

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Shef Rogers, SHARP President

Welcome to our first-ever virtual AGM. SHARP begins its twenty-eighth year as a scholarly society amid a rather different world. While we are all disappointed not to be in Amsterdam this week enjoying SHARP's famous conviviality, the members of the Executive Council hope that some of the offerings during this week's SHARP in Focus events will provide intellectual stimulation, lively discussion and useful insights for possible future developments.

As always, I'd particularly like to acknowledge those of you for whom this is your first SHARP AGM. To help with the AGM's proceedings and to provide you with a copy of the agenda, we produce this annual report to summarise the Society's activities since our last annual conference. We hope this will help you identify the various officers of the Society, and if you are interested, fuller reports for each area of activity are available from any member of the EC.

SHARP'S STRUCTURE & CONSTITUTION

SHARP is governed by an **Executive Council** of elected officers, a **Board of Directors** (currently chaired by Marija Dalbello), various appointees (most obviously the editors of *Book History*, *SHARP News*, *Lingua Franca*, but also the various review editors, the moderators of SHARP-L, the DeLong Book Prize judges, members of the Nominating Committee, and the archivist), as well as, of course, the membership as a whole. As always we are very grateful to all those members who volunteer their time to support the Society and its activities. A wide range of members contribute in some specific volunteer role to enable SHARP to carry out its activities. If you would like to be more involved in SHARP, please contact any of the EC officers. 2021 will be an election year, so if you have wondered whether you might enjoy being more involved or wanted to have more input into SHARP, please consider standing and feel free to talk to any of us about what our roles entail.

Finally, I would like to thank our Executive Assistant, **Ellen Barth**, for her significant attention to the website, her assistance with the DeLong Prize process, and the many other research tasks she undertakes to help the EC make informed decisions.

PRESIDENT & VICE-PRESIDENT

Shef Rogers and **Will Slaughter** are both halfway through their first terms. Will has been very active representing SHARP in the American Council of Learned Societies, from whom we gain a great deal of information. We have especially welcomed the connection with the ACLS this year as all academic societies deliberated over responses to the pandemic. The Society continues to enjoy sound finances and a solid membership base, enabling us to explore options, and we would welcome ideas from members on any aims that you would like to see SHARP pursue. That said, we are also aware of being perched awkwardly on the edge of needing more paid staffing, but without the finances to realize that desire. We have been debating for quite a few years ideas and options related to establishing an endowment, but not yet located the financial expertise within our membership for such planning. If you believe you could contribute to this discussion, the President would very much welcome a confidential conversation about this topic.

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FINANCES

Colin Ramsey reports that we remain in a solid financial position. The 2020 budget is modestly larger than the intentionally tight 2019 budget, the result, in part, of increases in the value of some SHARP awards, the move to ConfTools software for conference organization, and likely expenses associated

with the *SHARP News* transition. Savings from a decrease in SHARP dues to the American Council of Learned Societies has been committed by the EC to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. As of 9 June 2020 the Society holds assets of \$259,500 in cash accounts, and \$124,237 in CDs. The EC has recognised (through comparison with other academic societies) that SHARP probably needs to commit more funding to its administrative organization, and is working with the Board toward establishing an endowment and long-term financial planning.

As is the case for most scholarly societies, membership fees are the largest source of revenue through which the society conducts its work. If you have not yet renewed for 2020, please do so to help us continue our activities.

treasurer@sharpweb.org

MEMBERSHIP and SOCIETY AND REGIONAL LIAISONS

Lisa Maruca reports that membership is a key requirement in the making of a thriving, sustainable organization. Thus it was disappointing to see that SHARP membership fell considerably in 2020, most likely due to the pandemic and the cancellation of our annual conference. In the fall of 2019, we had 942 members. As of June 4, we have 681, or about 72% of last year.

The following chart, which breaks down our membership by geography and category, shows that we have stayed remarkably consistent in the relative numbers in each group. Considering that students and the unwaged are the hardest hit by the economic downturn, it is especially gratifying to see this important investment in the future of SHARP.

	2019		2020	
TOTAL MEMBERS	942		681	
North America	674	72%	486	71%
Europe	208	22%	158	23%
Remaining	60	6%	37	5%
Student/Unwaged	286	30%	210	31%
Full	578	61%	413	61%
Sustaining	49	5%	34	5%

Late last year, we were happy to welcome a new liaison organization, the Modernist Studies Association. Unfortunately, the cancelling of a number of societies' annual meetings in the last few months also meant that we did not garner new members through our liaison panelist membership requirements, nor were we able to share membership materials at these organizations to recruit new members.

We hope that this week's #SHARPinFocus events educate or remind potential members of the importance of funding SHARP so that we can continue to support research fellowships, travel grants, and of course, our annual conference. We will continue to investigate ways to make SHARP membership more appealing, the economics of membership more equitable, and our overall membership more diverse.

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MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Sarah Werner reports that the rapid development of Covid and shift to online teaching has refocused some of the work to engage SHARP's support of book history pedagogy away from in-person events to creating digital resources. In coordination with the new *SHARP News*, Sarah is developing *SHARP in the Classroom*, a peer-reviewed division of the *News* that focuses on sharing and assessing teaching resources. Different sections will share syllabi and classroom assignments, evaluate existing teaching

resources, reflect on pedagogical strategies, and provide space for students and other voices from the classroom to speak about book history. Please contact me for the initial call for pieces and with any questions.

