

## Norðurslóðarannsóknir við Reykjavíkurakademíuna

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### Ísland og ímyndir norðursins, INOR

• Tengiliðir: Sumarliði Ísleifsson, Sverrir Jakobsson og Þorgerður Þorvaldsdóttir, ReykjavíkurAkademíunni o.fl.

Þetta er viðamikl þ rannsóknarverkefni sem skiptist í mörg verkefni sem talin eru upp hér á eftir:

### **An ancient enemy observed: images of sea ice in selected narratives of Iceland from the settlement to the late-nineteenth century**

• Tengiliður: Astrid E.J. Ogilvie. INSTAAR, University of Colorado and Stefansson Arctic Institute, Akureyri

The association of Iceland with the element of ice is implicit in its very name, and throughout its history the country has been affected greatly by the sea ice which reached its shores via the East Greenland current, and the writings on ice are legion. This paper examines images of ice as seen in a variety of narrative accounts of Iceland. Because of the wealth of material, the discussion will be limited to: early historical writings from Iceland such as *Landnámabók* (“The Book of Settlements”); medieval writings such as the *Konungs skuggsjá* (“The King’s Mirror”); the sixteenth-century accounts of Iceland written partly as refutations of inaccurate accounts by foreigners; seventeenth to nineteenth-century descriptions found in the later Icelandic annals (*Íslenzkir Annálar*) and in certain official reports in the form of unpublished letters of the county sheriffs and governors (*Bréf sýslumanna og amtmanna*); and, finally, the image of sea ice as depicted in the poem by Matthías Jochumsson, *Hafísinn*, “The Sea Ice”. The ice is invariably personified as, at best, an unwelcome guest, at worst, an evil enemy.

### **The “North” and “the idea of Iceland” : a study of a contemporary crosscultural construction of representations of Iceland**

• Tengiliður: Daniel Chartier

This article studies a crosscultural and crossdisciplinary process that leads to the production of new representations of Iceland. This process began with an academic conference about the images of the North and the production of children’s drawings about the idea of North and led to the creation of a book of fiction by a foreign author, and its translation in Icelandic. This study highlights the relationship between research and artistic creation, and the nature of stereotypes and clichés about the North, the Arctic, and Iceland, in their relationship between a national and universal content.

### **Reflecting Images: The Front Page of Icelandic Tourism Brochures**

• Tengiliður: Guðrún Þóra Gunnarsdóttir, lector, Holar University College ([ggunn@holar.is](mailto:ggunn@holar.is))

One of the most popular tools to promote destinations is the publication of travel brochures. This research explores image making in Icelandic tourism promotion material on a regional and a national basis and its effect on the conceptualization of different regional tourist destinations. The pictorial content of the front page of prominent travel brochures is studied in order to identify images put in foreground by both the national tourism board as well as by various regional

destinations marketing bureaus. In addition, key players in tourism development and regional marketing are interviewed about the destination image making process and the interaction of the regional and the national image making.

### **Powerful Images: Drinking in Iceland and Ideas of the North**

• Tengiliður: Hildigunnur Ólafsdóttir

Ideas about the north as an extreme and turbulent force have been instrumental in shaping images relating to Icelanders' drinking culture and the imagined position of alcohol in the community. According to this understanding, the stereotype of the drinking culture is derived from specific ideas about the North. The objective of this study is to examine how specific preconceptions about the North have been instrumental in shaping the images of Icelandic drinking culture, and to define emphases and conflicts surrounding these assumptions. The sources used for this study are various types of written materials, newspapers and advertisements, particularly from the last two decades. The method is analysis of text and discourse. The conclusions reveal that the image of Icelandic drinking culture – which is based on a special connection between alcohol and the national character – is deeply-rooted and has been instrumental in shaping the position on alcohol. The image of drinking has an intrinsic value as it is used both to reject an old pattern and to justify a new one, yet images appear to have had little value as a tool for class distinction. On the other hand, preconceptions acquire practical value when used in promoting tourism. Ideas often seem remarkably persistent, and they become an integral part of the cultural perception in the community. Thus common images become a sort of glue in the community, although this does not preclude them being challenged.

### **The Image of Iceland in the Local and Global Nexus of Whaling Politics**

• Tengiliður: Karen Oslund

This paper looks at the development of the whaling debates and their contribution to the international image of Iceland. It traces the debates through two stages, namely an “era of peaceful protest” from ca. 1978 to 1985, and a “battle lines” period after 1985, explaining the positions of both sides and the images produced by each. For the anti whaling side, the Icelanders were “blood-thirsty hunters,” while the pro whalers portrayed themselves as a small people bullied by “sentimental terrorists.” It concludes by commenting on the development of the Icelandic whale-watching industry after 1995, and how this industry has promoted an international image of Icelanders as whale-protectors rather than whale-hunters to foreign tourists.

