

ICME Newsletter 52, January 2009

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1. Words from the President

For all the many, many hours of planning and organizing that were put into the 2008 ICME annual conference in Jerusalem, it seemed that it was over in the blink of an eye. All who attended warmly congratulated long-time and loyal ICME member, Galia Gavish, for the efforts she and the staff and volunteers of the Kaplan Old Yishuv Court Museum put into making the meeting such a success. Approximately 70 colleagues from 33 countries attended. Nineteen insightful papers were delivered. Countless museums and historic sites associated with pilgrimage were visited. And, good food and drinks were shared along with conversations. The program of the conference is on the ICME website. I am collecting the manuscripts to submit a completed text for publication. More about that when it is realized.

Members of the ICME board met formally while in Jerusalem. Thanks to those board members who were able to attend; there are always roadblocks preventing everyone from being present. We discussed many topics. Included were the website - you will see elsewhere in this newsletter Ralf Ceplak's request for materials you or one of your colleagues might have that will complete the ICME archives. We also discussed the ICME meetings for 2009 and 2010. In October 2009, we will be hosted by the National Folk Museum of Korea. Look for information about that conference in

the near future. The ICME Triennial in 2010 will be held in Shanghai, China.

If you would like to assist in shaping the theme of that conference contact Ralf Ceplak. Ralf is also leading a working group which is revisiting ICME's long out-of-date statutes, now called Rules by ICOM. Again, if you'd like a hand in determining how our international committee conducts itself, please contact Ralf and lend a hand. We hope to have these two items ready to be voted on in the 2009 meeting.

We have a few tasks ahead of us that we'd like ICME members to get involved with. Thanks for Ralf for his leadership in these issues. I hope a few of you have the time to work on them through the convenience of cyberspace.

With that I wish you all a healthy and enjoyable holiday season.

With warmest regards,

Annette B. Fromm

2. Report from the 2008 ICME Annual Meeting in Jerusalem

The 2008 annual meeting of the International Committee of Museums of Ethnography (ICME) was held in mid-November in Jerusalem. Over 60 participants representing museums and universities in 33 nations attended the conference hosted by the Kaplan Museum in the Old City. A very busy schedule including 19 papers on the topics of Migration, Diaspora and Pilgrimage, along with museum tours, neighborhood walking tours and festive meals was followed.

The conference began with a pre-conference tour of pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem, introducing the group to major sites. Starting off at Jaffa Gate, the tour hiked quickly to the Dome of the Rock, only to wait in the long, long line to gain entry. We were guided by Professor Amnon Cohen and the curator of the Dome of the Rock. The museum on the site, established 1922, is comprised of two large rooms with tall vaulted ceilings, whitewashed walls and stone floors. It is a magnificent repository of architectural remains collected from the many restorations of mosque & schools in area. Also in the museum are over 600 Korans dating from the 4th century to end of Ottoman Empire.

Text labeling in the museum is provided in English, French, and Arabic.

From this magnificent Muslim shrine the group descended to the kotel or Western Wall. After a coffee break in the Jewish quarter, they continued through the Cardo to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. This site, at mid-day, was swamped by numerous pilgrim groups from around the world. Our next stop, after winding through the busy Arab market of Jerusalem's old city was the Cathedral of St. James, and the Armenian Orthodox Monastery and library, guided by the Armenian Archbishop. The final destination of the day was compound of the Four Sephardic synagogues in the Jewish quarter. Then the busy day ended with a festive dairy meal at the Isaac Kaplan Old Yishuv Court Museum.

Early the next day, the conference started at the Tower of David, Museum of the History of Jerusalem, alongside the historic Jaffa Gate. Each day of the conference started with a museum tour and discussion with staff members. At the Tower of David, the group welcomed by representatives of the Ministry of Culture, Museum Division and the President of ICOM/Israel. Papers ranged from discussions of migration of gypsies in Bulgaria and Shammar Bedouins to workers from Romania and Slovenia who worked respectively in Canada and Egypt. Background on archives and museums

that collect materials relating to identity and memory of diaspora in Estonia and Israel were also presented. At some times during the day speakers had to make their presentations over the cry of muezzin calling the faithful the prayer! In the evening, participants enjoyed a reception in Yemin Moshe hosted by sponsor, the Jerusalem Foundation.

The second day, after a morning tour of Yad VaShem, the conference adjourned at the L.A. Mayer Museum of Islamic Art. Coincidentally, during the week of the conference the recovery of a priceless watch collection stolen from this museum was reported in the International Herald Tribune. Papers discussed the issues of museums serving as pilgrimage sites with examples from Israel, South Africa and Crete. After a dinner hosted by members of the Kurdish Jewish community the group returned to their hotels via a walking tour of Rehavia and Talbieh.

