

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Council of the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA), Shenzhen University, Shenzhen, Friday 26 July and Saturday 27 July 2019

Present (for all or part of the meeting):

Zhang Longxi, Lucia Boldrini, E.V. Ramakrishnan, Chandra Mohan, Marcio Seligmann-Silva, Hitoshi Oshima, Ipshita Chanda, Marie Thérèse Abdelmessih, Bernard Franco, Wail S. Hassan, Hans-Joachim Backe, Kathleen Komar, Kitty Millet, Liedeke Plate, Yorimitsu Hashimoto, Robert J.C. Young, Sangjin Park, Zhou Xiaoyi, Helena Buescu, Noriko Hiraishi, Sandra L. Bermann, Stefan Buchenberger, Massimo Fusillo, Yang Huilin, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, Peter Hajdu, Karen-Margrethe Lindskov Simonsen, Isabel Capeloa Gil, Theo D'haen, Haun Saussy, Anders Pettersson.

Friday 26 July, morning session, 8:30

1. Opening remarks by the President

The President, Zhang Longxi, opens the meeting and welcomes the participants. A round of presentations follows. The President explains how to access the agenda and the reports.

2. Approval of the minutes of the Kunming meeting

It is noted that the minutes of the Kunming meeting have already been approved electronically by the Council.

3. Approval of the agenda

Lucia Boldrini raises the question of member-associations that have not paid their membership fees. She suggests that this issue can be dealt with under item 7, the report on the website and the membership list. This is accepted, and the agenda is approved.

4. Report of the President

In his report Zhang Longxi thanks Shenzhen University, the University of Macau, the University of St. Joseph, and the Macau Exhibition and Convention Association for their joint efforts, making it possible to arrange the ICLA congress in Macau and the meeting of the Executive Council in Shenzhen despite the unforeseen complications caused by governmental restrictions in mainland China. He also thanks Lucia Boldrini, Livia Franchini, and the three Treasurers for making it possible to finally establish, once again, a reliable membership list for the ICLA.

The report of the President is approved.

5. Reports of the Secretaries

Personal reasons prevent the French Secretary-General, Anne Tomiche, and the English Secretary-General, Paulo Horta, from being present. The President presents their reports.

In addition to their standard liaising, Anne Tomiche has also arranged for the website of the Macau Congress to be translated into French. She has prepared the agenda for the present meeting of the Executive Council and the ballot material for the ICLA elections in Macau. Paulo Horta has circulated the agenda and the committee reports and also drafted guidelines for prospective hosts of ICLA Congresses. It is decided to postpone the discussion of these guidelines until the next day.

The reports of the two Secretaries are approved.

6. Reports of the Treasurers

In his report, the Treasurer for Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, Hans-Joachim Backe, provides a financial diary and a number of comments. He finds the European section of the ICLA in good financial health, possessing 75,226.04€/85,831.21 on its accounts reports. The efforts of the team working on the new website and the membership list have made it easier to collect membership data and fees. However, some member-associations have fallen behind in their payments.

Hans-Joachim Backe has three concrete suggestions to make to his successor: to reinvest the Balakian funds; to change bank to one offering higher interest rates; and to make sure that the Treasurers work together more effectively.

Lucia Boldrini informs that the costs reported as relating to the maintenance of ICLA's website also include the administration costs for ICLA's membership list, including the salary of the administrator.

Helena Buescu asks why such general expenses are not carried collectively by all three treasuries. Kathleen Komar explains that the present system is traditional and motivated by the costs of international monetary transactions; however, she also emphasizes the desirability of a coordinated Treasurers' report.

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

The Treasurer for Asia and Pacific, Noriko Hiraishi, also describes a solid financial situation. This treasury has accounts in both Japanese yen and US dollars. The latest information, as updated by Noriko Hiraishi at the meeting, is that the overall balance, translated into dollars, amounts to \$97,751.99. There are 1,079 members in the relevant associations, individual ICLA members not included. The Asia and Pacific treasury has supplied the \$10,000 promised to the organizer of the Macau Congress.

