



Demeures historiques-musées  
Historic House Museums  
Residencias históricas-museos

## **DEMHIST General Assembly 2015**

**Wednesday, 21st October 2015, 18:00 – 19:30**

**Museo Casa de la Bola de la Fundación Cultural Antonio Haghenbeck y de la Lama  
Mexico City. Mexico**

### MINUTES

#### Present:

Board members: John Barnes - *Chair*; Ana Cristina Carvalho - *Vice Chair*; Gianluca Kannés - *Vice Chair*; Elsa Rodrigues - *Secretary-Treasurer*; Carmen Jiménez Sanz - *board member*; Minerva Keltanen - *board member*; Lourdes Monges - *board member*; Ann Scheid - *board member*; Ulla Strømberg - *board member*

DEMHIST individual members: Edward Bosley, Diana G. Juaréz Pérez, Roberto Andréu Quevedo; Beatriz Quevedo; Adriano Rigoli; Carlos Faggin; Minerva Keltanen; Rauni Laukkanen; Rosanna Pavoni, Asunción Cardona; Tamar Berger; Hillary Walker-Gugan; Maria de Jesus Monge; Carl R. Nold; Pedro Hernández Bletrán, María Inés Madinaveitia

Non-voting members: Chun-Ni Chiu; Luís Rius Caso; Salvador Antonio Beltrán Llamas; Lucía Saenz; María del Carmen Férez Koni; William C. Watson; Catalina Corcuera

Important note: Simultaneous translation was provided from English to Spanish and from Spanish to English during this General Assembly.

### **1. Welcome**

John Barnes greeted the members and started the General Assembly by mentioning the agenda topics and then asked «Is there anything you would like to add on the agenda? I prefer to know this now».

### **2. Minutes of the General Assembly in Compiègne - Approval of the minutes**

The minutes were quickly approved because there was nothing to change or add in the text and no comments were made.

### **3. Report of the Chair - Approval of the report 2014-2015**

John Barnes went through his report, page by page, giving special emphasis to the Strategic plan 2014-2017. He also mentioned that the proceedings from Compiègne DEMHIST/ARRE conference should be published soon with English-French translation. Then he addressed the attention to the successful São Paulo Pilot Training Course. «We want to repeat the training course. In my report it is mentioned that we would like to do it in Beijing in 2017 but now we realise the importance of having local people coordinating the work. So, where shall we go for the next training course?». Lourdes Monges committed herself to be in charge of the next training course. «Now that we established an active Mexican National Group we have a team together. Nothing can stop us now» she affirmed.

«Creating a new website is one of DEMHIST's priorities. Our plan is to go live in English and this will be revised by board members. I promise it will be live at Christmas». John Barnes said. Carmen Jiménez insisted «Can you give me a date?». John Barnes explained all that «DEMHIST is just people in this room and we work voluntarily in the evenings and weekends. So, I cannot give you a date, just that it will be live at Christmas».

After that the report was approved.

### **4. Report of the Secretary-Treasurer - Approval of the report 2014-2015**

John Barnes skim-read the report from the Secretary-Treasurer which was immediately approved. He also thanked Elsa Rodrigues for her hard work because he was conscious that it takes a lot of time communicating with members and he recognised her commitment to the DEMHIST committee. The Assembly applauded.

### **- Approval of the budget for 2016**

John Barnes quickly explained the budget for 2016 saying that «If we don't spend money we won't receive more annual subvention from ICOM. So, last year we set up a budget in order to spend more money than we have usually been spending in the past. Anyway we cannot spend that much otherwise we will be bankrupt. We expect to receive 6000 Euros from ICOM annual subvention next year. We will not spend more than 5000 Euros with the Milan conference next year. The only way we can keep doing things is by partnership.

In our budget we propose 2000 Euros for the Board members' support fund. This money is for those who are not supported by their institutions. We also want to encourage more national groups, so we have 2000 Euros for them. In addition we have 1000 Euros to publish conference proceedings and another 1000 Euros to develop the website. Concerning scholarships we hope that there will be ICOM grants to attend Milan conference financed by ICOM Italy and by Fondazione Adolfo Pini.

