

President's Report to the ICLA Büro 2011-2012

July 31, 2012

I am pleased to report on activities of the Coordinating Committee for Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages from June 2011 when we met in Lisbon, to May 31, 2012, when we met in Salzburg. We thank Anja Tippner (Hamburg) for hosting our business meeting in Salzburg; we also thank Professors Peter Kuon, Kathrin Ackermann-Pojtinger, and Imke Mendoza of Salzburg University for helping her organize a conference June 1-2.

1) Financial Report.

At the last meeting of the ICLA Büro in London, September 14-15, 2011, we reported 19,315 € in the account. The Büro approved renewal of the annual subsidy from the ICLA for the committee's work in the amount of \$3,000. Micéala Symington on March 7, 2012, transferred \$3000 from the ICLA to the CHLEL account and deposited in our account as 2.281,20 €. At our annual meeting May 31, 2012, the Treasurer Vivian Liska reported royalties from John Benjamins of 438 € as well. Our account then showed a balance of 22.036,65 €.

Following our detailed report in March 2011 to the Union Académique Internationale (as I reported a year ago), the UAI allocated 2,500 € in its budget for a renewed subsidy. However, we have not yet applied for that subsidy to be paid out in **reimbursement**, because there have been no expenses submitted to the Treasurer in 2011-2012. As several projects mature this coming year and face the loss of their institutional funding, we expect significant requests from project directors for help in covering costs of translation and copy-editing. In a time of collapsing academic budgets these funds are particularly precious. We are waiting to hear whether an application for European funding has been approved; if not, the project led by César Domínguez will turn to us. The committee gave advance approval to a request for support in that case. The modest expenditures now awaiting reimbursement relate to research enhancing the website.

Our procedures are governed by requirements of the UAI and similar rules of the ICLA governing subsidies, whereby original documentation of expenditures is submitted before reimbursement. In the past, modest costs such as xeroxing, copy-editing, translation, indexing, and permissions for illustrations have been reimbursed. Such expenses have had a ceiling of \$2,000 per volume in recent years, with a possible additional 600 euros for further costs.

2) Publications with Benjamins.

While our 9 projects continue to make significant progress, as directors gather contributions, translate, and copy-edit them, there were no publications in this period. We do still expect to receive the first volume of the Nordic project and the second volume of the Iberia project in winter 2012-2013. By winter 2013-2014 it is possible that volumes on the challenge to comparative literary history by the study of Orality and Media will be completed.

Among ongoing projects César Domínguez's *Medieval Comparatism / Comparatist Medievalism* progressed by organizing conference presentations. Fridrun Rinner and Franca Sinopoli have gathered position papers for the transnational project on *Migrant Literatures* into a set of papers in the online journal 'Malice' this year. I am organizing a conference at Harvard's Center for European Studies to support the project on *Conceptualizing European Literature* directed by Vivian Liska and Thomas Nolden.

Realism: Since our last meeting, as President and provisional director I have made a number of inquiries among specialists in the troublesome conceptualization of "realism." A junior colleague, Jennifer Terni, collaborated with me on organizing panels at the ACLA. A second panel presented papers at our 2012 annual meeting in Salzburg. Marcel Cornis Pope and

Svend Erik Larsen have helped me organize several panels at the 2013 ICLA Congress to be held in Paris. Many other members of the committee have offered help in seeking contributors, and we are now collecting abstracts and setting deadlines for submission. Mario Valdes and Darío Villanueva have both sent names of potential contributors capable of innovative work in literary history. We have agreed to focus on the nineteenth-century component before developing a volume on avatars such as surrealism and socialist realism in the twentieth century.

A new proposal devoted to “Transatlantic literatures” was also submitted by Jean Marc Moura. The committee was very interested and requested that he send a revised, fuller proposal next year.

3) Dissemination and visibility

In order to enhance the visibility of the series, we have redesigned the website maintained at the University of Antwerp by our Treasurer Vivian Liska and her excellent assistant Jan Morrens. On the public face of the website, visitors will find our mission statement, links to the publications by Benjamins, a list of committee members, and the by-laws of the committee. I have posted the last ten years of presidential reports to the Büro, forming a collective institutional history. I collected published reviews of volumes in the series, which can now be read by going to the “History” tab on the home page, attached to each volume. These provide insight into the reception of our series. Both the Modernism volumes and the East Central Europe volumes have been widely recognized and reviewed. In addition, Secretary Svend Erik Larsen has gathered and posted short descriptions of each current project to make our ongoing work more accessible.

Our publisher Benjamins has also developed its website, with blurbs and selective Google views of our volumes. For older volumes on Symbolism and Expressionism, I wrote abstracts and more recent editors provided their own. Sets of volumes can now be bought at a discount and all volumes can be purchased in digital form. We continue to use the MLA style sheet.

4) Editorial review

In order to facilitate communication about these ongoing projects we make heavy use of the members-only side of the website. With the prompt help of Jan Morrens and Svend Erik Larsen, our Secretary, we post directors’ annual reports, committee members’ comments, and minutes detailing our decisions. These resources enable us to give quick and effective feedback to the project directors as their work proceeds. The site archives the confidential book reports, minutes of our meetings, and related documents.

5) Election

We have created a committee to nominate candidates to replace six members.

Respectfully submitted,

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