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

The Treasurer for the Americas, Efraín Kristal, has submitted a report but is not personally present. His report is presented by Kathleen Komar.

Efraín Kristal's report contains a financial diary and a financial overview. The actual overall balance in this treasury is \$70,006.03.

In his report, Efraín Kristal concentrates on describing the problematic relationship between the ICLA and its three member-associations in the Americas: ACLA (USA); CCLA (Canada); and ABRALIC (Brazil). CCLA, earlier hesitant, appears prepared to continue its membership. ABRALIC is willing to remain an ICLA member but has not thus far paid its required fees. ACLA is putting its membership on hold. Efraín Kristal recommends the Executive Committee to make the relationship between ICLA and ACLA a main focus of its discussion.

The President of the ACLA, Wail S. Hassan, is present at the meeting. He explains the position of the ACLA. Due to a clerical error in 2015, no dues were demanded from the ACLA for 2016. ICLA has asked for back payment for 2016. Emily Apter, the former President of the ACLA, has agreed to pay membership fees for 2017, but not for 2016, and the ACLA has decided to pay no further fees to the ICLA until a transparent ICLA budget is presented to the association. It is not clear to the ACLA how it benefits from being a member of the ICLA.

Anders Pettersson asks Wail S. Hassan what, exactly, ACLA would want ICLA to provide. Wail S. Hassan responds that ACLA would need to see ICLA's budget; to have the formal relationship between ACLA and ICLA explained; to get an explanation of how ACLA benefits from being a member of ICLA; and to have an ICLA newsletter circulated to its members.

Much of the subsequent discussion centres on financial transparency. Robert J.C. Young suggests that professional auditing of ICLA's accounts is needed. The question of costs and practicality is raised.

Regarding the dissemination of budgetary information from the ICLA to concerned parties, Lucia Boldrini offers to publish ICLA's accounts on the website. E.V. Ramakrishnan observes that an annual provisional report of the accounts is needed. Kathleen Komar and Hans-Joachim Backe both propose that accounts shall be shared with the member-associations on a regular basis.

Massimo Fusillo strongly supports the idea of an ICLA newsletter.

Lucia Boldrini notes that Efraín Kristal has paid privately for keeping the BLUE HOST website open, which should not be required, and suggests that such expenses be covered within the framework of the expenses for the ICLA website. She then goes on to make the general observation that some of the funds of the ICLA might be used for strengthening the relationship with member-associations, to subsidize participation by people from low-income countries, and for supporting research committees.

The report of the Treasurer for the Americas is approved.

In addition, the Council decides

- to share ICLA's accounts with its member-associations on a regular basis
- to call on the next Executive Council to look closely at the possibility and desirability of professional auditing of ICLA's accounts

7. Report on the Website and the Membership List

Lucia Boldrini presents her report, supplementing it with two handouts. She applies for funds for 2019–2020: £12,390 or, if the activities are to be developed further, £17,720.

Lucia Boldrini points to the fact that a new ICLA website is created and up running since September 2018. She describes its main features and underlines the importance of receiving continuous information from committees and member-associations in order to keep the website updated.

Lucia Boldrini and her team has also succeeded in recreating a consolidated ICLA membership list, which today comprises circa 5,300 individuals. The idea of circulating a newsletter has been vetted and to some extent tested. Such a newsletter would have to be sent out through an emailing service, either Mailerlite or Sendinblue. Facts about these options are presented in one of her handouts.

Lucia Boldrini points out, referring to her second handout, that some associations figuring on the ICLA website have ICLA affiliations that are, for various reasons, not existing or not fully regular. She raises the question of variable ICLA fees, given that some associations have a limited ability to pay.

Lucia Boldrini expresses her gratitude to the administrator, Livia Franchini, who is now leaving her post, and to the web consultant, Elvina Flower, Safetycat.

