "the cosmopolitical challenges".¹⁵ Certainly, the history of geography has been —and may be— well defined, to quote another outstanding contributor to the achievements of this Commission, as "an investigation into the way in which geographic subject matter was recognized, perceived, thought about, and evaluated over the course of the centuries".¹⁶ But, as the same author concluded, this inquiry will probably be more attractive if it is able to show how the history of geographical ideas can "make a clear contribution, widely recognized, to the overriding problems with which humankind is faced in the twenty-first century".¹⁷ The history of geography is capable of demonstrating clearly the nature of geography's historical contribution to the solution of major problems.

On the basis of these assumptions, the objectives and work plan proposed by the Commission for the next four years will confront issues of theoretical significance and outstanding social relevance, inside and outside the discipline. Those matters not only comprise most of the general IGU objectives, but also relate directly to some of the concerns given priority by the IGU in recent times. As already noted, the Commission work plan for 2012-2016 will seek to continue some of the objectives and actions initiated or carried out in the four-year period now ending (or even in earlier stages of the Commission's history), and thus already included in the program which was submitted to the General Assembly and Executive Committee of the IGU on the occasion of the 31st IGC. It will also consider other aspects and targets either novel or at least less taken into account in the Commission's recent past.

At the theoretical level, special attention devoted to recent developments and current progress of the historiography of geography within the proposed work plan would be helpful to sketch the state of the subject from international perspectives, as well as to raise theoretical and methodological questions that concern the understanding

¹⁴ SAUER, Carl O. (1956): "The Education of a Geographer", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 46, pp. 287-299.

¹⁵ BERDOULAY, V. (2003-2004), *op. cit.*

¹⁶ MARTIN, Geoffrey (2005): *All Possible Worlds. A History of Geographical Ideas, 4th Edition*, New York & Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. XII.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.530.

of the discipline as a whole. As already indicated, to investigate the different ways of approaching the history of geography is also, to a great extent, to investigate the complex, diverse and socially contested nature of the discipline, and to shed light on the ways and conditions in which geographical knowledge has been defined and shaped at different times and places. The plans proposed in order to improve and stimulate scientific exchange with specialists from non-European and non-Anglo-American regions through the meetings scheduled for 2012-2016 will contribute to overcoming, or at least to enriching and complementing, the Western-centric approaches to the discipline's past which still prevail in the majority of popular textbooks, anthologies and general essays in the field.

The meetings planned by the Commission aim likewise to pay further attention to the history of non-academic "geographic practices", as well as to the realm of geographic experience and that of the "lay" or "popular" geographies (that is, the learning about space achieved by non-experts and individuals or non-scientific social groups). That could provide discoveries frequently forgotten or set aside within the hegemonic historiographical tradition of the field, which has been predominantly centered on academic geography. It will also help to bridge the important (and, for several reasons, worrying) gap which, in many countries, separates the world of academic geography from the public perception of the subject, mostly dominated by other practices and domains, either school, official or mass media based.

Investigating these realms of knowledge about places, landscapes, regions and territories that are practised beyond the confines of academic geography will deepen our understanding of geography's public image, one of the particular topics suggested by the Commission for the symposium to be held in the 24th ICHST. It can also contribute to the understanding of mutual relations (transfers, convergences, differences and borrowings) between geography and other scientific fields of knowledge with spatial concerns, between geography and creative arts and humanities, and between the discipline and non-academic territorial policies and social practices. This kind of research will reveal the multiple, and sometimes contradictory and contested character of the geographer's task. This will provide a forum for new work on the ethnogeographies or geographical practice, as well as helping to understand the construction of particular multidisciplinary concepts about space. All this will enhance the larger project to construct a genuinely worldwide history of the subject, which would reflect the richness of the very concept of geography across the different historical and spatial contexts.

From the point of view of the significance and social relevance, the programme emphasises another of the basic aims of the Commission existing work: to examine and reflect on geography's past capacity to tackle socially relevant problems at different scales, especially at the international and global scales. The topics suggested for some of the Commission symposia not only focus on the social context within which geographic ideas and practices are created, but also emphasize how these ideas and practices have sought to shape social change. Along the same line, the work plan being proposed aims to stimulate closer reflection on the geographers' role within the territorial policies over the past. Furthermore, it intends to evaluate the historical contributions of geography to some of the great problems and challenges of contemporary world, such as those concerned with the dramatic changes on nature and landscape, driven by humanity at the global scale and with the persistence and

multiplication of ethnoterritorial, cultural and religious conflicts. As indicated in previous reports and accounts on the Commission's work and goals, the history of geographical thought can turn out to be a fruitful and useful instrument of reflection about the future, and, by the same token, a fertile source for the development of critical conscience.

Finally, the measures outlined in the work plan for 2012-2016 with regard to history of geography sources are intended to be useful for the whole geographical community. The creation of an international directory of groups and associations concerned with the history of the field will probably help to strengthen scientific networking and exchange of ideas worldwide. In a similar sense, an international directory of geographic historical archives, nowadays non-existent, can contribute in the future to make these valuable materials (including, of course, the UGI archives themselves) available to the global geographical community and, beyond it, to historians of science, as well as to provide for their detailed inventory and adequate conservation. Finally, the digitalization of *GBS* volumes and essays published to date and the transformation of the series towards an online publication, as well as the plans concerning the creation of a biographical audiovisual e-archive on the basis of the *International Dialogue Project* video recordings, might notably help to disseminate these worthy, unique collections, as well as to extend the reach of the IGU and the Commission's work.