

I. INTRODUCTION

1. A Welcome from the Organizing Committee

Dear colleagues,

During the 2nd International Conference of the European Society for the History of Science in Cracow I was asked to find out whether the 3rd Conference could be held in Vienna. The president of the Austrian Academy of Sciences immediately agreed to my request, and thus we can welcome you in Vienna on behalf of this Academy. The Academy's president will address you in the opening session of our conference. There are at the same time many colleagues at other academic institutions in Vienna, and in Austria in general, who do research in the history of science. They too look forward to your papers and to the exchange of ideas with you; they will also present results of their own research. We are convinced that in this way an atmosphere of hospitality will greet you in Vienna.

We hope that you will find opportunities for fruitful discussion during the conference, and for cooperation, both new and renewed, after it.

Hermann Hunger
Chairman, Organizing Committee

2. Thematic Scope

In 1994 the late Alistair Crombie published his monumental work ‚Styles of Scientific Thinking in the European Tradition’. He distinguished between six „styles of inquiry, demonstration and explanation diversified by their subject-matters, by their general conceptions of nature, and by scientific experience“ (publisher’s prospectus): postulation, the experimental argument, hypothetical modelling, taxonomy, probabilistic and statistical analysis, historical derivation. Fourteen years later it is time to reconsider this fascinating topical subject, in order to broaden earlier, Eurocentric approaches. Which philosophical, cultural, religious, political, economic influences can be identified that led to certain styles of thinking in science and technology all over the world and that influenced their further development? Cross-cultural influences and interrelations are of special interest. How are such traditions of thinking transmitted to later generations, to other cultures? How are they modified in the course of history? The Third Conference of the European Society for the History of Science would like to give a platform to all historians and philosophers of science and technology who are interested in these questions. Vienna with its scientific and cultural institutions that played a crucial role in the history of science is an ideal city for such an event.

Eberhard Knobloch,
Former president of the ESHS

3. Statement Concerning the ESHS

The European Society for the History of Science (ESHS) is a relatively new organization, devoted to the study of the history of science in the broad sense of history of science, technology and medicine (STM), including mathematics and allied sciences. Being a European organization, it is a prime purpose of ESHS to coordinate and promote studies of the history of STM in the countries of Europe, whether or not they belong to the European Union. Membership is open to both institutions and individuals, the only condition being that they share the purpose of the society.

Among the most important and visible responsibilities of ESHS is to organize a series of international biannual conferences, primarily (but not exclusively) for European historians of science. The first of these conferences was held in Maastricht in 2004, the second in Cracow in 2006, and the third in Vienna in 2008. I am pleased to report that all three conferences were successful and well attended. The local organizers of the conferences are to be congratulated with the excellent results. The fourth international conference is scheduled for 18-20 November 2010, to take place in Barcelona. Preliminary information about the conference can be followed on <http://4eshs.iec.cat>.

In order to promote research and strengthen the research basis of ESHS, the well established journal *Centaurus* has become the official journal of the society. With the new appointment of Ida Stamhuis as chief editor, we are confident that we will succeed to establish a stronger connection between the society and the journal. It is recommendable that ESHS organizes or co-organizes a meeting of a more specialized nature in between the international conferences, such as has been done in the past. A workshop on history of science, science studies and science education, to be held in Aarhus, Denmark, in the fall of 2010, is presently under preparation. In addition to these activities ESHS has sponsored a number of meetings and workshops on the history of science, and we will continue to do so in the future.

Helge Kragh
President of the ESHS