The final day the meetings continued at the Museum of Italian Jewish Art. This museum, housed in a former monastery, is noteworthy for the early 19th century synagogue from Conegliano near Venice. Papers on the final day continued to address the triple themes of the conference. The day ended with a tour and dinner at the Museum of the Jewish Underground.

Several discussions arose during the conference. One of them was about multicultural and single ethnic museums. The comments centered on contradictions found in each type of museum and in the practical consequences of the former because of finances.

Following well-established practice, after the close of the conference a small group remained to take part in the post-conference tour. The group departed from Jerusalem and traveled northward to Nazareth and the Church of the Annunciation. En route the tour bus passed through the newly inaugurated bridge under Mt. Tabor. As good pilgrims and museum ethnographers, some of the group recited the shehehyanu, the Jewish prayer expressed before partaking of new things.

Our first destination, the church in Nazareth is actually a relatively new structure (consecrated in 1969) encasing the historic sites associated with Mary. The wall enclosing the courtyard is decorated with mosaic panels visually representing Mary holding the baby Jesus. Each panel was donated by Catholic communities around the world and executed in the style of the donor country. I took a little break from the group and strolled through a very busy market place. I was able to see the Church of the Synagogue, a very plain site Jesus in which is said to have preached.

From Nazareth we drove northward to Kibbutz Yifat. At this location, we ate a pioneer kibbutz lunch - eggs, cheeses, vegetable and olives, bread and fruit. This Spartan meal prepared us to view the Pioneer Museum to understand the life of the early collective settlers of pre-state Israel.

Continuing northward, our next stop was the Museum German-Speaking Jews at Tefen. This museum is located in an Industrial Park near the Israel-Lebanon border at which there are not only businesses, but also schools, housing and museums. The day ended at Kfar Giladi in the one of the oldest and largest hotels run by a kibbutz. The view up the mountains and down the valleys was lovely.

The next morning the group reconvened after a generous modern kibbutz breakfast at neighboring Tel Hai. This early kibbutz and historic site has been

transformed into a museum and was recently redesigned. The exhibits make extensive use of video projections with accompanying audio texts to relate the story of pioneer life and the significant battle in 1920 at this outpost. Another discussion with our hosts was sparked about interactions between Israeli and neighboring Palestinians and if and how their stories are shared. From Tel Hai we descended to the Sea of Galilee and a stop at the Museum Yigal Allon at Ginosar to see the so-called 2000 year old "Jesus" boat. This is said to be the oldest boat found in freshwater. The high tech display draws many thousands of pilgrims to see a fragile artifact from the time of Jesus. Outside the museum, numerous sculptures dotted the landscape.

Our next stop was Nebi Shu'eib, a Druze shrine to Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. This impressive structure, built into the side of a limestone cliff preserves the site of Jethro's tomb. The site was identified in the time of Salahaddin and the tomb built 250 years ago. April 25, the date of the principal pilgrimage to this holy site, draws thousands of pilgrims. Our final stop before returning to Jerusalem was the Yardenit. Here, along the Jordan River Christian pilgrims are drawn to see where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. In addition, many pilgrims submit to the River for the sacrament of baptism. None of our group was so moved by their faith, we were mere observers.

A complete list of the papers presented at this year's conference is available on the [ICME website](#). The 2009 ICME Annual Meeting will convene in Seoul, Korea in October, sponsored by the National Folk Museum of Korea. Please check our web-site for notices submit papers or attend.

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3. Call for archival material from ICME annual meetings

There is incomplete record of annual meeting programs, proceedings and Newsletters on the ICME website.

In 1951 there was a Meeting of the ICOM Commission on Racial Questions, which was a subcommittee of ICME in Paris, France. But only from 1991 onwards the programmes of the annual meetings are online on our [ICME web page](#).

In our effort to complete the incomplete I am asking our ICME members: If anyone has the 1951 - 1991 programmes, proceedings and Newsletters (up to the No. 30, year 2000), please scan them and send them to Matthias Beitzl (Webmaster)

mailto: matthias.beitl@volkskundemuseum.at and he will put them on the ICME website.
Ralf Ceplak Mencin

In addition I would like to mention that we also lack photos from the two most recent annual meetings - in Vienna and in Jerusalem. Therefore, if any of you have photos from any of those two occasions, please send them to Matthias Beitzl (see address above).

