



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

2024/25 Annual Report by the ICLA Coordinating Committee for the Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages (CHLEL)

**For consideration at the ICLA Executive Committee Meeting on 26/27 July 2025
ICLA triennial conference | University of Seoul | South Korea**

by CHLEL president Florian Mussgnug

Information about CHLEL

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/projects/chlel/>

Information about publications, John Benjamins

<https://www.benjamins.com/#catalog/books/chlel/volumes>

About CHLEL

The main aim of the committee is to coordinate the publication of comparative, collaborative, and experimental literary histories: Comparative History of Literatures in European Languages. The profile of the series has been specified into four sub-series: a geographical, a period-oriented, a topic-oriented, and a problem-based sub-series. Projects in the first three series typically include 2-4 volumes, projects in the fourth sub-series have one volume focusing on a selected literary historiographical problem.

Criteria for acceptance of a project in our series is high-level academic quality, a genuinely new approach to a specific area of literary history, an international team of editors and contributors, and a comparative methodology. All volumes are published with John Benjamins. We take an active interest in the timeliness of our current outlets and formats, and in the kinds of visibility and levels of impact and access that they affords. We are in the process of exploring new avenues towards greater visibility, for example through free open access. Staff at John Benjamins Publishing are actively involved in this ongoing exploration of future possibilities.

We have an increased focus on literatures in European languages outside of Europe, especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and are increasing our attention to the interactions between literature in Europe and literature outside of Europe, and on understanding European literature in light of the consequences of globalization, colonialism, migration, and transcultural influences. We also have a strong focus on the literary object, its historical materiality, its redefinition in the new digital era, its old and new media forms, and relations to other aesthetic art forms, as well as literature's relation to literary culture.

At the moment, we have ten ongoing projects:

- *Nordic Literatures* (directors: Nate Kramer, Christopher Oscarson, Mark B. Sandberg | two volumes completed)
- *Migration in European Literature since the 1950s* (directors: Myriam Geiser, Jeanne Glesener, Helga Mitterbauer, Fridrun Rinner, Franca Sinopoli, Sandra Vlasta)
- *Comparative Literary History of Modern Slavery* (directors: Mads Anders Baggesgaard, Madeleine Dobie, Karen-Margrethe Simonsen | two volumes completed)
- *A Comparative Intermedial History of Baroque* (directors: Massimo Fusillo, Helga Mitterbauer, Alessandro Metlica, Birgit Neumann)
- *A Comparative History of Small and Minority Literatures in Europe* (directors: Jeanne E. Glesener, Benedikts Kalnačs, Marko Juvan)
- *Japonism and Post-Japonism in Literature: Nationally Coded Writing Beyond National Culture* (directors: Ina Hein and Christine Ivanovic)
- *Representing Same-Sex Desire: Local Contexts, Global Circulations in European Literary Cultures* (directors: Mateusz Chmurski, Clément Dessy, Ana-Isabel Simon)
- *World Literature and the Anthropocene* (directors: Ursula K. Heise, Florian Mussgnug, Birgit Neumann, Mads Rosendahl Thomsen)
- *Representing Jewishness in European Literature* (director: Atinati Mamatsashvili)
- *Rural Imaginaries: A Comparative Literary History of Agriculture* (director: Anne Fastrup)

New volumes in print (since June 2024)

- Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, Madeleine Dobie and Mads Anders Baggesgaard (eds). *A Comparative Literary History of Modern Slavery: The Atlantic World and Beyond*. Volume II: *Slavery, memory and literature*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2025. vii, 420 pp.
- Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, Madeleine Dobie and Mads Anders Baggesgaard (eds). *A Comparative Literary History of Modern Slavery: The Atlantic World and Beyond*. Volume I: *Slavery, literature and the emotions*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2024. xxiv, 334 pp.
- Olga Beloborodova and Dirk Van Hulle (eds). *A Comparative History of the Literary Draft in Europe*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2024. xiv, 550 pp.

Volumes in peer-review

- Nate Cramer, Christopher Oscarson, Mark B. Sandberg (eds). *Nordic Literature: A Comparative History*. Volume Two: *Figural Nodes*

New projects

Two new projects were accepted at annual business meeting in Copenhagen on 1 June 2024:

- *Representing Jewishness in European Literature* (director: Atinati Mamatsashvili)

- *Rural Imaginaries: A Comparative Literary History of Agriculture* (director: Anne Fastrup)

CHLEL annual business meeting and conference in 2024

The CHLEL business meeting 2024 took place in person at the University of Copenhagen on 1 June 2024. On this occasion, the University of Copenhagen also hosted the one-day CHLEL annual conference, “Revisiting the Countryside in Literary History”, on 31 May 2024, which was convened by Anne Fastrup and which included contributions from Helga Mitterbauer, Benedikts Kalnačs, Anne Fastrup, Jeanne E. Glesener, Tina Mamatsashvili, and Massimo Fusillo.

CHLEL annual business meeting in 2025 and ICLA Congress

Every three years, the annual business meeting of the CHLEL committee coincides with the period of the triennial ICLA Congress. Traditionally, CHLEL committee members have met during the days of the conference. We had initially considered holding this year’s annual committee meeting in Seoul (where the ICLA triennial conference will take place from 28 July to 1 August 2025). After much deliberation, however, we decided to propose an online meeting instead. Several CHLEL committee members are unable to attend the Seoul conference in person, so this seemed like the most practical solution, under the circumstances. In order to avoid any clashes with the programme of the ICLA triennial conference (for CHLEL committee members who are going to be in Seoul), the 2025 business meeting will take place online *after the ICLA triennial conference*, on 12 August and 13 August 2025.

Members of the CHLEL Committee will contribute to the triennial ICLA Congress in Seoul with a Research Committee Panel, “Literatures in European Languages in a Post-European World”, which is going to be convened and chaired by Stefan Helgesson (CHLEL Vice President | Stockholm University) and Helga Mitterbauer (CHLEL President Emerita | Université Libre de Bruxelles).

Historically, the 2025 CHLEL annual business meeting coincides with a one-day conference, dedicated to a thematic seminar on literary history and its broader disciplinary relevance. This year, we are going to host a shorter discussion on a broad and timely question: Why CHLEL? We are going to consider the role of CHLEL in an era shaped by AI, culture wars, climate change, renewed geopolitics, and growing criticism of values central to humanities research worldwide.

CHLEL annual business meeting and conference in 2026

In 2026, the CHLEL annual business meeting and conference will be hosted in Prague by the *Centre français de recherche en sciences sociales* (CEFRES). Our annual conference will build on the discussion at this year’s annual meeting, “Why CHLEL?”

CHLEL finance

Our financial situation is challenging. The committee needs further revenue in order to be able to carry out core activity: external peer-review and production of volumes in the CHLEL book series. We are actively exploring financial opportunities, but would also like to invite the members of the ICLA

Executive Committee to consider our position and to possible joint avenues towards grant income or philanthropic donation.

Election 2024

Elections took place in autumn 2024.

MEMBERS OF CHLEL (since January 2025)

President: **Florian Mussnug** (University College London): f.mussnug@ucl.ac.uk

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