Lucia Boldrini is warmly thanked by the Council for her successful work.

The discussion concentrates on the periodicity of a possible newsletter, the choice of firm managing the mailing list, and the question of subsidized fees.

The report on the website and the membership list is approved.

The Council also decides

- To grant £12,390 to the team responsible for the website and the membership list for 2019–2020
- To accept Mailerlite as platform to manage the ICLA mailing list
- To circulate an ICLA newsletter bi-monthly on trial
- To waive ICLA fees for graduate students
- To appoint Lucia Boldrini, Kathleen Komar, and Liedeke Plate as a committee charged with suggesting how to handle matters regarding reduced fees for certain member associations

The meeting is adjourned at 12:00.

Friday 26 July, afternoon session, 14:00

8. Report of the Structures Committee

The chair of the Structures Committee, Anders Pettersson, presents the report of the committee. He expresses the committee's satisfaction with the establishment of a consolidated membership list and with the stricter routines created for the voting on a new Executive Council. He thanks Lucia Boldrini for having uncovered the long forgotten by-laws of the committee and explains their implications.

The report of the Structures Committee is approved.

9. Alteration of the By-Laws of the Structures Committee

The Structures Committee has considered the newly recovered by-laws of the committee (see item 8 above) and proposes that the formulation of Article 6 should be changed to: "Votes are decided by a simple majority. The quorum consists of half of the committee members plus one."

The Council approves this alteration of the by-laws.

10. Report of the Nominating Committee

The chair of the Nominating Committee, Helena Buescu, presents the report of the committee. Over the past year she has taken responsibility for the preparation for the election of a new Executive Council and made sure that all nominees are ICLA members in good standing.

Questions concerning the practical carrying through of the election are discussed. Anders Pettersson suggest that the actual number of votes for each candidate shall be made accessible to the members of the ICLA, as well as the names of the two members elected by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the incoming President. There is widespread opposition against this suggestion.

The report of the Nominating Committee is approved.

11. Report of the Editor of the "Recherche littéraire / Literary Research"

In the absence of the Editor, Marc Maufort, his report is presented by Zhang Longxi.

The 2019 issue of the journal, the first to be published by Peter Lang, is in production and is expected to be available in gold open access in October 2019. Work on the 2020 issue is in progress. An annual subsidy of 5,000 euros has hitherto been granted to the Editor (through his university); he asks the Council to prolong this arrangement until 2022. Marc Maufort also informs that an article in the 2018 issue of the journal, Diana Looser's "Theatrical Crossings, Pacific Visions: Gaugin, Meryon, and the Staging of Oceanian Modernities", has been awarded the Marlish Thiersch Prize 2019 for excellence in research by the Australasian Association for Theatre, Drama and Performance Studies.

Zhang Longxi thanks Marc Maufort warmly for his excellent work.

The Council decides to grant an annual subsidy of 5,000 euros to the Editor (through his university) for the next three years.

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

12. Discussion on the 2022 Congress

Lucia Boldrini informs that the Georgian Comparative Literature Association (GCLA) has offered to host the 2022 ICLA Congress and that no other non-commercial offers have come in. The GCLA has been informed of the general requirements that need to be fulfilled at an ICLA Congress and the GCLA has then submitted a concrete proposal to the ICLA.

The discussion centres on the feasibility of the proposed arrangement and on how to present the proposal to the ICLA General Assembly at the upcoming Congress. No specific decisions are taken, but it is understood that the option of letting the GCLA host the 2022 Congress will be presented to the General Assembly and that this option will be pursued if there are no objections from the General Assembly.

13. Committee in charge of the organization of the 2022 Congress

According to the ICLA statutes, a committee charged with organizing the next Congress shall be designated at least three or four years in advance.

After a brief discussion the Council decides to designate the following committee: the incoming President (chair); Lucia Boldrini; Paolo Horta.

14. Report of the Balakian Prize Selection Committee

The report is presented by Kathleen Komar, chair of the committee.