Peter Bjerregaard

4. Up-coming conferences and seminars

January 8-10, "Heritage in Asia: Converging Forces and Conflicting Values", Singapore, http://www.ari.nus.edu.sg/events_categorydetails.asp?categoryid=6&eventid=814

February 12, "Contact and context: working with source communities", London Transport Museum, London, United Kingdom, <http://www.museumsassociation.org/events/contactandcontext>

February 27, "Only Human: Social History and Ethnography", Leeds City Museum, Leeds, United Kingdom, http://www.museumethnographersgroup.org.uk/?p=event_show&id=61

March 5-7, "Imagined Horizons: Spatial Configurations of the Present", Delhi, India, http://grs.du.ac.in/conferencesWorkshops/conference_2009.html

March 17-21, "Global Challenge, Local Action: Ethical Engagement, Partnerships and Practice" 69th Annual Meeting of The Society for Applied Anthropology, Santa Fe, NM, USA, <http://www.sfaa.net/sfaa2009.html>

March 27-28, "Creativity and Innovation", 16th ICC Annual Conference, Florence, Italy, <http://www.icc-languages.eu>

April 4-7, "Traditions and Transformations: Tourism, Heritage and Cultural Change in the Middle East and North Africa Region", Amman, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, http://www.tourism-culture.com/64/CMENA/CMENA%20brochure%20&%20registration%20form_final.pdf

April 16-18, "Instruction, Amusement and Spectacle: Popular Shows and Exhibitions 1800-1914", Exeter, United Kingdom, <http://www.sall.ex.ac.uk/conferences/victorian-shows.html>
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, <http://www.aam-us.org/am09/>

May 6-8, "Re-Imagining Identities: New directions in post-colonial studies", Waterford, <http://www.postcolonialstudiesassociation.co.uk/id63.html>

May 6-9, "Facing the Past/ Facing the Future: History, Memory, Literature", Bahcesehir University, Istanbul Turkey, <http://www.bahcesehir.edu.tr>

May 30-June 1, "Sharing Cultures 2009", Ilha do Pico, Azores, Portugal, <http://sharing.cultures2009.greenlines-institute.org>

May 7-9, "Living Islam in Europe : Muslim Traditions in European Contexts", Centre for Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin, Germany, for further information see <http://www.easaonline.org/calendar.htm>

5. Call for papers

April 2-3, "Amateur Passions / Professional Practice: ethnography collectors and collections", 2009 MEG Conference, Bristol, United Kingdom, <http://www.museumethnographersgroup.org.uk/?p=cms&pid=1>

April 6-9, "Anthropological and archaeological imaginations: past, present and future", ASA 2009, Bristol, United Kingdom, <http://www.theasa.org/conferences.htm>

April 24-25, "VIVA AFRICA 2009", 4th International Conference on African

<http://www.easaonline.org/calendar.htm>

May 13-15, Third Anthropological Film Festival at University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, <http://anthfilm.anth.ubc.ca/events.html>

July 9-11, "Visuality/Materiality: Reviewing Theory, Method and Practice", London, United Kingdom, <http://www.geography.dur.ac.uk/conf/visualitymateriality/Home/tabid/2944/Default.aspx>

July 27-31, "Humanity, Development and Cultural Diversity", XVI ICAES, 2008, Kunming, China, <http://www.icaes2008.org/>

August 18-22, "Rethinking the material, the visual and the narrative in culture", The 31st Nordic Ethnology and Folklore Conference, Helsinki, Finland, <http://www.helsinki.fi/kansatiede/nefk/engindex.html>

September 1-4, "Objects - What Matters? Technology, Value and Social Change", CRESC Annual Conference, University of Manchester, <http://www.cresc.ac.uk/events/conference2009/callforpapers.html>

September 21-24, Vth International Congress of Ethnobotany (ICEB), San Carlos de Bariloche, Patagonia, Argentina, mailto: pochett@fcnym.unlp.edu.ar

November 6-7, "Representing the People", Reims, France, <http://www.univ-reims.fr/index.php?p=2705>

April 8 - 10, 2010, "Continuities, Dislocations and Transformations: Reflections on 50 Years of African Independence", Biennial conference of the German Association for African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany, for further information see <http://www.easaonline.org/calendar.htm>

6. Words from the editor

First of all a Happy New Year to all of you out there!

Actually, this newsletter was posted just before New Year as I found some interesting conferences and calls for papers that needed immediate action from potential attendants. But apparently the mail never came through. I apologize if any of you have already received one version of this newsletter.

Most of the contributions to this newsletter are obviously related to the successful annual meeting in Jerusalem. It was a pleasant surprise to hear of the large number of attendants for this years meeting - hopefully we can keep the pace next year in South Korea.

As mentioned by Annette in the 'Words from the President' she will try to bring the papers presented in Jerusalem together in a volume. I would like to mention that we also still welcome papers presented in Vienna 2007 for publishing at the ICME website. I would like to thank everybody who have contributed to the ICME Newsletter in 2008. We try to keep pace with what is happening in the field of ethnographic museums while not overloading with information we would all be able to access elsewhere.

Therefore I will encourage all of you to contribute with your ideas and reflections for the newsletter in 2009 as well.

Best wishes

Peter Bjerregaard

The deadline for the next issue is April 24 2009. Please send news and contributions to: editor@icme.icom.museum

Peter Bjerregaard

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