

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Council of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA), Yunnan University, Kunming, 4 July 2018

Present (for all or part of the meeting):

Zhang Longxi, E.V. Ramakrishnan, Massimo Fusillo, Yorimitsu Hashimoto, Yang Huilin, Xiaoyi Zhou, Ipsita Chanda, Sandra L. Bermann, Marie Thérèse Abdelmessih, Noriko Hiraishi, Chandra Mohan, Wang Ning, Anders Pettersson.

Morning session, 9 a.m.

1. Opening of the meeting

The President, Zhang Longxi, opens the meeting and welcomes the participants. A round of presentations follows. Relevant documents are handed out.

2. Approval of the minutes of the Utrecht meeting

It is noted that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive Council, in Utrecht 4–5 July 2018, have already been approved by email.

3. Approval of the agenda

The agenda of the meeting is approved.

4. Report of the President

Zhang Longxi presents the President's report, also found in the documents. He emphasizes particularly that there are no concrete signs, after the contacts taken, that ICLA's American and British member-associations, ACLA and BCLA, will break off from the ICLA. However, he expresses concerns regarding the difficulties of finalizing the plans for ICLA's next congress, due to be held in Shenzhen in 2019.

The report of the President is approved.

5. Reports of the Secretaries

The two Secretaries have not submitted reports. Sandra Bermann suggests that the Council should ask for reports, and Zhang Longxi promises to email to Paulo Horta and Anne Tomiche with such a request. He gives a short description of the work of the Secretaries and its merits, and the Council expresses its full confidence in the Secretaries.

(The report of the Secretaries has been received after the Executive Council meeting and is available with the other reports – note added by Anne Tomiche at the time of the translation of the minutes.)

6. Reports of the Treasurers

The Treasurer for Europe and Africa, Hans-Joachim Backe, and the Treasurer for Asia and Pacific, Noriko Hiraishi, have submitted reports, found in the documents. There is no report from the Treasurer for the Americas, Efraín Kristal. Zhang Longxi expresses his confidence that the financial situation of the Americas section of the ICLA is very healthy. He takes it upon himself to email Efraín Kristal to request a report.

Hans-Joachim Backe has provided a financial diary and also offers a series of specific observations, comments, and recommendations. He judges that the Europe and Africa section is in good financial health. The total financial assets of the association for the Europe-Africa zone now amount to about 74,597,06 € / \$ 89,060,17.

The report of the Treasurer for Europe and Africa is approved.

Noriko Hiraishi is herself present at the meeting and gives a short review of her report as found in the documents. She supplements the document with a handout bringing her report up to 4 July 2018. She observes that the meeting schedules of certain associations makes for late payments and makes it difficult to provide relevant overviews in time for the ICLA executive meetings. She presents the financial condition of the Asia and Pacific section as stable and healthy. Its balances as of 4 July 2018 are 5,683,903 JPY plus 45,502.49 USD, which gives an overall balance, calculated according to current exchange rates, of 96,898.67 USD.

Chandra Mohan informs that the payments due from the Indian association, the CLAI, which have not yet reached the Treasurer for Asia and Pacific, were made in June.

The report of the Treasurer for Asia and Pacific is approved.

7. Report of the Editor of "Recherche Littéraire/Literary Research"

The Editor, Marc Maufort, has submitted a report included in the documents. He presents the contents of the 2018 issue of *Recherche Littéraire/Literary Research*, which for the first time also contains a number of commissioned scholarly articles. Work on the 2019 issue is in progress. The production manager, Jenny Webb, is stepping down, but a contract has been signed with Peter Lang according to which this publisher takes over the journal from the 2019 issue onward and will publish it in gold open-access format.

Marc Maufort asks the council to make the following payments related to the production of the journal.

- 6,000 USD to Jenny Webb for her production services
- 5,000 EUR to himself for his work as editor
- 400 USD (approximately) to Jenny Webb for the purchase of 55 hard copies of the journal from Amazon (this includes copies to contributors)
- 500 USD to John Schweppe, who designed the cover of the 2018 issue

Chandra Mohan underlines the importance of the journal for the attractiveness of the ICLA to Indian scholars. He also asks about the costs of a printed copy and is told that he will have to turn to Amazon for an answer. Zhang Longxi finds that, because of the commissioned articles, the journal is now more of a traditional scholarly publication. He is pleased to note that Marc Maufort is willing to stay on as Editor for another four years.

