

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF SINOLOGICAL LIBRARIANS

The thirteenth annual conference of EASL was held at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, Rome, from 9th to 11th September 1993. The meetings were chaired by Thomas Hahn.

Present were:

Marina Battaglini (Biblioteca Nazionale, Rome)
YU Dong (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana)
Monique Cohen (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)
Hubert Delahaye (Collège de France, Paris)
PEH Guat-Kooi (Centre Chine, Paris)
Diane Strobl (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München)
Thomas Hahn (Sinologisches Seminar der Universität Heidelberg)
Ina Asim (Institut für Sinologie der Universität Würzburg)
Kira Rohde-Liebenau (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)
Barbara Hoster (Institut Monumenta Serica, Sankt Augustin)
Thomas Gaiser (Seminar für Sinologie der Universität Tübingen)
Basilia Fang (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien)
Gudrun Alber (Institut für Sinologie der Universität Wien)
Mary Trifonenko (Russian State Library, Moscow)
Serguei Kazantsev (Russian State Library, Moscow)
Laura Rivkin (Great Britain-China Centre Library, London)
Sue Swee Chin Small (School of Oriental and African Studies, London)
David Arrandale (Brotherton Library, University of Leeds)
Charles Aylmer (Cambridge University Library)
Bing Sum LAU (University of Westminster, London)
David Helliwell (Bodleian Library, Oxford)
Koen Wellens (Universitets Biblioteket i Oslo)
Bent Lerbæk Pedersen (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, København)
Roger Greatrex (Institutionen för Östasiatiska språk, Lund)

Observers:

Eva Schrepf (ex Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München)

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1. Notices and reports
- 1.1 Sue Small and Koen Wellens were congratulated on their respective appointments in London (SOAS) and Oslo (University Library).
- 1.2 A number of libraries announced that they had recently benefitted from grants from the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, among them Oslo University Library, Brotherton Library (Leeds), Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris - this grant was towards the publication of the *Impressions de Chine* catalogue), Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises (Paris), Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Vienna), Needham Research Institute (Cambridge), Sinologisches Seminar (Heidelberg), Durham University Library, Edinburgh University Library, British Library (for the publication of Tunhuang materials).
- 1.3 Thomas Hahn had represented EASL at the Ninth General Meeting of the International Association of Orientalist Librarians (Hong Kong, 24-25 August 1993), and gave a comprehensive report on its proceedings, a short synopsis of which would appear in BEASL 7. A formal relationship has now been established between EASL and IAOL, which it is hoped will lead to future cooperation.
- 1.4 Marina Battaglini reported on the current state of sinological libraries in Italy, and Serguei Kazantsev reported on the sinological holdings of the Russian State Library. Both these reports would appear in the next issue of BEASL as the 7th part of *Chinese collections in Europe*.

2. Projects

- 2.1 Mrs Zhuang Weifeng of Shantou Daxue Tushuguan had announced her willingness to undertake the production of a union catalogue of Chinese local histories (*difangzhi*) in European libraries, and also to fund this project. Thomas Hahn agreed to pursue this matter on behalf of EASL, and members agreed to cooperate fully if the project materialised.
- 2.2 Thomas Hahn agreed to make an application to the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for money to catalogue the Chinese collectanea (*congshu*) in European libraries, and would combine this with a request for appropriately qualified personnel to undertake the task.

3. Visit to China

Thomas Hahn agreed to pursue an invitation by Mr Tang Shaoming, Deputy Director of the National Library of China to EASL members to visit a number of Chinese libraries in April/May 1994. Mr Tang had offered to take care of all the practical arrangements for such a visit.

4. Book suppliers

There was considerable discussion on the current state of book supply, especially from the mainland. Thomas Hahn maintained a sizeable list of dealers in a computer file, and agreed to make this available to EASL members either through his CJKLIB mailbox or on diskette.

5. EDOCS

[Discussion of this topic was greatly hindered by the unavoidable absence of J-M Streffer, who initiated this project and has managed it since its inception.]

- 5.1 Microfiche output of the current database would shortly be sent to all participating libraries (i.e. all German and British sinological libraries and a few others), and as a courtesy to all present at the 13th conference.
- 5.2 Thomas Hahn announced that Dr Traute Braun had agreed that from mid-October to the end of November EASL members would have read-only access to ZDB on an experimental basis free of charge.
- 5.3 A number of members were of the view that the EDOCS database would be far more useful to them in a computer file (accessible through *allegro*, for example) than on microfiche, and Thomas Hahn would investigate the possibility of obtaining output in this form.

