



The Carpenter-Meldgaard Endowment at the National Museum of Denmark:

A Research Program based on the Archives of the Late Jørgen Meldgaard

1st Progress Report, October 2009

According to Article 11 in the agreement between the Rock Foundation and The National Museum of Denmark concerning the Carpenter-Meldgaard Endowment, the foundation receives a progress report every six months. The present first progress report is published by October 31st, 2009.

The project

Briefly, the aims of the Carpenter-Meldgaard Endowment Project (CME-Project) are to:

- conduct a complete registration of the archive of late Jørgen Meldgaard and make the data accessible to the international research community
- carry out a state-of-the-art research program on Meldgaard's archaeological material from primarily Igloolik, Canada, and Qajaa, West Greenland, and to publish scientific monographs and papers based on these analyses
- experiment with diversified ways of creating dialogues between researchers and the public, including the local communities in Arctic Canada and Greenland

The Frame

The four year CME-Project is carried out within the frames and scientific environment of SILA – The Greenland Research Centre at the National Museum of Denmark (now 'SILA – Arctic Centre at the Ethnographic Collections').

The project was initiated by May 1st, 2009. Beforehand, associate researcher Martin Appelt and head of the project, senior researcher Bjarne Grønnow, had prepared the project start by receiving the 80 boxes of books and archival materials, which Jørgen Meldgaard's heirs, Morten, Mette and Malene Meldgaard generously had donated to the National Museum. The books were sorted, registered and included in the department's library, and the comprehensive and diverse archival material was preliminary sorted.

Meldgaard's archival material, photos and films: the first steps

During the first months of the CME-Project the archive has been sorted according to types of material – including diaries, field notes, plan drawings, letters, photos and films – and year/expedition/research project. A key to the sorting of the physical documents and other material has been developed and tested, and at the present stage all documents from Canada and Greenland are stored in covers and standard archive boxes according to the key. The documents and drawings are made ready for digitizing. The thousands of photos, negatives and slides have been preliminary sorted and are now safely stored in the photo-storage of The Ethnographic Collections. The registration and digitalization of this material is being prepared as an integral part of the development of the electronic database (below). All of Meldgaard's films – 16 mm as well as video-films from Qajaa – has been professionally digitized and are now ready for registration in the database.

Establishment and test of the Meldgaard Database

Peter Andreas Toft is hired for three months to develop and test the electronic database, which includes the entire archival material. The database has a well-arranged user interface and provides direct links to Meldgaard's digitized drawings, photos and films. The database is based on the Access program and is compatible with all standard museum registration systems. During the coming weeks we run a pilot project on a complete registration of a limited, but diverse, archival material from one of Meldgaard's expeditions.



Archivist Jesper Kurt Nielsen and ph.d.student Peter Andreas Toft working with Jørgen Meldgaard's photos and the database respectively.

The Ph.d.-program: 'Symbols in Palaeo-Eskimo Material Culture'

As stated in Article 13 of the Agreement we have applied Danish and Greenlandic funds for a Ph.d.-grant connected to the CME-Project. The applications were successful and The Commission for Scientific Research in Greenland is now going to fund a three year Ph.d.-program, carried out by the Greenland student, Mariane Hardenberg, Nuuk. The program begins January 1st 2010. Mariane Hardenberg's Ph.d. project is primarily based on studies of Meldgaard's archaeological and archival materials from the Late

Dorset Culture in Canada and Greenland. The title of the program is 'Symbols in Palaeo-Eskimo Material Culture'. Mariane Herdenberg's board of supervisors are associate professor Erik Brinch Petersen, University of Copenhagen, Bjarne Grønnow, and Martin Appelt, The National Museum. Part of Mariane Herdenberg's program will be carried out at the Greenland University and at the Greenland National Museum and Archives in Nuuk.

Furthermore, a Ph.d.-program with a starting point in a visual anthropological analysis of Meldgaard's films is currently being planned.

First Advisory Board Meeting

The first meeting of the scientific Advisory Board of the Carpenter-Meldgaard Endowment was held during the days June 2nd – 4th, 2009. The following members participated: dr. Susan Rowley, curator Patricia D. Sutherland, curator Steven Loring, director Morten Meldgaard, and head of project Bjarne Grønnow. Associate researcher Martin Appelt is the board's secretary.

Briefly, the recommendations and conclusions of the fruitful meeting were:

- The creation of a database/catalogue on the most important parts of Jorgen's archive must be prioritized within the first year of the CME-initiative. The realization of this catalogue is a precondition for making a more detailed plan, in particular concerning the comprehensive Igloolik material for the following three years of the initiative.
- Using the publication of Eigil Knuth's archive as a model, the advisory board suggested that the catalogue on the Canadian material could be published in the Mercury series from CMC. It would be appropriate to publish the Greenland material (mainly Qajaa) in 'Monographs on Greenland'.
- It is important to design and structure the home page of the CME so that it contains different levels: communication with the local communities, the general public and fellow researchers. An important component of the coming home page is Jorgen's ethnographical photos from Canada and Greenland.
- The archival material holds a great potential for a most interesting, illustrated biography on Jørgen Meldgaard. The Advisory Board suggested that Jørgen's North East Greenland experiences from the 1940's, his Vinland discoveries and his stays in Igloolik during the 1950's along with selected papers by Jorgen himself could be components of the book.

A separate topic concerned the collaboration between the CME-Project and Canadian Museum of Civilization. Common principles of registration of the archival material and final storage of the original archival material from Meldgaard's investigations in Igloolik were discussed. These negotiations will be continued.

Public outreach

The Greenland and Danish press marked the beginning of the CME-Project with a number of articles in May and June. Bjarne Grønnow informed about Jørgen Meldgaard's legacy, the donation from The Rock Foundation, and the current project in a nationwide broadcast in June. The front home page of the National Museum published the news about the donation from the Rock Foundation and the planned registration and research program.

A separate home page of the CME-project is under construction. Our home page will take advantage of the current work and experiences with the home page of the new priority area of the National Museum: *Northern Worlds*.

Co-financed by Illiniusiorfik (The Greenland Publisher of Schoolbooks) the CME-Project's Greenlandic artist, Nuka K. Godtfredsen, has begun the creation of the graphic novel on the Late Dorset Culture based on Meldgaard's discoveries in Igloodik, Arctic Canada, and excavations in Greenland. This, the second volume of 'The First Steps' - a four volume graphic novel on Arctic prehistory – is one of the first steps as well in the CME-Project's experimentation with diversified ways of creating dialogues with the public.

An agreement between the CME-Project and Det Grønlandske Selskab (The Greenland Society) has been made concerning a special issue, an illustrated biography on Jørgen Meldgaard, in the society's journal (Tidsskriftet Grønland).



Greenland artist Nuka Godtfredsen at work for the Carpenter-Meldgaard Project

CME-Project Staff

Head of the CME-Project, Bjarne Grønnow, and associate researcher Martin Appelt has been working full time on the project since the start in May. Artist Nuka K. Godtfredsen has been working full time on the project since September. Ph.d. student Peter Andreas Toft and archivist Jesper Kurt Nielsen has periodically been hired to develop the registration key and electronic database. Two temporary positions as senior researchers have been announced and two qualified candidates have applied. The positions are aimed at registration and analyses of Meldgaard's data on the Qajaa Site and on the dwelling structures from Igloodik. The positions are filled during November, 2009.

