

**Tbilisi, July 28, 5:00pm-6:30pm (local time)**

## **Minutes of the General Assembly**

Sandra Bermann, ICLA President, opened the General Assembly. Given the circumstances, the format of the meeting was, for the first time in the ICLA history, a hybrid format, with some participants physically present in Tbilisi and others online.

Some important innovations took place during the 2022 Congress, namely: 1) the Special Sessions, new this year and organized by the ICLA, with their focus on issues of Social Justice (questions of racial and ethnic equality, issues of language, and issues of the Anthropocene); 2) the Presidents Session invited description of and debate about the different ways we envision Comparative Literature itself.

Sandra Bermann thanked once again all the colleagues from Georgia who worked so well to produce this Congress: Irma Ratiani (along with Tatia Oboladze, Maka Elbakidze and all of the institutional leaders from TSU, the Shota Rustaveli Institute, the Georgian Comparative Literature Association, the City Council, the Ministers of Science; and also the writers, educators and students who leant their creativity and insight to these efforts.)

### **A. Recent changes in the ICLA overall administration and organization**

Sandra Bermann indicated some major changes that have occurred over the past three years and demonstrate the ICLA's efforts toward openness, connectivity and transparency.

- 1) One major change has been the focus on reaching and communicating more effectively with the membership. Thanks largely to the work of Vice President Lucia Boldrini, the ICLA now has finally established a full mailing list of all its members—some 5400 of them. It was used for the first time to email the membership about this General Assembly.
- 2) The mailing list will be used again in September to renew distribution of the ICLA Newsletter, the bimonthly publication—also edited by Lucia Boldrini over the past three years— that has offered updates from its members around the world as well as information about ICLA events and research committees.
- 3) Having a full membership list has enabled the ICLA to launch its first online election. Sandra Bermann thanks Kathy Komar and her Elections Committee (Ipshita Chanda and Isabel Gil) for accomplishing this difficult task.
- 4) The list of candidates has been inclusive, paying close attention to geographic range but also to the various identities, viewpoints and career stages of its nominees.

As part of this attention to plurality, openness and connectivity over the past three years, major efforts have been made to engage and mentor early career scholars. This was clearly evident in the Tbilisi Congress where:

- 1) A number of sessions and meetings were devoted to the rising generation. Many of them had been organized by the Early Career and Researcher Development Committee (ECARE), headed by William Spurlin who will be publishing the papers given by early career scholars at this Congress's NextGen meetings.
- 2) New publication prizes for early career scholars were granted as well as new Participation Grants, offering conference fee waivers to 26 (primarily early career) scholars whose papers had been accepted. All this thanks to Helena Buescu and her committee.
- 3) This new focus on early career scholars was also evident in 2021 when the ICLA held its first Early Career Conference: a free, online Global Publishing Conference at Princeton in collaboration with Princeton University Press. Early career scholars not only gave papers, but had the opportunity to interact with professional editors, translators, and publishers, and even to speak with editors from a range of presses one on one about their book projects.

Sandra Bermann noted that if efforts such as these suggest the ICLA's growing interest in openness and connectivity across its entire increasingly diverse membership, the organization's well-known emphasis on research and publication has not been forgotten at all:

- 1) Unlike most large literary organizations, the ICLA offers a number of Research Committees (or groups) reflecting the many different interests and backgrounds of its members--from committees on literary theory, to committees on the plural literatures of South Asia, East Asia, Europe, as well as a new and energetic committee on Comparative African literatures. The ICLA also has dynamic research committees on translation, gender studies, Comics and Graphic novels, on literature and media.
- 2) Under the leadership of Marc Maufort, the ICLA's journal *Recherche Littéraire*, Literary Research has, over the past three years, vastly expanded its range of essays, articles and reviews. An open access journal published by Peter Lang, it is a fully peer reviewed publication, eager to receive submissions by global, early career as well as senior scholars.

Sandra Bermann developed the various aspects of the major effort, made over the past three years in the Association's activities, towards transparency:

- 1) Committee by-laws and annual reports are all online, so members can see for themselves what the committees do.
- 2) Though membership fees are low (\$10 a year) and are either included in the fees of National Comparative Literature Associations, or paid individually to the ICLA, donations

by members have also been growing and remain much needed. This year's new Early Career prizes as well as its numerous grants were fully supported by member donations. The ICLA can use your funding—whether \$5 or \$5000—to good purpose.

## **B. Announcement of some recent decisions**

Anne Tomiche announced the winners of the ICLA prizes and the names of Standing Research Committees Chairs for ratification.

### 1). Prizes won by the membership

- *Anna Balakian Prize:*

The winner of the prize is May Hawas, *Politicising World Literature: Egypt, Between Pedagogy and the Public*, Routledge, 2021.