The Council expresses its great appreciation of Marc Maufort's work. His four financial requests, listed above, are accepted. It is decided that Zhang Longxi will write a personal message to Jenny Webb, thanking her for her services.

The report of the Editor of *Recherche Littéraire/ Literary Research* is approved.

8. Report on the 2019 Congress

On behalf of the organizers, Wang Ning, president of CCLA, ICLA's Chinese member-association, explains the present situation of the planning for the 2019 ICLA congress to be held in Shenzhen. It has proved difficult to get the organization in Shenzhen of a congress of the ordinary ICLA congress size approved by the relevant Chinese authorities. The organizers are still pursuing a permission, with support from several quarters, including the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences. It seems that 300 participants would have to be a maximum number, and that information about the names, ages, and political attitudes of the participants would have to be submitted in advance. Wang Ning points to two possible options: either to continue seeking permission for a congress in Shenzhen or to change the venue to Macau, where a congress can most probably be arranged in 2019 or, if time proves too short, in 2020. In the latter case, the Shenzhen organizers are prepared to hold a high-level conference in Shenzhen in 2019 in cooperation with the ICLA.

Zhang Longxi thanks Wang Ning for his report, but expresses his view that the ICLA Congress 2019 cannot be reduced to a small conference with 300 participants only.

There is a longer discussion. Sandra Bermann asks whether there are institutions in Macau willing to arrange the ICLA congress, whether funding can be found, and whether the same administrative problems will not emerge with respect to the Macau alternative. Wang Ning considers that finding volunteer assistants for a congress in Macau at short notice might prove difficult, but that funding will probably be less of a problem. A network of personal contacts may make funding quite possible. Yang Huilin points out that Macau, although part of the People's Republic of China, is a Special Administrative Region, and that the same administrative problems therefore cannot, in principle, arise. Like Wang Ning, he refers to facilitating personal contacts and mentions persons and institutions possible to approach. He points to two specific universities, the Macau University of Science and Technology and the Macau City University, as particularly promising venues.

Sandra Bermann underlines that a possible conference in Macau 2019 should not collide with the MLA International Symposium in Lisbon 23–25 July. Marie-Thérèse Abdelmessih asks whether visa matters may be a problem with respect to Macau, and whether a congress in Macau will have the same themes and topics as earlier presented and accepted for the congress in Shenzhen. Zhang Longxi replies that visas are probably not needed for Macau for most of our participants, and that themes and topics will be the same. E.V. Ramakrishnan asks about the possible conference in Shenzhen in 2019 – will it have some different themes? Zhang Longxi points out that such a conference would not be an ICLA conference. Wang Ning explains that a possible conference in Shenzhen 2019 would be a smaller conference than the ICLA congress, but that the entire Council of the ICLA would be invited.

While there is general sympathy for the Macau alternative, the Council is divided in the question of whether to hold on to the idea of arranging the congress in 2019 or to decide to postpone it till 2020. Zhang Longxi expresses his preference for the 2019 alternative, provided that it finds acceptance in Macau. Chandra Mohan and Massimo Fusillo likewise support this alternative. Anders Pettersson expresses reservations, pointing to the very short time for all the various preparations and stressing the importance of not compromising quality. Sandra Bermann asks specifically about the possibility of getting the congress website up and running quickly. Zhang Longxi assures her that all technical problems have long been solved.

It is also debated how soon a definitive decision will have to be taken. Noriko Hiraishi draws attention to the fact that enquiries about the coming congress are coming in from various people. Sandra Bermann remarks that it would be good to have clarity within a week. Wang Ming and Yang Huilin believe that a week or ten days will be needed for finalizing the discussions already initiated with people and institutions in Macau. Anders Pettersson proposes that

- Zhang Longxi is authorized to decide, not later than 15 August 2018, whether or not the next ICLA congress can be held in Macau 2019
- If he finds that the congress cannot be held in Macau in 2019, he is authorized to decide, not later than 15 August 2018, that the ICLA congress will be held in Macau in 2020. (If he finds this too impossible to decide, search for a new venue will have to begin.)
- The dates of a possible congress in Macau in 2019 or 2020 will have to be decided later.