6. BEASL

- 6.1 BEASL 6 (December 1992) had been produced in Cambridge by Charles Aylmer, and members expressed satisfaction with its format. It was generally felt that the thinness of its content owed more to the lethargy of potential contributors than of the editor, who was thanked for his labours in producing the 6th issue and persuaded to produce a 7th.
- 6.2 David Helliwell conveyed a report from the Acting Treasurer (Tony Hyder, unavoidably absent from the conference this year) on the finances of BEASL, and a balance-sheet was circulated. A summary of the financial position would be published in BEASL 7. Although enough subscriptions had been received to finance the production of BEASL 7 and possibly BEASL 8 as well, it was noted with disfavour that a number of institutions, some of them major, had not paid.
- 6.3 It was agreed that future issues of BEASL might contain advertising and flysheets. Laura Rivkin, who had acquired considerable experience of these matters in the production of the BACS (British Association for Chinese Studies) newsletter, agreed to act as our advertising editor.
- 6.4 The distribution of BEASL backnumbers was considered to be unsatisfactory, and the secretary was urged to locate any stocks of these that might still be available and gather them together in Oxford for distribution on request.
- 6.5 Contributions to future issues should be sent to Charles Aylmer in Cambridge. The deadlines are November 30th for BEASL 7, and May 31st 1994 for BEASL 8.

7. Statistics

It was still generally agreed that the gathering of statistics for Europe along the lines of the "current status" reports of American CJK libraries that appeared regularly in the CEAL bulletin would be a worthwhile exercise.

David Helliwell apologised for not acting on this question earlier, but agreed to circulate a form

with the minutes of the Rome meeting whereby members could supply figures. The reporting criteria would be defined. If enough members cooperated to make the results meaningful, they would be published in BEASL.

8. Constitution

This would be left undefined, except by what had now become custom and usage. It was agreed that the number of members who regularly attended the annual conferences was still sufficiently small for the Association to operate informally. In view of the fact that EASL now had a small balance of funds, it was considered that the office of Treasurer should be established.

9. Elections

The following officers were unanimously elected for the next year:

Thomas Hahn *Chairman*

David Helliwell *Secretary*

Tony Hyder *Treasurer*

10. Automation

10.1 There was a general discussion on the progress of automation in the various sinological libraries of Europe. The *allegro* catalogues of Berlin, Heidelberg and Oxford had all made substantial advances in the past year, though continued to operate independently in every major way (in matters of format, character coding, romanisation, and cataloguing conventions).

10.2 These differences notwithstanding, the point was repeatedly made that so long as sound cataloguing standards were consistently maintained, no insurmountable barriers existed to the free and automatic conversion of data (including MARC) from one standard to another.

10.3 A message from J-M Streffer was conveyed to the meeting. The Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin had finally obtained the 150,000 China MARC records that have been created in Peking from 1988 to the present. These have been imported into *allegro*, and together with simple indexes occupy around 150Mb of disc space.

10.4 Both Berlin and Heidelberg hoped to network their Chinese catalogues internationally during 1994. Progress in Oxford on this front was being hindered by the absence of an Ethernet facility.

10.5 A conference on Chinese bibliographical automation (the conference language being German) would be convened by J-M Streffer and Urs Widmer in Bremen at the beginning of 1994.

11. Visit to the Vatican Library

One of the highlights of this year's EASL conference was a visit to the Vatican Library, which had been arranged with the permission of the Prefect, Rev. Dr. Leonard Boyle. As Dr Boyle was absent on the day of our visit, members were given an excellent tour of the Library and its bookstack by Msgr Paul Canart, and an exhibition of 17th century Jesuit publications had been laid out by Yu Dong. Msgr Canart finally led the group through the Library's galleries, leading eventually into the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel.

12. Fourteenth annual conference

It was agreed that the fourteenth annual conference would be held in Prague, in conjunction with the EACS conference.

[A complication has emerged since this decision was taken. Please see the attached letter.]

The thirteenth annual conference closed with an expression of thanks to Marina Battaglini for arranging our hotel accommodation and meeting place so satisfactorily.

David Helliwell
Secretary

Oxford: 7x93