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CONFERENCES

Josée Vincent has had a very busy year:

- I coordinated the surveys (participants and organizers) after the Conference in Amherst and organized deposit of material from the conference for the SHARP Archives.
- I liaised with Lisa Kuitert for the organization of the Amsterdam Conference concerning the move to Conftool, the selection of papers, travel grants, and many logistical and administrative matters. Since March, I have been in touch with her constantly in order to renegotiate the planning of the Conference for 2022.
- Last summer I was in touch with many scholars in order to find a venue for the Conference in 2022: Portland, Chicago, and New Jersey were on the list. Finally, Milwaukee made a formal proposal, but Covid has stymied those plans.
- I worked with SHARP members and scholars and institutions outside SHARP to plan for the future of SHARP Conferences with respect to issues of diversity, sustainability, and online options.

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TRANSNATIONAL AFFAIRS

During most of this past year, **Simon Frost** has coordinated 29 regional liaison officers representing 28 different countries. These liaisons do everything from supplying brochures and other promotional material for local events to mounting seminars or focused conferences. In early 2020 Simon announced that he would have to end his long service on the EC, having created a dynamic and engaged team of liaisons. The EC unanimously welcomed **Jan Hillgärtner** to fill this position from May 2020 until the 2021 AGM and looks forward to supporting several events later this year.

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PUBLICATIONS

Corinna Norrick-Rühl oversees our three publications—*Book History*, *Lingua Franca*, and *SHARP News*. In her first year as Director of Publications, she has focussed on re-launching *SHARP News* under new editorship. She convened the appointments committee that selected Andie Silva as the new editor of *SHARP News*, and Nora Slonimsky as head reviews editor. The new look will be launched during SHARP in Focus week on June 15, 2020. Corinna also conducted a publications questionnaire which several hundred members completed (thank you to all who replied). We will work with the results, together with the editors of SHARP's publications and the Director of Electronic Resources, Giles Bergel, to make our publications more accessible and visible online. Corinna has also moved toward more sustainable production of *Book History*: the journal has transitioned to recycled paper for the upcoming issue, and green publishing targets are being met by JHUP for *Book History*.

Corinna proposed a semi-regular virtual BYOB (Bring Your Own Book) book launch party for SHARPists; the first iteration will be held during the SHARP in Focus week on June 16, 2020. If you have any questions about our publications, please be in touch.

publications@sharpweb.org

AWARDS

Melanie Ramdarshan Bold oversees the *DeLong Book Prize* and the *Book History editors' prize* for the best essay submitted to the journal by a graduate student: these will both be awarded at the virtual AGM. Melanie extends her sincere thanks to the judges of the book prize: Martyn Lyons, Michael Hancher, Brigitte Ouvry Vial, and Fiona Black. This year also saw the second award of the SHARP 25th Anniversary Fellowship to Dr. Jane Raisch of the University of York (UK). Dr. Raisch's research project examines the pre-history of the 'facsimile' during the letterpress period.

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ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Giles Bergel oversees SHARP's online presence. In the past year, SHARP upgraded its web hosting to provide more security and bandwidth and migrated all of its executive email to a single system to assist archiving of correspondence. SHARP also migrated its *Book History Unbound* publication into a new Wordpress instance, improving the publication, discoverability and referencing of contributions, which are now typically released under a Creative Commons (CC-BY-NC-SA) license. A new conference management system (ConfTool) was selected for the Amsterdam conference. Keeping information current on the website – an ongoing task – has been greatly assisted by SHARP's Executive Assistant, Ellen Barth, and by the timely reporting of outdated information by SHARP affiliates and members.

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ARCHIVES AND RECORD-KEEPING

Vincent Trott has scheduled and minuted Executive Council and Board meetings throughout the year and generally kept the organization functioning smoothly. Along with Ellen Barth, he has been responsible for tracking all the registrations and corresponding about access to the SHARP in Focus events. He has also worked with SHARP's archivist, Jessica Ryan, to ensure that the society's records are archived effectively.

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SHARP Board of Directors Annual Report 2019–2020
Marija Dalbello (Chair, Board of Directors, 2020–2021)



Meetings of the Board of Directors in 2019–2020

Since the Board of Directors met at the AGM during the annual SHARP conference in Amherst, Massachusetts on July 17, 2019 (with six directors in attendance, including two incoming), two meetings were held in the 2019–2020 reporting year: November 7, 2019 (with nine directors in attendance) and June 10, 2020 (with 12 directors in attendance). Minutes of the meetings and main decisions were kept by the Recording Secretary.

Membership of the Board of Directors in 2019–2020 (with retirement dates)

Anne Coldiron, 2021; Marija Dalbello, 2023 [chair]; Mike Everton, 2021; Danielle Fuller, 2023; Alan Galey, 2023; Lisa Gitelman, 2023; Adam Hooks, 2023; Matthew Kirschenbaum, 2023; Bonnie Mak, 2023; Simone Murray, 2021; Brigitte Ouvry-Vial, 2023; Ruth Panofsky, 2021; Susan Pickford, 2023; Goran Proot, 2023; Nelson Schapochnik, 2023

Three new directors joined the board (2019–2020): Lisa Gitelman (New York University, USA), Matthew Kirschenbaum (University of Maryland, USA), Brigitte Ouvry-Vial (Le Mans Université, France). Two directors, Kevin Absilis and George H. Williams, completed their terms. Projection of retirements (2021): Anne Coldiron, Mike Everton, Simone Murray, Ruth Panofsky. At next year's elections members will need to elect at least one new director and could elect up to four (the constitution allows the Board to operate with 12–15 directors).

AGM Agenda

- Welcome & brief remarks on officers' reports *Shef Rogers*
- Acknowledgment of organizers of SHARP in Focus *Shef Rogers*
- Announcement of SHARP Prizes
 - George A. and Jean S. DeLong SHARP Book History Prize
Melanie Ramdarshan Bold
 - Book History Essay Prize *Greg Barnhisel, Beth Le Roux, Yuri Cowan*
- SHARP plans for 2021 and beyond
- Members' announcements
- Any other business