This proposition is accepted.

Chandra Mohan expresses his appreciation for the work done by Zhang Longxi. Zhang Longxi, in his turn, thanks Yang Huilin for his efforts towards the solution of the problems around the congress.

9. *Report of the Structures Committee*

Anders Pettersson, chair of this committee, presents the report, found in the documents. During the past year, the Structures Committee has primarily followed the work on establishing a consolidated list of members of the ICLA and been engaged in the transparency of elections at the next congress.

The report of the Structures Committee is approved.

10. *Report on the Website and the Membership List*

A report from Lucia Boldrini is handed out and read. During the past year much work has been done on the enhancement of ICLA's website. Livia Franchini has been responsible for most of this work, aided by Elvina Flower, who offered web support. An improved website is now ready to go live. However, it has not been possible to make any progress where the membership list is concerned. The report explains this with lack of input from the crucial Treasurer, Hans-Joachim Backe,

It is noted in the report that the Council has previously agreed to invest up to 10,000 USD annually for the period 2016–2019 to enhance the ICLA website and the reliability of its membership list. Lucia Boldrini now asks the Council to agree to make the following payments:

- 500 GBP to Elvina Flower for web support July 2018 to July 2019
- 4400 GBP to Livia Franchini for work as administrator (twelve months, half a day a week; administrative and bank transfer costs included in the sum)

This means that 4,900 GBP, or circa 6,465 USD, are being requested.

Sandra Bermann asks for clarifications concerning the membership list and the difficulties surrounding it. Zhang Longxi, Massimo Fusillo, and Anders Pettersson offer explanations. There is a prototype form for the associations' reporting of members, designed by Hans-Joachim Backe, and all three Treasurers have accepted to use this form and ask for corresponding information from their respective national associations, but for various reasons this process seems to have stalled. Noriko Hiraishi, the only Treasurer present, confirms this account.

Zhang Longxi expresses his appreciation of the work done by Lucia Boldrini – and by the other Vice-Presidents – and proposes that the Council grants her financial requests.

The Council approves the report on the website and the membership list and accepts to make the two payments requested in the report.

11. Discussion – should ICLA advertise conferences and other events on its website?

Zhang Longxi introduces the topic by explaining that various associations or organizers have approached the ICLA, asking to have arrangements announced on ICLA's website. He advises against such a practice, which would risk to inundate the website or require difficult gatekeeping.

Massimo Fusillo suggests that – apart from ICLA's own initiatives – only official conferences or congresses arranged by ICLA's national associations should be advertised on ICLA's website. Sandra Bermann supports his proposal, observing that permitting this would also be a way of strengthening the ties between the ICLA and its member-associations.

The Council decides that, apart from ICLA's own initiatives, only official conferences or congresses arranged by ICLA's national associations should be advertised on ICLA's website.

12. Discussion – voting procedures at next ICLA Congress

A concrete proposal, supported by the Structures Committee, is handed out and read. There are five points, the most important of which say that the Council shall appoint a specific person to be the one chiefly responsible for organizing and reporting the voting, and that there shall be reliable means in place to ensure that people casting votes are eligible to do so and cannot cast a vote more than once.

Anders Pettersson explains the proposal. Eligibility to vote is a particularly sensitive issue. If a consolidated membership list exists, this can be used as an electoral roll. If not, it is suggested that members wanting to vote get a confirmation of their eligibility to do so from an officer of his or her national association.

Zhang Longxi stresses the importance of working together with Lucia Boldrini to establish, if possible, a consolidated membership list and having such a list printed out. Noriko Hiraishi mentions that such a list existed at the Rio de Janeiro congress in 2007, but that it seems difficult to establish such a list before the next congress. She asks to whom information about members should be sent. Anders Pettersson says that such information should be sent to Lucia Boldrini and her team.

E.V. Ramakrishnan finds it necessary that the member associations be given a date when their information shall be in, and that their information is then posted at the ICLA website from some specific date.

