

Minutes of the International Association of Byron Societies Council Meeting,
July 5, 2013

The meeting was opened by the new joint presidents, Naji Oueijan, Jonathan Gross and Alan Rawes, with the introduction of three documents, "Constitution of the International Association of Byron Societies," "IABS Conferences: A Guide for Organisers" and "The Elma Dangerfield Prize" which described changes to the constitution, together with revisions in conference and award guidelines. Gross then welcomed the members. Christine Kenyon-Jones and Roderick Beaton were thanked for their excellent organization of the 2013 London conference and were presented with gifts by Gross.

Oueijan conveyed apologies from those who could not be present. There was a standing ovation for past presidents: John Clubbe, Byron Raizis and John Lytton. The minutes of the previous council meeting in Beirut were approved, with Jonathon Shears making the motion. Robin Byron inquired as to how the minutes would be accessed. Gross said they would be available on the IABS website.

Rawes then outlined the three documents and said they would make the constitution more transparent and explicit. He said there should be consistency in how the IABS votes and the votes at the present meeting should be conducted according to the rules in the new documents, after they were approved. Each society would get a single vote. The specific changes were discussed, including the use of "confederation" instead of "federation" under section 2 ("Definition and Purpose") of the constitution. Rawes will make the necessary changes. Andrew Stauffer then moved that the documents be accepted. Discussion was invited and Geoffrey Bond raised the question of how disputes would be handled. Oueijan said that the constitution had been revised for clarity and consistency and there should be no occasion for dispute. Robin Byron then suggested an arbitration clause stating that any disputes arising in connection with this constitution shall be submitted to a sole arbitrator. Stauffer moved to accept this as a friendly amendment.

Robin Byron then raised the question of whether the issue regarding the definition of "society" was likely to arise. Rawes said that it was not the business of the IABS to make rules regarding this issue; if a society wants to join, fees should be paid. Oueijan stressed that we want to encourage membership. Byron was concerned about corresponding members calling themselves a society. Gross said that corresponding members would be encouraged to form a society wherever possible.

Bond then asked what the difference was between "confederation" and "federation." Rawes asked for a vote on "confederation". The latter was approved. The society would also henceforth be known as IABS (International Association of Byron Societies) instead of IBS (International Byron Society). The revised constitution was approved.

Rawes then asked for a discussion on the document "IABS Conferences: A Guide for Organisers." Peter Myrian suggested that the society should be more careful in selecting sites and organizers and that specific criteria should be set up. Rawes requested that Myrian write to the board with suggested criteria. Stauffer pointed out that part of the justification for the document was to develop a collective sense of emerging criteria and that the question could be referred to the board for a more articulated document which might be finalized next year, though this was not agreed as an action. Robin Byron suggested a 2-year cycle for planning conferences. The question of parallel vs. single sessions was discussed with reference to the criteria for quality stated in section 3 of the document. Oueijan stressed the need for quality and not quantity. Although it would be difficult to have a conference without any parallel sessions, the consensus was that a balance should be sought, and the spirit of section 8 in the document should be acknowledged. Stauffer suggested that section 8 could be clarified, stating that "three or more parallel sessions should be avoided wherever possible". This was approved, with David McClay moving and Stauffer seconding the motion.

Both the "Guide for Organisers" and "The Elma Dangerfield Prize" documents were approved. Oueijan then announced the winner of the 2013 Elma Dangerfield Prize. The prize was awarded to Caroline Franklin for her book *The Female Romantics: Nineteenth Century Women Novelists and Byronism*; this was the second time Franklin had received the award.

Oueijan then moved on to the discussion of election of the joint secretaries and noted that the only nomination received for this office was from Peter Graham, who had nominated Rosa Florou. Gross moved to recommend Florou and mentioned her graciousness in hosting the student conferences in Greece for eight years, and her contribution to the Association as the organizer for two International conferences (the 25th and 35th) in Athens and Messolonghi. Florou was voted in as one of the joint secretaries. G. Todd Davis and Peter Francev were mentioned as other possibilities. Myrian stated that the criteria should be clarified. Gross suggested that we should have a balance between those with experience/administrative skills and young people. A member suggested that additional nominees might make a personal statement which could be circulated and a vote done by email.

Oueijan then asked for the report from the Treasurer, Eric Wishart. Wishart presented the report, mentioning that there would be scholarship funding available to encourage young scholars in the future. The report was approved with Olivier Feignier moving and Byron seconding.

Next, Oueijan presided over the discussion regarding conference venues, giving the representatives of two potential future hosts five minutes to speak about proposals for the site and theme of the next two years' conference. Innes Merabishvili proposed Georgia, with the theme of the conference as "Byron Original and Translated." The conference would be hosted by Tbilisi State University. Merabishvili said that the infrastructure in Georgia had changed over the past 10

years and the university was recently refurbished. The Ministry of Culture would offer support as well.

The following proposal was from Mirosława Modrzewska who proposed Gdansk, Poland, as a site with the theme being “Reality, Fiction and Madness.” Modrzewska mentioned that Gdansk was a historic city with a variety of attractions and the Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Gdansk organizes at least one international conference every year. She also provided some details about conference accommodations and cost.

Oueijan then called for questions and discussion on the proposals. Rawes said the meeting needed to approve locations for the coming two years, if at all possible. May Maalouf expressed concern that not everyone would be involved with the topic of translation, which might be rather narrow. Merabishvili explained that the theme was meant to be broad and inclusive. Rawes called for a vote approving the proposal. McClay moved, Stauffer seconded. Georgia was approved for 2014.

The question of Paris as a possible site for 2015 or 2016 was also brought up by Feignier. Byron mentioned that the London conference had benefited from 2 years advanced planning. The consensus from the floor was that this would be a good idea for the future. Rawes mentioned that we had two proposals: one from Poland and one from Georgia, and that those were the only ones that had been received. Feignier objected that he had not been told that a proposal needed to be sent in. Gross mentioned the fact that venues in Armenia and Paris had also been discussed at the last AGM meeting at Beirut. A member said that we could only vote on proposals we had received. There was close to unanimous agreement that the next two venues would be Georgia and then Poland, following the need to have two years' advance planning. Rawes then called for a vote on Poland as a conference site for 2015. McClay moved, Maalouf seconded. Poland was approved for 2015 and the meeting came to a close.