

Minutes - Eighteenth annual conference of EASL

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The eighteenth EASL conference was held in the East Asian History of Science Library in the Needham Research Institute at Cambridge from 9 to 12 September 1998. The meetings were chaired by Katharina Thölen (main session) and Charles Aylmer (automation).

A welcoming address was given by the Director, Ho Peng-Yoke. During the course of the conference, tours were made of the East Asian History of Science Library (led by John Moffett), the newly completed Aoi Pavilion of Cambridge University Library (led by Charles Aylmer), and the new British Library in London (led by Frances Wood, Graham Hutt and Beth McKillop).

Present were:

Linda de Lange (Sinologisch Instituut, Leiden)
Bénédicte Vaerman (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven)
Cristina Cramerotti (Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire des Langues Orientales, Paris)
Vincent Durand-Dastès (École Française d'Extrême Orient, Paris)
Hubert Delahaye (Collège de France, Paris)
Diane Strobl (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München)
Hanno Lecher (Universität Heidelberg)
Friederike Schimmelpfennig (SSELP, Universität Heidelberg)
Helga Stahl (Universität Würzburg)
Kira Rohde-Liebenau (Ruhr-Universität Bochum)
Klaus Gottheiner (Universität Trier)
Andreas Mixius (Universitätsbibliothek und TIB, Hannover)
Alek Stypa (Institut Monumenta Serica, Sankt Augustin)
Mark Ulyanov (Russian State Library, Moscow)
Bent Pedersen (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, København)
Lars Fredriksson (Östasiatiska Biblioteket, Stockholm)
Katharina Thölen (Universität Zürich)
Marina Battaglini (Biblioteca Nazionale, Rome)
YU Dong (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana)
Laura Rivkin (Great Britain-China Centre, London)
Hiroko Brittain (British Library Document Supply Centre, Boston Spa)
Frances Wood (British Library, London)
Graham Hutt (British Library, London)
Beth McKillop (British Library, London)
Sue Small (School of Oriental and African Studies, London)
Charles Aylmer (Cambridge University Library)
John Moffett (East Asian History of Science Library)

David Arrandale (Brotherton Library, Leeds)
David Helliwell (Bodleian Library, Oxford)

Observer: Du Wei (CIBTC representative)

Apologies for absence were received from: Johann Michael Streffer (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) Matthias Kaun (Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel) Nathalie Vandeperre (Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, Bruxelles) Anne Labitzky-Wagner (Landesspracheninstitut NRW, Bochum) Tony Hyder (Institute for Chinese Studies, Oxford)

ACTA

1 Chairman's address An opening address was given by the Chairman.

2 Minutes The minutes of the Seventeenth EASL conference were accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

3 Notices of members

3.1 Attention was drawn to the recently published Catalogue of the Morrison Collection of Chinese Books in the SOAS Library. (Sue Small).

3.2 The Jesuits' Bibliothèque des Fontaines in Chantilly has been closed, and its Chinese collection (as well as most of its important ancient western books) has been transferred to the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon and will be available to the public in the near future. Contact Jean-Louis Bouilly for further details (bouilly@bmserveur.univ-lyon1.fr). (Vincent Durand-Dastès).

4 Conferences and meetings

4.1 Yu Dong and Joyce Wu recently visited Peking to attend a ceremony marking the completion of the publication of Siku quanshu cunmu congshu.

4.2 SINODOC (the French colleagues' association) met last October, and the minutes are on the EASL homepage. The purpose of the meeting was to draw up a list of UNIMARC fields as the basis for a French union catalogue of Chinese materials.

4.3 The China Library Group (the British colleagues' association) had met twice since the last conference, and the minutes are also on the EASL homepage.

4.4 The German colleagues will meet in Münster in October. 4.5 Sue Small had attended the CEAL conference in spring, where the principal topic of discussion had been the proposed change from Wade-Giles romanisation to Pinyin.

5 Treasurer's report

A statement of accounts prepared by Tony Hyder was presented, and unanimously accepted. He was thanked for his work.

6 Automation

6.1 The automation session was held on the day preceding the main conference, and consisted largely of a tour d'horizon of member libraries, accompanied by a number of online demonstrations, including one of SSELP by Friederike Schimmelpfennig (née Bertelt).