Zhang Longxi points out that the ICLA also has some individual members not belonging to any member association. Chandra Mohan suggests that ICLA allows congress participants to become members in connection with the payment of the congress fee, but E.V. Ramakrishnan and Noriko Hiraishi find it necessary to decide on some earlier cut-off date. E.V. Ramakrishnan suggests six months before the beginning of the congress. Zhang Longxi proposes one month.

Chandra Mohan raises the question of voting by proxies, and suggests that no person should be allowed to represent more than two other members as a proxy. Anders Pettersson observes that the statutes do not limit the number of proxy votes, but supposes that the Council can make an ad hoc decision concerning the next election.

Anders Pettersson proposes that the Council decides

- To endorse the concrete proposal from the Structures Committee contained in the presented document, adding two supplementary rules: (a) a person eligible to vote will have to have been a member of the ICLA at least one month before the beginning of the congress; people not belonging to a member association will have to contact the Treasurer of their respective region for payment and confirmation; and (b) at the next congress, nobody will be allowed to represent more than two other members as a proxy
- To authorize Zhang Longxi to find a person suitable to act as the one chiefly responsible for organizing and reporting the voting at the congress

The Council accepts this proposal.

Zhang Longxi announces that he will, in the first instance, contact the former Secretary-General John Burt Foster and ask him to assume the chief responsibility for the voting at the next congress.

13. *Report on the Balakian Prize*

There is no report on the Balakian prize. Zhang Longxi will write to Kathleen Komar and ask for a report.

(The report has been received after the Executive Council meeting and is available with the other reports – note added by Anne Tomiche at the time of the translation of the minutes.)

14. *Report of the Nominating Committee*

The Nominating Committee has submitted a report, found in the documents and signed by its chair, Helena Buescu. When nominating candidates, the Nominating Committee has searched to secure diversity of scientific approaches; broad geographical and linguistic representation; gender balance; and nominees engaged with, or showing willingness to engage with, the ICLA. The committee has consulted the President and other representative members of the ICLA and asked for informed help from all ICLA's committee chairs. The Nominating Committee's report includes ballot material for ICLA's 2019 elections: a list of nominees and individual presentations of each candidate.

The list of nominees is as follows:

- One President (one position): Sandra Bermann
- Six Vice-Presidents (four positions): Lucia Boldrini; Kathleen Komar; E.V. Ramakrishnan; Monika Schmitz-Emans; Márcio Seligmann-Silva; Yang Huilin
- Two Secretaries (two positions): Anne Tomiche, Paulo Lemos Horta
- Three Treasurers (three positions): Roberto Vecchi, Adelaide M. Russo, Noriko Hiraishi
- Members (sixteen positions): Marie Thérèse Abdelmessih, Sangjin Park, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Piero Boitani, Thomas Buffet, Yves Clavaron, Oana Fotache-Dubălaru, Bernard Franco, Róbert Gáfrik, Ferial Ghazoul, Isabel Gómez, Marina Grishakova, Stefan Helgesson, José Luís Jobim, Marko Juvan, Djelal Kadir, Adam Kola, Bénédicte Letellier, Mauro Pala, Danielle Perrot-Corpet, Matthew Reynolds, Elizabeth Richmond-Garza, Bruce Robbins, Rita Terezinha Schmidt, Anja Tippner, Toshiko Ellis, Miguel Vedda, Cyril Vettorato, Stefan Willer, and Zhang Xiaohong

Marie Thérèse Abdelmessih would like to see more candidates from North Africa, for example, from Morocco, Algeria, or Tunisia. Zhang Longxi advises her to contact the chair of the Nominating Committee, Helena Buescu.

Ipsita Chanda mentions that she wishes to resign from the Nominating Committee in order to be able to stand for re-election to the Council.

Ipsita Chanda's name is added to the list of nominees under "Members". This revised list of nominees is approved.

The report of the Nominating Committee is approved.

15. *Report of the Committee on Early Career Researchers*

No report from this committee has been submitted. Zhang Longxi undertakes to write to Isabel Capelo Gil to request a report.

