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**Workshop on Microhistory in Reykjavík
27–30 June, 2016.
Summary**

In the partnership of Eötvös Loránd University (Budapest, Hungary), the University of Iceland (Reykjavík), Volda University College (Norway), and the Reykjavík Academy (Iceland), the third event of the our project *Working out the curriculum of a joint MA-programme 'Microhistory'*, financed by the Tempus Public Foundation took place in the capital of Iceland, Reykjavík between 27–30 June 2016. This project unites colleagues from Iceland, Hungary, Norway and other countries to work together towards the elaboration of a joint international MA programme called 'Microhistory'. Colleagues and students from Iceland, Hungary, Norway, the USA, Canada, Russia, and Poland cooperated in the third event of the project.

The participants arrived on 27 June. Several cultural programmes were offered (National Museum of Iceland, Reykjavík Art Museum, National Gallery, Culture House, etc.). Accidentally, it was a great moment for the Icelandic soccer team as it knocked out England in the European Championship witnessed by the most of our hosts and guests. (It was a kind of anthropological experience for all of us as well.)

On 28 June an open session on the teaching and methodology of microhistory was held at the National Museum of Iceland. Professor Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon, chair of the Center for Microhistorical Research at the Reykjavík Academy, one of the organizers of the event opened the discussion and made a few preliminary remarks about the aims of our project. All the speakers, experienced and renowned scholars reflected on the question of how they could teach and transfer different historical methods in their own academic practice. These subjective viewpoints, which are not strange in different microhistories, revealed several key questions of our discussed object. Professor Thomas Cohen referred to the problem of intimacy by which the historians could experience some kind of 'skilled frustration'. It is only natural as human curiosity calls forth the desire of the 'informed imagination', however, what is more difficult is to dissociate ordinary and extraordinary matters, events, acts, and agents of history. Mónika Mátay's paper was an example of that, as she demonstrated in what ways microhistory could use individual life stories or biographies, and profit from producing and analysing them. A parallel problem was raised in Davíð Ólafsson's presentation in which he explored the 19th century scribal culture of Iceland. Professor Elizabeth S. Cohen examined the 'thick description' of everyday life, especially women's everyday life, and the possible methodology of a microhistory research on that came into question. Another crucial issue, the problem of various narratological practices that microhistory could apply also emerged. Professor Arnfinn Kjelland argued that local histories could be more deeply developed and

Professor Thomas Robisheaux called attention to the question of narratives. The latter presentation claimed that subtle narrative was one of the most important and carefully crafted tool of microhistorical analysis, although it was the most controversial tool as well. It is well-known that after some microhistorical classics – e.g. the works of Carlo Ginzburg and Natalie Zemon Davis – a great interest rose in story-telling and experimentation with narratives has been one of the distinctive features of many historians. Professor Robisheaux presented the ‘new wave’ microhistory narratives, arguing that the mode of narrative, the different ways of story-telling, and the widely various roles of narrators were ‘carefully crafted analytical devices’. In the afternoon the group visited the great Manuscript Collection of the National and University Library of Iceland where Bragi Þorgrímur Ólafsson, the head of the department gave a presentation about the history and special pieces of the collection. A visit to the Blue Lagoon spa and an evening dinner allowed the participants to discuss the different questions of our project in a more relaxed manner.

On June 29 the participants took part in a closed session in the home of Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon. This day of the Workshop focused on the students’ participations. After the 2015 Workshop in Budapest several colleagues held special courses either of a microhistorical character or of about microhistory, on BA-, MA, and PhD-levels too. Some of the students of those courses had the chance to present their own research. In 15-minute-long presentations, various topics came to light, such as a letter by Pope Alexander III in 1171 or 1172 (and the problem of how one can deal with authorship of sources); the chances of comparing two different historical agents (in this case, a Spanish and a Hungarian military commander who fought together against the Ottoman invasion in 16th-century Hungary); migration of a small rural community in Norway 1865–1910 (a case study about the chances of ‘local history’); women’s biography and autobiography in 18th-century Iceland; the possibilities of a microhistorical biography of a ‘great man’ of 19th-century Icelandic history; the historical anthropology of the everyday use of religious paintings in Poland from the late 18th century till today; and the careers of prostitutes after leaving their profession in 19th-century Budapest. Although the topics were considerably different in space and time, it was interesting how these very difficult situations and fairly varied sources can lead to questions that an academic course of any University or College should answer. In the afternoon the consultation did not end. The group took a tour at Glymur waterfall then a pleasant dinner gave us a chance to think the well discussed material over again.

The conference was the last event of the partnership of Eötvös Loránd University, the University of Iceland, Volda University College, and the Reykjavík Academy, the project *Working out the curriculum of a joint MA programme ‘Microhistory’*, financed by Tempus Public Foundation. It was organized to test the pilot courses which had been held all over the world, and it gave a chance for students of these courses to present their papers, and for experienced and renowned colleagues to discuss methodological problems on microhistory.

All of us hope that our discussions would result in a successful curriculum in the special field of Historical Studies.