



**Minutes of the General Assembly
of the International Arthurian Society, online
28th July, 2021, 1.00 pm GMT**

President: Andrew Lynch
Vice-President: Danièle James-Raoul
General Secretary: Brigitte Burrichter
International Bibliographer: Nathanael Busch
JIAS Editor: Leah Tether, assisted by Samantha Rayner
General Treasurer: Isabelle Arseneau
Digital Supervisor: Bonnie Millar

The President, Andrew Lynch, starts by warmly thanking members present: since the Catania Congress has been cancelled, the General Assembly met online.

1. Approval of the minutes of the last General Assembly at Würzburg

The President first submitted the previous minutes of the Würzburg GA (25 July 2017), which can be found on the Society's website, to the meeting, for approval: as there were no comments, the minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Report of the Board

- The President read out the names of Arthurian colleagues who had passed away since the last General Assembly in Würzburg, July 2017: Heinz Bergner, Anna Maria Finoli, Willem Peter Gerritsen (dit Wim), Sue Ellen Holbrook, Charmaine Lee, Dhira B. Mahoney, Seraina Plotke, Monique Santucci, Ursula Schulze, Muriel Whitaker.

The meeting held a moment of silence in their memory.

- The period since the last Arthurian Congress has not been easy. Andrew Lynch thanked, on behalf of the Society, the organising committee – Maria Colombo, Eliana Creazzo, Barbara Ferrari and Gaetano Lalomia – who had worked so hard, against all odds, to bring us the IAS Congress at Catania, first in 2020 and then again in 2021, but which was cancelled in the end due to the pandemic. He sincerely hopes that at a later date we will be able to meet in Sicily.

- In recent years, however, IAS has been presented with, and overcome, a series of challenges.

Our regular publications *JIAS*, *BIAS* (online), the online Arthurian week from 29 to 30 July 2021 with a plenary lecture each day and online academic events are all evidence of these challenges and successes. This record shows that our Arthurian studies are truly of global relevance. You are warmly invited to inform the International Committee of any Arthurian events you are organising so that we can post them on our website.

- The Society's current paid-up membership is close to 800 and has recently been strengthened by the re-foundation of the Hispanic branch, which had been dormant after the Würzburg Congress. Thanks and congratulations to Carlos Alvar, to José Carlos Ribeiro Miranda, its new president, and to all those involved.

- In recent years, medieval studies have also been seriously threatened here and there, and the International Committee has intervened to protest and exert its influence against the catastrophic

decisions announced in some places, such as proposed staff cuts at Bangor University and the closure of the medieval English programme at the University of Leicester.

- The meeting was asked to vote and unanimously approved the report.

3. Results of the elections of 19-25.VII.2021

This year, the elections usually held during the GA of our international congresses were held separately, in the week from 19 July, 8 am GMT, to 25 July, 8 am GMT, because it was too complex to organise them live online. It was decided to rank the candidates or options with the highest number of votes as number 1 in each case.

Here are the results.

— **i.** Due to the pandemic and the subsequent postponement by one year of the last Congress planned in Catania, and therefore also of the election of the International Board, the end date of the mandate of the next International Board to be elected and the date of the next International Arthurian Congress are postponed until **July 2024**.

— **ii.** The next International Arthurian Congress will be hosted in **Aix-Marseille in France**.

— **iii.** Here are the **six themes** selected for the next Arthurian Congress in Aix-Marseille.

1. The reception of Arthurian literature in the post-medieval period
2. Retelling, adapting, repeating
3. The transmission of Arthurian romances: manuscript, print and translations
4. History and fiction
5. Arthurian objects
6. Merlin

— **iv.** **The International Board** will consist of the following members:

President: Danièle James-Raoul (Bordeaux)

Vice-President: Raluca Radulescu (Bangor)

Secretary: Fabrizio Cigni (Pisa)

JIAS Editor: Richard Trachsler (Zurich)

Bibliographer: Nathanael Busch (Marburg)

General Treasurer: Isabelle Arseneau (Montreal)

Digital Supervisor: Bonnie Millar (Nottingham)

4. Financial report

Isabelle Arseneau, International Treasurer, presented the financial report, showing a positive balance of \$31,907.61. This compares to \$31,606.01 CAD as of June 30, 2017 and \$39,778.92 CAD as of June 30, 2014. IAS is therefore in good financial health, although it does not have any exceptional reserves either, given the financial burden represented by De Gruyter, i.e. CAN\$21,044.40 in 2020.

It should be noted that the level of an individual membership fee is globally fixed on the unit cost of *JIAS*, but that this is also dependent on the overall number of members, which varies from one year to the next. It would therefore be advisable for national branches to send the Bureau updated and correct membership lists (up to date with their fees) by February-March at the latest, so that the cost can be determined in spring.

Continuing problems with bank charges for international transfers (\$17.50 per transfer) are still not solved: the GA decided to redistribute the amount of the charged transfers to the national branches' invoices.

