

Research Vessel MARIA S. MERIAN



MSM 57:

Reykjavik – Longyearbyen - Reykjavik

1. Weekly report: 26 – 31 July 2016

Friday, 29 July 2016 R/V MARIA S. MERIAN sailed at 1 p. m. local time from bunker pier of Icelandic port Reykjavik for a transit of four days to our research area at the western continental slope of Spitsbergen. Before, R/V MARIA S. MERIAN berthed at Ægisgarður Pier for an exchange of scientific crew and equipment of the cruises MSM56 and 57. For MSM57 we now have on board the MARUM seafloor drill rig MeBo70 and many additional, mostly geological sampling devices. In total eight 20' containers and one 40' container were discharged by boatswain and crew. Especially the complex installation of MeBo70 prolonged the berthing time to four, instead of the usual three days.



Fig. 1: British research vessel DISCOVERY and MARIA S. MERIAN at same pier in the port of Reykjavik.



Fig. 2: MeBo being hauled up with a heavy load crane to the afterdeck of MERIAN. In the background the vessels SARMIENTO DE GAMBOA and NEIL ARMSTRONG.

Interestingly, MARIA S. MERIAN was not the only research vessel in the Icelandic port. On arrival of MERIAN, the British research vessel RRS DISCOVERY moored vis-à-vis at the same pier (Fig. 1). After she sailed for oceanic measurements in Labrador Sea, the berth was taken by the Spanish research vessel SARMIENTO DE GAMBOA. On Tuesday, the new research vessel of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), R/V NEIL ARMSTRONG, joined us in the same port basin (Fig. 2), and finally, on Saturday, when we left our pier for bunkering, R/V POSEIDON of Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research GEOMAR Kiel came to Reykjavik. Certainly, such a crowd of research vessels is quite rare and shows that the northernmost capital in Europe is an ideal starting port for research cruises to the North Atlantic.

Having left Reykjavik, MARIA S. MERIAN steamed along Iceland's west side, under coast protection, northwards across the Demark Strait, crossed the active rift zone of Kolbeinsey Ridge and arrived today, on Sunday, at the Iceland Plateau. In principle the wind conditions with a force of just 5 to 6 on Beaufort scale are manageable; however, the appearing groundswell was a problem for some among us. Today though the swell will subside, so that all cruise participants are fine!

Best regards on behalf of all cruise participants,
Gerhard Bohrmann

RV MARIA S. MERIAN, Sunday, 31st July 2016