

Marine Ventures International Symposium: Diversity and Dynamics in the Human Sea Relation

The *Marine Ventures International Symposium: Diversity and Dynamics in the Human Sea Relation* was held between October 2nd and 6th, 2013 in Trondheim, Norway. The symposium was hosted by the Norwegian University of Science and Technology's Museum of Natural History and Archaeology (NTNU Vitenskapsmuseet) in collaboration with CADIC-CONICET in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. The goals of the symposium were to engender greater dialogue between archaeologists and historians that study the adaptations and complexity of human lifeways in coastal/marine environments. The symposium explored three major areas related to this theme: 1) studies of marine foraging and subsistence; 2) technological and logistical implications of travel by sea; and 3) relationships between social and cognitive systems, settlement and subsistence of marine-hunter-gatherers. These three broad areas were chosen to highlight the important intersection of current research, competencies, methodologies and theoretical traditions in the study of the human-sea dynamic. This symposium was organized under the auspices of the *Marine Ventures Project: Comparative perspectives on the dynamics of early human approaches to the seascape of Tierra Del Fuego and Norway*, an international comparative archaeology project supported by the Latin America Program of the Research Council of Norway. This project is currently exploring the similarities and differences of cultural histories found between the coastlines and seascapes of Patagonia and Scandinavia.

The symposium was divided into six sessions over a three day period. The first day of the symposium focused heavily on human interactions and movement within and across the sea with an emphasis on the circumpolar North. These sessions

explored how the various histories and movement of early peoples in the arctic and North Atlantic took many different forms and challenged a number of previously held assumptions of how early peoples navigated harsh and uncompromising coastal systems. Papers stressed variable human relationships and perceptions of the land, sea and ice that helped to create unique cultural strategies and traditions across the Aleutian Islands, Ireland and Fennoscandia coastline during the Holocene.

The second day of the symposium shifted attention to much of the recent collaborative work of Chilean and Norwegian researchers in the Marine Ventures project. Papers highlighted the current archaeological as well as anthropological work being conducted between the skerry-fjord seascapes of Tierra del Fuego and Western Norway. Taken as a whole, the sessions presented significant insight and new perspectives on coastal and marine adaptations as well as the analogous cultural trajectories of sea-faring people found between the two hemispheres. Time was also given to exploring modern concerns of cultural heritage preservation and how different strategies of cultural resources are managed between the Parque Nacional Tierra del Fuego and the Vega World Heritage site in Nordland, Norway.

The third day of the symposium gave the floor to researchers working in a number of diverse marine/coastal areas that ranged from the Baltic Sea to South Africa, the Atacama Desert coast of Chile, the Iberian Peninsula, the Southeast coast of Sri Lanka and the West Coast of South Africa. Much of the focus in these papers centered on new data related to the expression of diverse cultural forms, movement and economies of early to middle Holocene hunter-fisher-gatherers. Papers explored numerous methodologies for inferring human activity in the past that ranged from ancient paleoenvironmental reconstruction

and faunal analysis to delineating cultural spheres of interaction in prehistory.

At the conclusion of the conference, participants were offered the opportunity to take a seven hour sea-voyage that traversed a variety of Norwegian seascapes: the Trondheim fjord, a protected channel behind an almost unbroken succession of mountainous islands and skerries and the outer coast of Northwest Norway. A variety of cultural sites and monuments were visited, with the main focus being on marine hunter-gatherers.

Overall the symposium was well-organized and presented both students and career researchers with the opportunity to network and share ideas related to their research. Many of the ideas and data presented gives credence to the fact that past interactions with the sea are relevant to modern concerns of heritage preservation, climate change and coastal sustainability in the 21st century. Furthermore the symposium highlighted the important shift toward global comparative studies in archaeology, demonstrated in the work currently underway by the Marine Ventures Project in Patagonia and Scandinavia. Work of this nature demonstrates the dynamic quality of human resourcefulness and ingenuity in prehistory and how important sea and coastal systems were in the development of early human societies. Funding for the publication of the Symposium Proceedings is secured and a publication date is expected in 2014.

Please consult the following website for more information on the 2013 Marine Ventures Symposium:

<http://www.ntnu.no/vitenskapsmuseet/marine-ventures-symposium-2013>

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