

MINUTES OF THE SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ASSOCIATION

University of Vienna: 27 July 2016

The General Assembly was opened at 4:00 pm by the retiring President of the Association, Hans Bertens.

John Foster, the English-Language Secretary, announced the results of the election. ZHANG Longxi (Hong Kong) had been ratified as the new president. Lucia Boldrini (United Kingdom) was the vice president who had received the greatest number of votes, meaning that in case of an emergency she would become president. The other three vice presidents were ZHOU Xiaoyi (China), Kathleen Komar (United States), and Anders Pettersson (Sweden). Marc Maufort (Belgium), who had received the same number of votes as Pettersson, had chosen to step aside, given his position as editor of the Association's journal, *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research*. Anne Tomiche (France) was ratified as the French-language secretary, but due to uncertainties about the candidate for English-language secretary, that position would need to be determined later. The three treasurers who were ratified were Hans-Joachim Backe (Denmark/Germany) for Europe and Africa, HITASHI Noriko (Japan) for Asia, and Efraín Kristal (United States/Peru) for the Americas. The election produced the following sixteen assessors to serve on the Executive Board: Sandra Bermann (United States), Ipshita Chanda (India), Wiebke Denecke (United States), Massimo Fusillo (Italy), Debjani Ganguly (Australia), HASHIMOTO Yorimitsu (Japan), Achim Hölter (Austria); OSHIMA Hitoshi (Japan), PARK Sangjin (Korea), E.V. Ramakrishnan (India), Rita Sakr (United Kingdom/Lebanon), Márcio Silvermann-Silva (Brazil), William J. Spurlin (United Kingdom), Reza Teher-Kermani (Iran), Mads Rosendahl Thomsen (Denmark), and YANG Huilin (China). The election results had been finalized by a committee consisting of Hans Bertens, the retiring president; ZHANG Longxi, the incoming president; and Manfred Engel, the 2010-13 chair of the Nominating Committee, acting for Theo D'haen, the 2013-16 chair of that committee, who had been unable to come to Vienna. This committee, exercising its right to appoint two additional assessors to the Executive Council from the list of candidates on the ballot, chose Marie-Thérèse Abdelmessih (Egypt) and Philip Van Schalkwyk (South Africa), thereby providing the Council with two African representatives. Hans Bertens's presidency having officially come to an end with the announcement of these results, John Foster nominated him for the position of Honorary President. The General Assembly approved this designation and greeted the election results with a round of applause.

The new president, ZHANG Longxi, announced that the new Executive Council would meet in the Senatsaal at 6:00 p.m. There was no set agenda, and the officers and assessors in attendance were invited to bring up matters of pressing importance. In the absence of the 2016-19 secretaries, Lucia Boldrini volunteered to keep the minutes for this meeting.

Marc Maufort, the editor of the Association's journal, *Recherche littéraire / Literary Research*, announced that the 2016 issue had just become available on the Association's website. He invited the audience to download the convenient PDF document. In the course of outlining the editorial policies and describing the journal's contents, he clarified what was meant by the cluster of essays that comprised one section of the journal. These essays were not traditional scholarly articles, but addressed topics of general interest to scholars pursuing comparative research.

Next on the agenda was the ceremony honoring the winner of the Association's Balakian Prize, which is awarded at three-year intervals to the best first book in comparative literature to appear during that period. The prize is named after Anna Balakian, a professor of comparative literature at New York University and a long-time member and supporter of the Association, who was noted for her research on symbolism and surrealism as international movements. In the absence of Monika Schmitz-Emans, who had chaired the jury that evaluated the submissions and who wrote the award

citation, Honorary President Manfred Schmeling read the citation and presented the 2016 Balakian Prize to Dr. Alexandra Berlina from the University Essen-Duisburg in Germany, for her book *Brodsky Translating Brodsky: Poetry in Self-Translation* (2014). Dr. Berlina was present to receive the prize, which amounted to \$1000 plus her travel expenses to attend the Congress.

The next item of business was the bid from China to host the 2019 Congress. President Bertens introduced Professor CAO Shunqing, president of the Chinese Comparative Literature Association, who gave a PowerPoint presentation on the proposal from Shenzhen University in south China. Professor Cao acquainted the audience with the city's modern amenities and with the university that would host the Congress, and assured them of them of Shenzhen's capacity to handle a large conference with a thousand or more participants. The city's international airport was also well served by airlines that could meet travel needs of the Association's membership. Except for some unofficially expressed displeasure with the choice of certain possible plenary speakers, the discussion period produced no significant objections to this bid. It was forwarded to the new Executive Council for formal approval later that afternoon.

As the assembly began to draw to a close, University Professor Dr. Matthias Meyer, Dean of the Faculty of Philological and Cultural Studies at the University of Vienna, gave a brief speech that communicated his institution's pleasure at having hosted the 2016 Congress. When he concluded by expressing gratitude for the contributions of the Congress organizer, Professor Achim Hölter, the assembly broke into lengthy applause in a sign of appreciation for his efforts.

Achim Hölter took the stage to describe his ongoing plans for publishing the Proceedings of the Congress. Research committees that had organized sessions under the Congress's auspices would be free to publish the results at their own initiative, provided that the resulting books or journals gave explicit credit to the 2016 Vienna Congress and also displayed the Association's logo. With other papers, some combination of hard-copy and online publication was still under discussion, and final plans would be publicized on the Congress website. At the close of Achim Hölter's remarks, bouquets were presented to his wife Eva Hölter and to his assistant Constanze Prašek, to the accompaniment of another outburst of applause.

Retiring President Hans Bertens brought the meeting to an end by remarking that although former presidents customarily became "Honorary Presidents," the Association's Statutes actually made no mention of such a position. Instead, it allowed more generally for "honorary members" of the Executive Council, and he now wanted to nominate the retiring secretary John Burt Foster to that position. The nomination was accepted by acclamation. The General Assembly was adjourned at 5:30 p.m., and a reception followed.

Respectfully submitted,
John Burt Foster, Jr.
English-Language Secretary.