The last G.A. had voted in Würzburg to set up a Paypal account, but this was not done, particularly due to constraints imposed by local lockdowns. This decision, which has already been taken and on which we do not have to vote again, will be implemented in the next three years: whatever the future choice (Paypal or equivalent), an electronic payment system will have to be set

up to simplify transactions. The International Bureau was mandated to settle this matter as soon as possible.

The assembly was invited to vote and unanimously approved the financial report, minus one vote.

5. The Arthurian Bibliography-Database

Nathanael Busch, International Bibliographer, begins by reminding the assembly that the publication of the Bulletin Bibliographique is one of the main tasks of the IAS and a fundamental working tool for the scholarly study of medieval Arthurian literature. The data of our former "little blue books" have been partly transferred to an independent online database (see below, 7, ii), as decided by the GA in Würzburg four years ago. A complete retro-digitisation remains to be done, which implies a significant amount of funding: applications have been made in the last few years, which have not been successful and efforts in this respect need to be renewed soon. If any member of the Society knows of or learns about opportunities for funding, please inform Nathanael Busch. Work on the database requires the cooperation of some 40 bibliographers from 14 countries, which is obviously complex but very stimulating. The pandemic has obviously slowed down the work of collecting the publications to be listed, due to the closure of libraries. It is now necessary to increase the size, power and user-friendliness of this database; but this presupposes finding a new programmer or an insider who knows the Elixir programming language and is likely to invest in our Arthurian Society.

Finally, N. Busch is pleased to thank the bibliographers responsible for the National Branch bibliographies who have worked alongside him since 2017: Adeline Latimier, Ann Howey, Ana Sofia Laranjinha, Ayumi Yokoyama, Barbara Ferrari, Brindusa-Elena Grigoriu, Fanny Maillet, Frank Brandsma, Jelmar Huguen, Jose Ramon Trujillo, Kit Kappahn, Sarah Cals, Sarah Randles, Sofia Loden, Yasufumi Taka-na, Yoko Kawaguchi.

6. *JIAS*

Leah Tether spoke as editor of *JIAS*, with Samantha Rayner having served as deputy editor. Since 2017, three volumes have been published, with the fourth about to be published and the next, on Arthurian medievalism, edited by Renée Ward and Andrew B. Elliott, well underway. There have been occasional problems with distribution, particularly in North America, which have now been resolved, it seems. Statistics provided by DeGruyter on the journal, its distribution and usage show that usage has increased by a third in the last year. Article submissions are increasing. Two biennial *JIAS* Essay Prizes were awarded to Sofia Lodén (from Stockholm) in 2019 and Natalia Petrovskaia (from Utrecht) in 2021.

Finally, the editorial board, many of whose members carried out blind reviews of articles at short notice and provided expert advice whenever necessary, is warmly thanked.

7. The website and digital information

Bonnie Millar reminded the meeting that the website, which showcases the work of the IAS, was developed 7-9 years ago and that, despite difficulties caused by the Covid pandemic, the website has continued to function.

The work of the last four years has been marked by three major obstacles. First, the website's content management system (ExpressionEngine), now free but without technical support, has to be regularly updated along with a tool called Transcribe to feed the multilingual aspect of our website. While they are evidently needed, these updates take up substantial time and are complex to implement.. Secondly, there is no plan for the architecture of the website and no documentation outlining its components and coding. This makes the task of updating it tedious, as it involves setting up and testing pages and then repeating the exercise until the desired result is achieved. Finally, the current basic system has some limitations with regard to uploading and integrating videos. The French, North American and recently the Hispanic branches have created new websites.

In addition, the International Arthurian Society has a dynamic twitter account for engagement and news dissemination, as do several of its branches.

It is now time to set up a working group to look at the content of the website and social media, and to consider whether to keep the current, outdated website or to create a new one, which might be easier. The International Board and Committee, as well as the webmasters of the different national branches will be involved in this process of consultation.

8. Other points

i. The statutes

It was decided that the International Bureau and the International Committee would examine the statutes to ensure that they were updated and translated into French and German.

ii. The *BBIAS/BBSIA* digitization project and the Arthurian archives

Raluca Radulescu, Director of the Bangor Arthurian Center, says that *BBIAS* volumes 1, 4, 6-7, 9-11, 13-17, 19-33, 35-38, 40-41, 52, 57, 59-65 have been digitised and uploaded to a server connected to the Bangor University Arthurian Studies Centre. Anyone can access them with a server access code. The last 23 volumes still to be digitised will be uploaded as soon as access to the Bangor University library is available.

iii. The future of *BIAS*

After a questioning of the publication of this bibliography at the end of 2019, as it was considered inoperative as well as costly by the British Branch because the Branch pays its bibliographers, a working group was set up to consider the issue and highlighted certain improvements to be made. Following discussion in the meeting it appears that the majority of the members in the audience value this research tool, which, compared to other databases, is specifically linked to Arthurian matter.

Nevertheless, the International Bureau and the International Committee were mandated by a large majority vote to consider the issue in view of the next Congress.

The Assembly concluded by thanking its President, Andrew Lynch, for all his work: he became Honorary President of the IAS and will now be part of the International Committee.

For the International Board,
Danièle James-Raoul