16. *Report of the Translation Committee*

Sandra Bermann, chair of this committee, presents the report signed by her and found in the documents. She emphasizes particularly that this is a committee open to everybody with an interest in translation, that the committee holds good conferences, and that it arranged a special session at the latest ACLA conference, co-sponsored by ICLA and ACLA. The committee will shortly publish a special issue of the online translation journal *Transfer*; its topic will be "Translation Networks".

The report of the Translation Committee is approved.

17. *Report of the Committee on Dream Culture*

A report signed by the committee chairs Bernard Dieterle and Manfred Engels has been submitted and is found in the documents. The second volume in the committee's series "Cultural Dream Studies", *Theorizing the Dream/Savoir et théories du rêve*, was published in February 2018; a third volume is under preparation and expected to appear in autumn 2018. The committee's database on dream-researchers and dream-research now contains close to 4,500 publications.

The report of the Committee on Dream Culture is approved.

18. *Report of the Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature*

A report signed by Kate Millet, chair of the committee, has been submitted and is found in the documents. The committee, which now has 71 members, arranged two seminars at the ACLA conference in March 2017. Its first research volume, *The Fault Lines of Modernity: The Fractures and Repairs of Religion, Ethics, and Literature* is expected to appear in September 2018, published by Bloomsbury.

The report of the Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature is approved.

19. *Report of the Committee for Research on South Asian Culture and Literature*

A report has been submitted and is found in the documents. The report is signed by the committee's chair, Chandra Mohan, and its co-chair, E.V. Ramakrishnan, both present at the meeting. Chandra Mohan presents the report. The members of the committee have been active with talks and publication on the committee's themes, and new relevant research and courses have emerged in Santiniketan, Kolkata, and Bangladesh. A collection of papers from the committee's group section at the ICLA congress in Vienna 2016 is being prepared for publication.

E.V. Ramakrishnan remarks that lack of sufficient funding from government authorities is a problem for the committee. Zhang Longxi mentions that the Vienna congress organizers were quite successful in securing government funding. Chandra Mohan observes that reflection on funding is always necessary and will have to include a consideration of religion and culture.

The report of the Committee for Research on South Asian Culture and Literature is approved.

At 11:30 a.m. the meeting is adjourned for lunch.

Afternoon session, 2 p.m.

20. *Report of the Committee on Literature and Neuroscience*

A report signed by the chair of the committee, Suzanne Nalbantian, has been submitted and is found in the documents. The committee's work has led up the production of an interdisciplinary volume on creativity, *Secrets of Creativity: What Neuroscience, the Arts and Our Minds Reveal*, which will be published with Oxford University Press in early 2019.

The report of the Committee on Literature and Neuroscience is approved.

21. *Report of the Committee on Gender Studies*

A report signed by the chair of the committee, Liedeke Plate, has been submitted and is found in the documents. The committee has several projects in line, including edited collections and special issues based on the papers at recent committee-sponsored meetings. Vital discussions are carried on at the committee's annual business meetings.

The report of the Committee on Gender Studies is approved.

22. *Report of the Committee on Comparative History of East Asian Literatures*

A report signed by the chair of the committee, Haun Saussy, has been submitted and is found in the documents. The aim of the committee is to oversee the production of a book series covering the intercultural literary history of literature in the languages of East Asia, a series possibly called "A Comparative Literary History of East Asia". This project is still in a process of preparation. Funding will be sought from a number of sources in USA, Japan, and Korea.

Zhang Longxi and Chandra Mohan, who have both participated in the activities arranged within the framework of the project, commend the project highly. Sandra Bermann expresses her satisfaction with the fact that this project is being pursued within ICLA.

The report of the committee on comparative history of East Asian Literatures is approved. Following a proposal by E.V. Ramakrishnan, the Council also expresses its admiration for the project.

23. *Report of the Coordinating Committee for CHLEL*

A report signed by the chair of the committee, Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, has been submitted and is found in the documents. After the latest meeting of the Council, two research volumes have been published: *Renaissance II: La nouvelle culture, 1480–1520* and *Nordic Literatures: A Comparative History of Nordic Literary Cultures, Vol. 1: Spatial Nodes*. Two more volumes are expected to appear later this year: *Nordic Literatures: A Comparative History of Nordic Literary Cultures, Vol. 2* and *Transculture and Migration*. Two new projects were accepted at the committee's latest business meeting, in addition to the six already existing ones: "A Comparative Intermedial History of Literature in the Baroque Age" and "Towards a Comparative History of Literary Writing Processes". The committee is also preparing a special issue of the journal *Arcadia*. Citing earlier precedents, the committee asks for 2,000 euros for language revision in connection with the project "Medieval Literatures".