The committee, of which the other members are Eugene Eoyang and David. M. Hertz, received four fine submissions. The Committee decided to award the Anna Balakian Prize for 2019 to Shuangyi Li for his book *Proust, China and Intertextual Engagement: Translation and Transcultural Dialogue*. Honourable mention was given to Maya Boutaghou's volume *Occidentalismes, Romans Historiques Postcoloniaux et Identités Nationales aux XIXe Siècle: Juan Antonio Mateos, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Marcus Clarke, Jurji Zaydan*. These decisions have been announced on the ICLA website. The prize will be awarded in connection with the upcoming Macau Congress.

Zhang Longxi thanks Kathleen Komar and the committee for their work.

The report of the Balakian Prize Selection Committee is approved.

15. Report of the Committee on Translation Studies

The chair of the committee, Sandra L. Bermann, presents the report. She underlines that this is an open committee, regularly hosting panels at ACLA Annual Meetings and at ICLA Congresses. The first publication from the committee appeared in 2019: a special issue of the online peer-reviewed journal *Transfer*. Plans for an edited book are being discussed.

The report of the Committee on Translation Studies is approved.

16. Report of the Committee on Literary Theory

The chair of the Committee, Robert J.C. Young, presents the report, which also includes the programme and the report of the committee's 2018 meeting in Abu Dhabi. The papers from this meeting will be published in *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*.

The report of the Committee on Literary Theory is approved.

17. Report of the Committee on Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative

The report of the committee is presented by Stefan Buchenberger, co-chair of the committee together with Kai Mikkonen. This is an open committee, members of which have presented in panels and at seminars, not least on the topic of embodiment, and published as a group in the proceedings of the 2016 ICLA Congress.

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

18. Report of the committee Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies

In the absence of the chair of the committee, Yang Huilin, the report is presented by Zhou Xiaoyi.

Over the past year, the committee has organized six international conferences and two international workshops as well as a series of guest lectures at Renmin University, Beijing. The committee has also been responsible for the editing of the issues 40 and 41 of the *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture*.

The committee asks the President and the Council to approve Zhang Hui as the new chair of the committee.

The report of the committee Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies is approved.

Zhang Hui is approved as chair of the Committee.

19. Report of the Committee on Religion, Ethics, and Literature

The report is presented by the chair of the committee, Kitty Millet.

This is an open committee. In 2018 the committee published a research volume: *The Fault Lines of Modernity: The Fractures and Repairs of Religion, Ethics, and Literature*. During this year the committee has sponsored an ACLA seminar and will sponsor a panel at the Macau ICLA Congress. Kitty Millet has become the editor-in-chief of a new series at Bloomsbury, relevant for the committee.

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

20. Report of the Committee for Research on South Asian Literatures and Cultures

The report is presented by the chair of the Committee, Chandra Mohan. He points to extensive activity by the members of this committee over the past year, including participation in several relevant conferences and the publication of a book, *Culture, History and Politics: South Asian Narratives*, edited by Jasbir Jain, E.V. Ramakrishnan, and Chandra Mohan. More and more countries have been drawn into this research network, which now comprises members from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, and Bhutan.

E.V. Ramakrishnan adds that present crises in the area make this research group even more relevant, and that the involvement of many languages represents an important cultural contribution.

The report of the Committee for Research on South Asian Literatures and Cultures is approved.

21. Report of the Committee on Comparative Gender Studies

The chair of the Committee, Liedeke Plate, presents the report. She mentions that this is an open committee and points to its new statement of purpose. In 2019 the committee sponsored a two-day programme at the ACLA annual meeting and it will organize a panel at the ICLA Congress in Macau. CIRQUE and its journal *Whatever* are affiliated with the committee.

Helena Buescu expresses the opinion that the existence of open committees should be made more widely known.

The report of the Committee on Comparative Gender Studies is approved.