In fact, ICOM is not increasing our annual subvention although we are increasing the number of members. Not only does ICOM base subvention on membership but also on the quality of our conferences, on our communication, on our website and if we have a good financial management».

After all these explanations the budget was approved.

## **5. Sao Paulo Pilot Training Course - Report and evaluation**

Ana Cristina Carvalho reported about the Sao Paulo Pilot Training Course by saying that the course was an excellent opportunity for Brazil. The expectations were achieved since there were 38 alumni coming from the whole country. Then, she showed a printed report and affirmed that she received feedback from the alumni.

She thanked John Barnes for having supported the idea of doing the course and for having suggested Kate Frame for being one of the lecturers; Elsa Rodrigues for having prepared the course; and the three main lecturers Maria de Jesus Monge, Ayşen Savaş and Rosanna Pavoni for having enriched the quality of the course.

It was only possible to set up this course by establishing a partnership between DEMHIST and the Sao Paulo State Government.

Hillary Walker-Gugan asked about the alumni's geographical distribution and about their background. For that question Ana Cristina Carvalho explained that most alumni were already museum professionals but there were some post-graduate too. «How were they selected?» Hillary Walker-Gugan asked. The answer was «The Sao Paulo State Government did it but DEMHIST board also contributed towards the selection during its board meeting in Paris in June. There were 90 candidates but only 38 were selected».

The content of the course was quite vast. It covered conservation, museological definitions, authenticity, inventarium, exhibition design, architectures, museography, etc. «That is something we have to learn. Maybe we will not cover so many themes next time». John Barnes added.

Not only did the course have theoretical lectures but also practical workshops and study visits. It also had local tutors helping the international lecturers. However they did not have enough time to interact with alumni because time was short.

Then Hillary Walker-Gugan asked «Will you track students in a few years?». Ana Cristina Carvalho replied that «Yes, we will do it but it is still too soon to do so.».

John Barnes said that Elsa Rodrigues sent very good material about the course. Not only did she report to us about the course but also sent us photographs covering the event. Moreover «We should thank Ana Cristina Carvalho, her staff and the Sao Paulo State Government».

## **6. Conferences - Feedback on the Mexico City conference**

John Barnes thanked Lourdes Monges for organizing the Mexico City conference. Nevertheless she stated that «I think the other way round. We (Mexicans) should thank you for having come to Mexico».

Maria de Jesus Monge asked «Will we receive an evaluation form?» which Lourdes Monges replied «Yes, you will. We are working on it».

### **- Update on the 2016 conference in Milan**

Gianluca Kannés informed the Assembly that Italian fellows already gave a call for paper proposals to the DEMHIST Board based on Rosanna Pavoni's suggestion to focus on the topic 6 and 10 of the Siena Charter entitled "Museums and Cultural Landscape".

It was explained that concerning the conference schedule the first two days are going to be held at MICO (Milan Congressi). Several house museums in Milan are going to be seen on the afternoon of the second day, but they are still being selected. For those visits the local means of transport are going to be used. On the third day there will be a one-day visit outside Milan, precisely to Lake Garda, to visit *Il Vittoriale degli Italiani*.

However there is only place for about 100 people. So, attendees will have to book in advance if they want to go there and a fee about 30 or 40 Euros will be charged.

On the fourth day there will be several ICOM tours that attendees can choose.

Gianluca Kannés asked «Please, raise your hands if you are thinking of going to Milan next year».

#### - **Proposal for the 2017 conference in Helsinki**

Minerva Keltanen gave a quick update on the Finnish conference. She said that «The conference will be in June or in September because in May House Museums are still closed due to the winter period. Holding it in July is out of the question because most people are on holiday. We will do it as a joint conference. It is a challenge for us because CECA is the ICOM's second biggest international committee. We will probably welcome 100 members from CECA and another 100 from DEMHIST. However the selected venue (The National Museum of Finland) does not have room for more than 150 people. If we allow too many attendees we will have to move to another venue and for sure that will cost.