Honourable mention has been awarded to Joseph Cermatori, *Baroque Modernity: An Aesthetics of Theater*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021

- *Early career scholars Prizes*

The Best Translation Prize (US\$1000) has been awarded to Aurore Turbiau for her translation of a section of Sara Ahmed's, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017) entitled 'Academic Walls' – translation into French as 'Les Murs de l'Université', published in the journal *Littérature, Histoire, Théorie* (Fabula LhT), No. 26 (Octobre 2021).

The First Book Subvention Prize (up to US\$1500) has been awarded to Isabel C. Gómez, for *Cannibal Translation: Literary Reciprocity in Contemporary Latin America* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, forthcoming 2023—under contract).

### 2). Ratification of the Chairs of the Standing Research Committees

- Comics Studies and Graphic Narrative Committee: Stefan Buchenberger
- Comparative Gender Studies: Tegan Zimmerman
- Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages (CHLEL): Helga Mitterbauer
- Comparative History of East Asian Literatures: Haun Saussy
- Literary Theory: Robert Young
- Scriptural Reasoning and Comparative Studies: Zhang Hui
- South Asian Literatures and Cultures: Chandra Mohan (Vice-Chair: EV Ramakrishnan)
- Translation Studies: Isabel Gómez

The Chairs of the Standing Research Committees are ratified by the General Assembly

3). Sandra Bermann announced the results of the online elections:

President:

- Lucia Boldrini - U. London, Goldsmiths, UK

Vice-Presidents:

- Anne Tomiche – Sorbonne Univ., France
- Márcio Seligmann-Silva – Unicamp, Brasil
- Noriko Hiraishi- Univ. of Tsukuba, Japan
- Haun Saussy – Univ. Chicago, USA

Secretaries:

- Ipshita Chanda—English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India
- Anne Duprat – Univ. Amiens, France

Treasurers:

- Europe/Africa/Middle East: Alexandra Lopes – UCP, Portugal
- Asia: Yuriko Yamanaka—National Museum of Ethnology, Japan
- Americas: Adelaide Russo – LSU, USA.

EC Members:

- Toshiko Ellis – Nagoya University of Foreign Studies, Japan
- Rita Terezinha Schmidt – Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil.
- Marina Grishakova – University of Tartu, Estonia
- Marko Juvan – University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Oana Fotache – University of Bucharest, Romania
- Zhang Hui—Peking University, China
- Raoul Calzoni – Università degli Studi di Bergamo, Italy
- Sayantan Dasgupta - Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India
- Irma Ratiani, State U. Tbilisi, Georgia
- Takayuki Yokota-Murakami – Osaka University, Japan
- Youngmin Kim – Dongguk University, South Korea
- Isabel Gómez – University of Massachusetts, USA
- Clotilde Thouret—Univ Lorraine, France
- Lobna Ismail – Cairo University, Egypt
- Véronique Porra – U. Mainz, Germany
- Fatiha Taib - Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco
- Jerónimo Pizarro – Univ. de los Andes, Colombia
- Ato Quayson – Univ. Stanford, USA

#### 4). 2025 International Comparative Literature Association Congress.

Sandra Bermann reminded the General Assembly that the decision on the congress site and organizing committee is made by the Executive Committee, as per the ICLA statutes; ICLA members participating in the General Assembly are asked to ratify the Executive Committee's choice with a simple yes/no poll.

Sandra Bermann stressed that for the 2025 Congress, two truly excellent proposals were submitted. The proposal from South Korea actually came in a few years ago as a proposal for the 2022 Congress. Though it was not accepted then, it was reworked and resubmitted, and it persuaded the Executive Committee the second time around. So, the decision of the Executive Committee is to hold ICLA Congress 2025 (July 28-August 1<sup>st</sup>) in Seoul, Korea. The topic of the proposal is: "Literature in the Age of Hyperconnectivity: National Literatures, Comparative Literature, and Technology".

While the second proposal, that came from India ("Comparative Literature as Alternative Humanities: Ethics, Affect and the Everyday Social"), did not win the EC vote this time round, it was, in the EC's view, excellent and especially promising. So promising did it seem that the EC specifically asked the proposers to resubmit for 2028.

The question of the criteria of the EC's choice was raised by one of the participants, who pointed out that the triennial Congress already took place in South Korea in 2010. Sandra Bermann and Anne Tomiche responded that location is indeed an important criterion (and the idea is to rotate as much as possible among countries and continents – a Congress in India would therefore be very promising) but that there are also other criteria, among which the proposal (its scientific content), the infrastructures and the logistics, the efforts made in the proposal towards early career scholars.

The General Assembly ratified the site and the organizing committee of the 2025 Congress in Seoul.

As newly elected President, Lucia Boldrini closed the General Assembly, thanking the members for their vote, warmly thanking Sandra Bermann for all she has done for the ICLA over the past three years, and looking forward to the three years to come.