22. Report of the Committee on Literature, Arts, and Media

Massimo Fusillo, chair of the committee, presents the report. This is a new committee, which held its first meeting, including a roundtable, in Tartu in 2018; its first regular conference will take place in L'Aquila in 2020. A workshop will be organized at the ICLA Congress in Macau. A volume based on a workshop on the *Gesamtkunstwerk* held at the 2016 ICLA Congress is about to be published by Peter Lang, edited by Massimo Fusillo and Marina Grishakova.

The report of the Committee on Literature, Arts, and Media is approved.

The meeting is adjourned at 17:20

Saturday 27 July, afternoon session, 14:00

23. Discussion of Guidelines for Prospective ICLA Congress Hosts

The discussion of these guidelines, drafted by Paulo Horta, was postponed from the morning session on the day before (see item 5 above). Zhang Longxi now reads the drafted guidelines to the meeting.

There is extensive discussion and a sense of urgency, since the position of the Council will have to be communicated to the Georgian Comparative Literature Association, the prospective hosts of the 2022 ICLA Congress, without much delay.

Some of the views put forward meet with no objections:

- Zhang Longxi observes that the major theme of a Congress shall be decided by the Council, not by the organizers, who will however be free to formulate sub-themes

- Kathleen Komar suggests that the most important points in the document need to be put up front, not least those concerning the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the organizers and the ICLA
- Kitty Millet adds that the document should be more concrete about the contents of the MOU and the timeline for decisions about it
- Liedeke Plate wishes to see a table of contents in the document in order to facilitate overview
- Liedeke Plate further asks for a translation of the document into French.
- Massimo Fusillo observes that something needs to be said in the document about a *comité de tri*
- Helena Buescu suggests that reference should also be made to arts, media, and translation

On certain other points there is disagreement. Some members, including Kathleen Komar and Zhang Longxi, express fears that the proposed document may be too detailed. Others, including Theo D'haen, Isabel Capeloa Gil, Lucia Boldrini, and Kitty Millet find the detail useful for potential organizers.

The stipulation in the document that the organizer shall provide two nights of accommodation to members of the ICLA Executive Council is questioned by Lucia Boldrini and Kathleen Komar, who believe that money for this will prove difficult to find for future organizers. Zhang Longxi considers that the mention of the two nights can remain, functioning more as an indication of something desired than as an absolute requirement.

Lucia Boldrini raises the question of whether ICLA should not demand that all who give presentations at ICLA Congresses be ICLA members. Noriko Hiraishi expresses the view that also non-members need to be accepted. Kathleen Komar finds it reasonable to require membership from presenters but not from those who just participate. Massimo Fusillo points out that some may only come for one particular workshop.

In this connection, technical questions also come up, related to the possibility of letting people become ICLA members at the Congress itself. According to Noriko Hiraishi, this would require the organizing of a special paydesk. Hans-Joachim Backe asks whether these newcomers shall then become individual members or members of a national association, and he emphasizes the difficulty for Treasurers to handle individual members. Marie-Thérèse Abdelmessih, for her part, finds the option of individual membership a necessary one.

No special decisions are taken. It is understood that the committee in charge of the organization of the 2022 Congress (see item 13 above) will finalize the document in the light of the discussion during the Shenzhen meeting.

24. Report of the Early-Career Researcher Development Committee

The chair of the Committee, Isabel Capeloa Gil, presents the report. This committee, established in Vienna 2016, has organized research training for doctorate students in Venice and Macau in cooperation with the University of Warwick, the Sorbonne, and the Portuguese UCP. Via Facebook and a website the committee announces activities dedicated to doctoral students. The committee now applies for \$1,000 in annual support as co-payment for the management of the website.

There is a discussion of the possibility of special support from the ICLA for early-career researchers, for example, the waiving of ICLA fees for this category and the creation of travel grants. Massimo Fusillo strongly supports this idea.

The report of the Early-Career Researcher Development Committee is approved.

