Preface

Published by

Graham, Pamela M.
Migrations and Connections: Latin America and Europe in the Modern World.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/111659.

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Preface

My first journey to Berlin took place in October of 2008 for a pre-conference planning visit. I embarked on what I intended to be an ongoing relationship with this fascinating city. This visit, and the time I spent in Berlin during our conference year of 2009, allowed me to begin my explorations of the city of today and gave me glimpses and windows into its complex past. The themes of our conference—the dynamics of movement and change; the migration of people, culture, and ideas; the processes of exile and return, and the legacies of such diffusions—are inscribed onto the city of Berlin, as are the adaptation and creativity that can emerge out of displacement and change. My intention in developing the conference theme was to encourage a re-visiting of these topics with respect to the modern relationships between Europe and Latin America. The site of our meeting was an engaging and appropriate setting.

For many attendees, this was a return visit to Berlin, which served as the site of the 31st Annual Meeting in April of 1986, also hosted by the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut (IAI) in what was then the Federal Republic of Germany. Comparison of experiences and exercises in remembrance are inevitable. The dramatic changes that altered the political landscape of Germany, Europe, and the world not long after the first Berlin SALALM meeting were followed by the technological changes that transformed the research process, libraries, and librarianship. With awareness of such changes, I purposely sought a thread of continuity with the 1986 meeting, which also focused on migrations, specifically on “transcultural contributions of European and Latin American émigrés.” I am pleased to note that three contributors to this volume (Beatriz Colombi, Ana María Cobos and Analya Sater) also published papers in the 1986 proceedings. Cobos and Sater’s earlier paper on Chilean folk music in exile has become a paper on exile and return, reflecting the changes that took place in Chile in these intervening years.

SALALM’s return to Berlin was also, of course, a return to Europe. Another important purpose of our meeting was to facilitate connections and engagement among libraries and archives based in the United States, Latin America, and Europe. Our generous hosts at the IAI welcomed us to their library, home to one of the best Latin American collections in the world. We viewed exhibits, took tours, met the full staff, and had opportunities to learn more about their outstanding collections and collecting strategies. I am especially pleased that the European association of Latin American studies library and information professionals, REDIAL (Red Europea de Información y Documentación sobre América Latina) convened its annual meeting to coincide with SALALM’s conference. We welcomed REDIAL members to our meetings and panels and were grateful to include twenty Redialistas on
our program as presenters or moderators. During the SALALM conference, I signed a *Carta de Intenciones de Colaboración* with Dr. Mona Huerta, then President of REDIAL, formalizing our interest in strengthening the ties between our organizations. This interchange was also beneficial for SALALM *libreros*, who had the opportunity to learn about European institutions and organizations that could benefit from their services.

Presentations by REDIAL members and our informal conversations revealed the common and universal issues we encounter in the library and information profession. (And here the thread of continuity with 1986 was broken—technology, save a panel on microformats and preservation, had scant presence in that program.) Our program featured several presentations about digital projects, web-based resources, and streaming video in libraries in the United States, Latin America, and Europe. Technology was not only a subject of discussion but a function of our meeting, which was the first SALALM conference to include live or near-live blogging. A group of volunteers posted their experiences with the goal of sharing SALALM 54 in somewhat more real time for those who could not attend.

The timing of our meeting raised several important issues that were not new but were emerging with renewed intensity and dramatic impact. The summer of 2009 found us in the midst of a global economic crisis that had already begun to have measurable impact on libraries and universities. Reductions in travel budgets prevented some SALALM members from attending the conference. Most members were grappling with cuts (or impending cuts) in acquisitions budgets, and libreros faced the prospect of declining sales paired with ongoing shifts in the demands and needs of libraries with respect to the libreros’ services. Our 2008/09 Vice-President/President-Elect Fernando Acosta-Rodríguez organized a session on “Adaptation and Innovation: Libraries and Libreros on Collections, Technical Services, and the Economic Crisis.” The program also featured a session on “Getting More from Less,” which focused on strategies for managing and developing smaller Latin American collections.

The technological themes and economic realities of our situation in 2009 were timely and salient additions to the program but these proceedings center on the main conference theme. Our contributors offer diverse reflections and accounts of the migrations and the connections between Latin America and Europe in the modern era. The papers address the multiple forms of exchange and diffusion among cultures, represented in art, literature, language, architecture, and music (alas, this print volume cannot bring the sounds of those latter papers to life). Personal and macro-level accounts of migration processes convey the human and historical dimensions of such movements. Our authors also explored exile, return, and the bibliographic record of migration processes and cultural diffusion.
These proceedings are just one reflection of the research, discussion, exchange, and connections that took place in early July 2009 as our members and other conference participants gathered in Berlin. I sincerely thank all colleagues whose time and energy made this meeting so memorable, enjoyable, and productive.

Pamela M. Graham