Massimo Fusillo, who is a member of the committee, comments on its work, emphasizing particularly the importance of the comparative history of Nordic literary cultures.

The report of the Coordinating Committee for CHLEL is approved and 2,000 euros for language revision in connection with the project "Medieval Literatures" are granted.

24. *Report of the Research Committee*

A report signed by the chair of the committee, Theo D'haen, has been submitted and is found in the documents. There is also a second, addendum report concerning a recently submitted proposal of a research committee. Altogether, three new proposals of research committees have been received by the committee after the 2017 meeting of the Council. These are "Literature, Arts, Media" (proposed by Massimo Fusillo), "Literary History" (proposed by Achim Hölter), and "Comparative African Studies / Literary Histories of Africa" (proposed by Márcio Seligmann and William Spurlin). All three proposals have been approved by the committee and are now submitted to the Council.

Massimo Fusillo hands out a document presenting the project "Literature, Arts, Media".

Concerning the proposal of the research committee "Literary History", Zhang Longxi comments that the committee should include a sufficient number of ICLA members and that an informative mission statement would be desirable. Marie Thérèse Abdelmessih underlines the importance of securing that a significant number of relevant and representative scholars are included in the committee. Sandra Bermann finds the project highly important but stresses that its historical dimensions should not be neglected.

The Council decides to approve the establishment of the three research committees "Literature, Arts, Media", "Literary History", and "Comparative African Studies / Literary Histories of Africa".

The report of the Research Committee is approved.

25. *Report of the Committee on Comic Studies and Graphic Narrative Research*

A report signed by Kai Mikkonen, one of the two co-chairs of the committee, has been submitted and is found in the documents. During 2017, the committee organized panels and seminars at the ACLA conference and at a conference held by the European Network of Comparative Literary Studies (ENCLS). The papers given in the ENCLS sessions are being prepared for publication as a thematically organized collection of articles. The papers from the committee's sessions at ICLA's 2016 congress in Vienna will be included in the congress proceedings with an introduction chronicling the history of the research committee.

Noriko Hiraishi, who is a member of the committee, comments on the report. In particular, she points to the two forthcoming volumes and emphasizes that the committee is interested in inviting more members.

The report of the Committee on Comic Studies and Graphic Narrative Research is approved.

26. *Report of the Committee on Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature*

A report signed by the chair of the committee, Yang Huilin, and by its secretary, Zhang Jing (Kathy), has been submitted and is found in the documents. During the year, the committee edited issues 38 (“Différence and Écart”) and 39 (“Post-Secular Era”) of the *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture*. The committee has sponsored a large number of cultural events during the year, including symposia, panels, and guest lectures. The committee is also, in cooperation with the journal *T'oung Pao*, putting together a material of relevant translated articles by foreign scholars for the benefit of Chinese scholars in the humanities.

Yang Huilin comments on the report, emphasizing in particular the two journal issues published and the committee’s relationships with such important scholars in this field as Peter Ochs and Martin Kern. He also commends the work of Zhang Jing.

The report of the Committee on Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Literature is approved.

27. *Report of the Committee on Literatures of the Islamic World*

No report from this committee has been submitted. Zhang Longxi undertakes to write to Mohamed-Salah Omri to ask for a report.

Marie Thérèse Abdelmessih questions the concept of an Islamic world. Zhang Longxi and Ipshita Chanda reflect that literatures in Arabic-speaking countries might be a better delimitation.

28. *Report of the Committee on Literary Theory*

No report from this committee has been submitted. Zhang Longxi undertakes to write to Robert Young to ask for a report.

There is no further business. At 3:40 p.m. Zhang Longxi thanks the participants and declares the meeting closed.

These minutes were prepared by Anders Pettersson and E.V. Ramakrishnan.