The Council also decides

- to waive ICLA fees for graduate students (masters and doctoral)
- to recommend the incoming Council to establish a committee looking into the possibility of offering special travel grants or other support to early-career researchers, particularly in connection with ICLA Congresses, and to suggest sums and rules for such subsidies
- that such financial support shall not exceed \$1,500

25. Report of the Research Development Committee

The chair of the committee, Theo D'haen, presents the report. The committee has received three new proposals of research committees since 2017: "Literature, Arts, Media", "Literary History", and "Comparative African Studies / Literary Histories of Africa". These committees were all established by the Council in 2018. The Committee on Literature, Arts, and Media is active and thriving (cf. item 22 above). There is no information about the other two committees.

Marcio Seligmann-Silva, who signed the application for the establishing of the committee "Comparative African Studies / Literary Histories of Africa" says that it has been difficult to find willing collaborators on the list of possible members originally presented to the Council. He is willing to go on trying but wishes to be relieved of the official responsibility for taking the committee forward.

The report of the Research Development Committee is approved.

26. Report of the Committee on Comparative History of East Asian Literatures

The chair of the committee, Haun Saussy, presents the report. Work within this committee is still in the stage of planning and preparation. Haun Saussy has spent a year of sabbatical leave in Berlin preparing a book-length introduction to the envisaged book series. A workshop will be held in October 2019, supported by the American Council of Learned Societies. Several foundations will be approached in the search for more ambitious and long-term funding.

The report of the Committee on Comparative History of East Asian Literatures is approved.

27. Report of the Coordinating Committee for the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages Series

The chair of the committee, Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, presents the report.

Karen-Margrethe Simonsen mentions that a new committee elected for the period 2019–2022 has just begun working. She points to the six ongoing projects within the committee and refers

to new ideas for projects that will be considered later this year. An issue of *Arcadia* edited by people from the committee was published in autumn 2018. Two book manuscripts will be submitted in 2019: the second volume of the series *Nordic Literatures: A Comparative History of Nordic Literary Cultures* and an edited volume on *Transculture and Migration*. The committee applies for 2,000 euros from ICLA for language revision of the second volume in the series *A Comparative Literary History of Modern Slavery*.

Liedeke Plate suggests that the accounts of the committee should be made available to the ICLA. Karen-Margrethe Simonsen promises that this will be done.

The Council decides to grant the committee 2,000 euros for language revision.

The report of the Coordinating Committee for the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages Series is approved.

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

In the absence of the chair of the committee, Suzanne Nalbantian, Zhang Longxi presents the report. An interdisciplinary volume, *Secrets of Creativity: What Neuroscience, the Arts and Our Minds Reveal*, edited by the committee members Suzanne Nalbantian and Paul M. Matthews will be published by Oxford University Press in autumn 2019. A book project based on the committee's special sessions is being considered.

It is pointed out that the allotted time of this committee has elapsed, so that the committee will now cease to exist as a research committee sponsored by the ICLA. The incoming Council is expected to inform Suzanne Nalbantian of this.

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

29. *Report of the Committee on Dream Cultures: Cultural and Literary History of the Dream*

In the absence of the two co-chairs, Bernard Dieterle and Manfred Engel, Zhang Longxi presents the report.

This is a final report from the committee, which has now completed its six-year term. During the past year the committee continued to enlarge its extensive database of dream-researchers and dream research. It also held an international symposium, "Mediating the Dream / Genres et médias du rêve" in Saarbrücken and will conclude its activities by arranging two workshops: in Macau and in the Villa Vigoni in Italy. The committee plans a five-volume series, "Cultural Dream Studies", of which the third volume was published in January 2019. When finished, the series will comprise circa 2,000 pages. During its six years, the committee has also convened seven conferences and workshops.

The report of the Committee on Dream Cultures: Cultural and Literary History of the Dream is approved.

There is no further business. At 16:40 Zhang Longxi thanks the participants and declares the meeting closed.

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