6.2 Interest was expressed by several members in the INNOPAC and ALEPH systems, but specific information on them was not forthcoming.

6.3 The possibility was considered of holding an allegro workshop in Zürich next year.

6.4 The inordinate cost of subscribing to the Bibliography of Asian Studies emerged as an issue. Regrettably, the terms of subscription do not permit reductions for corporate bodies such as EASL, but a number of members were investigating the possibility of making more localised joint initiatives.

7 Cataloguing issues

7.1 It was agreed that although the principles of cataloguing were closely related to the capabilities of automated systems, they should henceforth be discussed under a separate heading and not confused with the more technical aspects of automation which were not necessarily of interest to all the members.

7.2 Standards of data entry were again discussed, as the principal obstacle to forming a union catalogue from the substantial number of local catalogues now in existence in a number of widely different formats, characters codings, and romanisation conventions.

7.3 Lars Fredriksson and Hanno Lecher agreed to investigate the merging of local data into a single unified database, which would be chaotic, but possibly still useful.

7.4 Problems of name authority, classification and subject headings were touched upon.

8 SSELP

8.1 A short report on the progress of SSELP was given by Friederike Bertelt.

8.2 One further year's funding had been obtained for the project.

8.3 A questionnaire was circulated to members, who were urged to complete it.

9 BEASL

9.1 In its present form, BEASL was effectively dead. It was suggested that contributions might now be better offered through the EASL homepage, and it was agreed that regular publication of BEASL should be formally suspended.

9.2 From time to time, if there was sufficient material of a suitable kind (for example, the series on European sinological libraries), hard copy could be printed out and published from the homepage.

10 EASL homepage

10.1 Matthias Kaun (unfortunately absent on a visit to China) had continued to expand and develop the EASL homepage. He was again

thanked and con-gratulated on a most professional result, for which he had received prizes in the course of the year. 10.2 Members were urged to add details of their library to the homepage by completing the simple on-line form that had been specially devised to facilitate this process.

11 CJKLIB

11.1 Hanno Lecher agreed to continue to host and administer CJKLIB (the EASL mailbox) at Heidelberg.

11.2 Now that almost all EASL members have access to the Internet, the possibility of using CJKLIB as the principal means of communication between members would be examined.

12 Book supply

12.1 In the course of the year, a number of members had made personal visits to China and discovered that several dealers other than the main corporations were willing to supply books and CD-ROMs overseas at local prices.

12.2 It was suggested that members with specific experience of this should report them privately for further consideration.

13 EACS membership

13.1 A letter from Professor Rudolph Wagner, currently Chairman of EACS, was read out, urging EASL to meet jointly in conjunction with EACS.

13.2 It was pointed out that much as EASL would like to oblige its academic colleagues, to meet jointly was inconvenient for a number of reasons. EASL always meets where there is a decent library, as familiarising members with important collections and their curators is one of its principal purposes, but EACS often meets where there is no sinological library at all ♦ as at its next meeting in Turin ♦ and in any case, EASL had already agreed to hold its 20th anniversary meeting in Leiden, according to tradition. A conflict was also perceived between the informality of EASL and the formality of EACS, and there was a general feeling that the free and uncircumscribed expression of professional library views would be compromised were we to meet in conjunction.

13.3 On the other hand, it was considered desirable that the two organisations should meet at different times (unlike this year, when there was a clash), as a number of members would like to attend both. It was also considered desirable that if possible, they should meet in the same place, though EASL should not make a commitment to that effect.

13.4 It was agreed that EASL should renew its practice of sending a representative to report on its proceedings at the EACS conference.

13.5 It was also suggested that a small group of members might prepare a special digest of online and other IT resources for the benefit of our academic colleagues, and offer to present this on a regular basis at EACS conferences.

14 Election of officers

Kathy Thölen, David Helliwell and Tony Hyder were re-elected to their respective offices of Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. 15 Next EASL

conference

The next conference will be held in Naples, or in Venice should that prove impossible. The preferred dates are Wednesday 22 to Friday 24 September, or failing that, Wednesday 15 to Friday 17 September 1999. As previously agreed, the Millennial conference will be held in Leiden.

The Eighteenth EASL Conference closed with an expression of thanks to John Moffett and Charles Aylmer for their superb arrangements in what was unanimously agreed to have been an ideal location.

David Helliwell Secretary

Oxford: 20 October 1998