### **Images of the North, Sublime Nature and a Pioneering Icelandic Nation**

• Tengiliður: Marion Lerner

This article sheds light on the issue of national identity as related to the Tourist Association of Iceland, which was founded near the end of the 1920s. Written association sources illustrate how the leading participants interpreted their work ideologically, with nationalistic connotations. Not only did they see themselves as heirs of Iceland's celebrated first settler, Ingólfur Arnarson, but they applied this picture of themselves to the nation as a whole. While engaged in opening up the country - in particular its uninhabited highlands - and in building up a modern travel infrastructure, they interpreted these undertakings as parallel to Iceland's initial settlement. They therefore viewed themselves as pioneers who had taken on the mission of pacifying the still awesome Icelandic environment and providing access to its resources. In this way, they would not merely contribute to modernising their country, but also to cultivating a positive national self-image. This self-image was based to a large degree on self-assertion over Nature, as well as on portraying the nation as the most northerly preserver of culture within European civilisation. Curiously, this meant assigning

attributes to Iceland's own interior which depicted it as a "Far North", a North that ought to be challenged and wherever possible conquered.

### **Banking on Borealism: Eating, Smelling and Performing the North**

• Tengiliður: Kristinn Schram

This article examines the exotic performances and representations of Icelanders and 'the North' (or Borealism) in both media and daily life, focusing on food traditions and their practice within intricate power-relations and transnational folkloric encounters. It sets forth a theory for understanding the dynamics, agency and ironies involved with images of 'the North' and the performance of identity amongst 'foreigners'. The study looks at Icelandic expatriates and draws examples from the media, bankers' marketing events during the peak of Icelandic business ventures and from the everyday practice of food culture. It explores the roles of identity and folk culture in transcultural performances. In approaching the questions of differentiation and the folklore of dislocation, the everyday practice of food traditions are studied as an arena of negotiation and performance of identity. Interlinking theory and ethnography, the article highlights how expressive culture and performance may corrode the strategies of boundary making and marginalisation re-enforced by stereotypes and exoticized representations. Finally, this article sets forth the concept of ironic, as opposed to 'authentic', identities.

### **Islands on the edge. – Medieval and early modern national images of Iceland and Greenland**

• Tengiliður: Sumarliði R. Ísleifsson

In this article accounts of Iceland and Greenland from the late middle Ages to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century will be examined and what kind of national images were appearing there. The aim of the article is to analyze and explain these images and discuss their development and origin, and not least how ideas about islands and the north in general have influenced the descriptions of these two countries. The research is based on two connected research traditions; the field of imagological studies and postcolonial studies, which means that the sources are studied as representations, as a discourse on islands in the periphery in the far north.

### **The Emergence of Norðrlönd in Old Norse Medieval Texts, ca. 1100-1400**

• Tengiliður: Sverrir Jakobsson

The aim of the article is to analyze the precise meaning of the term *Norðrlönd* within medieval discourse, in particular with regard to how it was used in the Scandinavian *lingua franca*. A secondary aim involves the consideration of related concepts in other languages, for example, Latin. In order to achieve this, an analysis will be made of how the term was used, and in what context. In addition to this, the influence of power structures on the term and their uses will also be analysed. A third consideration will be how the inhabitants of *Norðurlönd* were defined; in other words, who was included and who was not.

This study of medieval discourse is qualitative rather than quantitative, as befits the nature of the documentary sources consulted. The primary sources themselves, and the information they provide, is the major focus of the study. Through careful analysis of the term *Norðrlönd* and its use in contemporary texts, the dominant discourse concerning the North in Scandinavia during the Middle Ages will be elucidated, and, in addition, how an image of the North, and a specific Nordic identity, were created.

## **The Gender Equal North. Icelandic images of femininity and masculinity**

• Tengiliður: Thorgerður Thorvaldsdóttir

The article explores the somewhat imaginary notion of the gender equal north which signifies a crucial element of national identity in the Nordic countries. Attributes thereof are various attempts to export the Nordic gender equality model. One of its trademark is the notion of the 'decent' Nordic man or the caring father, but a negative spin-off are growing divisions between "us - the Nordic" and "gender-unequal immigrants." I then zoom in on Iceland where I propose a three phase division, based on prevalent but often contradictory gender images and correlated discourses on equality from the 1970s to the present. I name the period from 1970-1999 'A women's/feminist era, during which Iceland made some noteworthy contributions in terms of women's empowerment which attracted international attention. I label the era from 2000 to October 2008 'The era of masculinity'. Its defining features are two conflicting images of masculinity; the caring father and the risk taking 'Business Viking'. As for the period, post-October 2008 and the economic crash, it is tricky to pick a defining label. In terms of visible gender images, it is nevertheless tempting to pinpoint the nation's most prominent figure, i.e. Iceland's Prime minister, a lesbian woman in her sixties.