The theme is about "What can you do to keep a house museum alive?" because it has to be a theme that also fits CECA concerns. Besides that it is being planned to visit the following places: *Hvitträsk*, *Tamminiemi*, *Seurasaari* (Open-Air Museum) and *Louhisaari* Manor because they are managed by the The National Museum of Finland. Furthermore, some other historical house museums such as Alvar Aalto Museums are under consideration to be visited».

In addition, the following DEMHIST board members: John Barnes, Ulla Strømberg and Ana Cristina Carvalho are planning go to Finland in January 2016 to see the venue, to meet the Finnish local team and to discuss details about the theme.

## **7. Reports from the National Groups**

John Barnes explained that DEMHIST Board encourages networking groups and members working with their groups in their countries or regions.

### **Portugal**

Maria de Jesus Monge stated that the Portuguese meeting focused on "Documentation and Archives in House Museums" and took place in Tormes, at *Fundação Eça de Queiroz*, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2015. For the first time a cultural programme was also organized on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Tormes is the north of Portugal, by the river Douro. We had a collaboration with University of Oporto, so about 40 students could attend the meeting as part of their museology master studies. Next year we are planning to hold the meeting in Évora and hope to count on University of Évora's collaboration as well as the participation of students of the master in Museology.

Due to these meetings we are increasing the number of Portuguese DEMHIST members. Anyway, these annual meetings are being organised only by four members. Actually just few people are working on it.

### **Italy**

Gianluca Kannés said that the Italian meeting took place before the Mexico City conference, on the 16<sup>th</sup> October at *Fondazione Adolfo Pini*, in Milan. The theme was about House Museum Kitchens and it was a successful meeting.

## **Mexico**

Lourdes Monges stated that there were held several national meetings during the year to organize the Mexico City conference. «It has been a busy year but now we are proud of this conference» she said. John Barnes agreed that «It was a great job».

## **Brazil**

Ana Cristina Carvalho said that the Brazilian National Group met twice during the year, in Rio de Janeiro and in Sao Paulo.

The meeting in Rio de Janeiro was held on the 13th August at *Casa Rui Barbosa* and the discussion was under the topic "Accessibility in historic house museums". Besides that Ana Cristina Carvalho was one of the speakers.

The meeting in Sao Paulo was held on the 31st August at *Museu de Arte Sacra* which was the IX Annual Brazilian Meeting on Palaces and Historic House Museums and the theme was «An object, a house, many stories».

## **Turkey**

John Barnes announced that a Turkish National Group was set up in June and that DEMHIST board will try to have a meeting there to welcome the group and to get to know them.

## **8. Individual/institutional members' thoughts**

Carlos Faggin used the word to say he had a proposal to make and then started reading a text he had recently written. With his permission I attached his text to these minutes. According to his proposal which was written and read in Spanish his intention was the creation of a DEMHIST Lexicon.

DEMHIST MEXICO: PROPUESTA LEXICON

Empiezo mi propuesta por pedir disculpas a esa distinta platea por hablar en español, lengua que para nosotros brasileños es muy difícil porque está muy cerca del portugués que hablamos en Brasil. Por eso hablo poco, para errar poco y escribí para errar menos. La propuesta que quiero presentar parte de la base oficial trilingüe de DEMHIST: español, francés y inglés. Para los lingüistas esas lenguas son parte de tres diferentes mundos que pero hoy día son mundos Hermanos y vecinos que luchan para afirmar sus diversas culturas. Culturalmente somos, todos los miembros de DEMHIST, parte de un mundo cada vez más globalizado, aun como parte de uno de esos tres universos lingüísticos. Se pasamos a mirar la perspectiva del mundo de las casas-museos desde nuestras culturas me parece que la historia que podemos contar, la nuestra experiencia y la nuestra memoria tienen que ver con nuestras diversas y dignas culturas. ¿En un mundo culturalmente tan heterogéneo qué cosa pero nos puede integrar y permitir investigar, proponer y discutir nuestras ideas? La solución ya existe y no es necesario inventar nada porque otras

personas desde 300 años atrás ya han pensado en eso proponiendo un LEXICON, documento que debe contener todos los conceptos comunes al mundo de las casa-museos originarios de nuestras diferentes lenguas evitando con eso el riesgo de empobrecernos y perdernos nuestras raíces materiales, afectivas y proyectivas. Como ilustración de mi pensamiento relato algo que se pasó conmigo en el primer día en que entré en la Facultad de Arquitectura de San Pablo. En este día asistí a la tradicional conferencia magistral presentada por Vilanova Artigas arquitecto autor del proyecto del edificio donde se ubica la Escuela hasta hoy. El tema de esa conferencia fue 1e la palabra diseño, en portugués *desenho*. Y el discurso presentaba y discutía nada más que 16 diferentes significados de esta palabra, relativos a la historia de los pueblos de lengua portuguesa, la cultura de Portugal con sus más de 1000 años de existencia y la historia de Brasil con sus 500 años de vida. Puedo concluir que estaban ahí 16 diferentes maneras de hablar de Europa y Portugal y de América y Brasil. Mi siento así encadenado se para hablar de nuestras raíces históricas y culturales debe referi a *design* o *dessin*, simplemente omitiendo toda una larga cultura. Lo que propongo en conclusiones la formación de un grupo de trabajo para estudiar y construir el LEXICON DEMHIST DE CASAS-MUSEO. Creo con esto que ese documento será parte de nuestro futuro y quizás la nuestra base para un entendimiento universal cuando hablamos de casas-museo.

Carlos Augusto Mattei Faggin

México, 22 octubre 2015

Immediately after Rosanna Pavoni said «I would like to go further on this. Why can't I express myself in French? We don't use translations anymore on our General Assemblies. We could use them more effectively».

John Barnes affirmed that «We need to develop a language for House Museums' museology. We need to form a group that would work on that. We can start from those who have proposed that topic, they dominate the language».

Ann Scheid stated: «Often I was uncertain about a words meaning. It might be useful to have a lexicon».

Carmen Jiménez confirmed: «It is nice that we have simultaneous translation here in Mexico because it brings richness to the discussion. Often we have a lot of things to say but we remain in silence because we are not fluent in English. Some people just don't speak because they feel ashamed and because they simply did not understand what other colleagues were saying».

Maria de Jesus Monge stated that «It always seemed like a dictation to me. We just use English language during General Assemblies. French speaking members don't come because we don't speak French at conferences. Elsa, could you send out information to the French speaking members too? They might help us with the task of museum jargon».

John Barnes said that according to the DEMHIST membership database 32 members prefer to communicate in Spanish, 104 prefer to do it in French and 260 prefer in English. «Every translation costs us money. There is an economic reason. It is a snake eating its own tail».

Rosanna Pavoni emphasized the fact that we were having simultaneous translation during the General Assembly and asked «Why don't we try to speak in different languages to change the perspective?».

Maria de Jesus Monge added that «We stopped having the call for papers in the three ICOM official languages. That fact reflects on the people attending our conferences».

Minerva Keltanen assured that «We will use four languages during the Helsinki conference».

By the end of this discussion Carlos Faggin asked «My proposal has been approved?...». John Barnes said that the Lexicon proposal was approved.

Then Ulla Strømberg pointed out that «We don't have a right definition of House Museum on our website».

John Barnes said that «We need to establish a group to work on the definition».

## **9. Any other business**

«Can we move on?» «I would like to give you sad/good news». The sad news is that, as most of you know, Jeanny Watson passed away in the beginning of September. The good news is that William C. Watson (Jeanny Watson's widower) decided to donate 5000 dollars for the year to come for a scholarship for young people in remembrance of Jeanny Watson's memory. The Assembly applauded loudly.

## **10. Next General Assembly: Milan, July 2016**

John Barnes announced that the next DEMHIST General Assembly is going to take place in Milan, in July next year.

After that, John Barnes closed the Assembly by saying "The Assembly is finished".

Elsa Rodrigues  
DEMHIST Secretary-Treasurer  
Lisbon, May 2016