

Exposició

1933-2003

Comissió Internacional
per a l'estudi de la Història de les Institucions
Representatives i Parlamentàries

Comisión Internacional
para el estudio de la Historia de las Instituciones
Representativas y Parlamentarias

International Commission for the History
of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions

Commission Internationale
pour l'Histoire des Assemblées d'États

Internationalen Kommission zur Geschichte des
Ständewesens und der Parlamente



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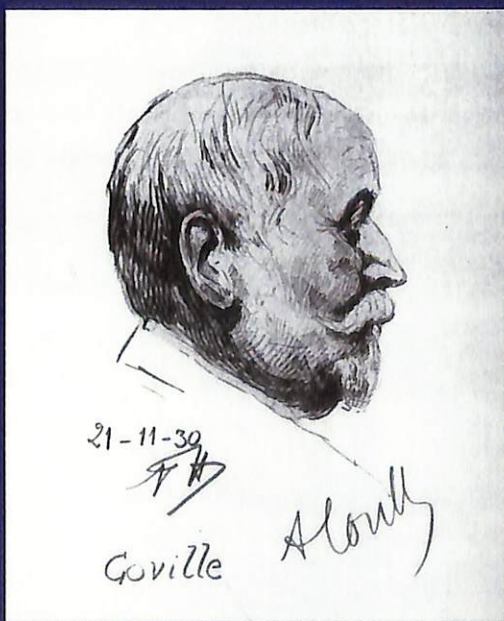
Museu d'Història
de Catalunya

1933 – 2003

In its first incarnation, as the Commission internationale pour l'histoire des Assemblées d'états, the International Commission was the brainchild of two historians, the Belgian Émile Lousse (1905 – 1986) and the Frenchman François Olivier-Martin (1897 – 1952). Olivier-Martin, who was professor of legal history at the Sorbonne and a member of the Institut de France, proposed its creation at a meeting of the International Congress of Historical Sciences held in Warsaw in 1933. The proposal was approved, and the International Commission was established two years later. It was formally recognised as a "commission extérieure" by the International Committee of Historical Sciences at its meeting in Bucharest in 1936. This date is normally taken as marking the birth of the new body. It held its first meeting the same year in Lausanne, jointly with another body, the French Société de l'histoire du droit (with which it was to hold further joint conferences sporadically for about forty years). Its first autonomous conference took place in Paris in 1937, and a year later, a small bureau was created, composed of a president, a vice-president, and a secretary.

The first president was the French mediaevalist Alfred Coville (1860 – 1942). A student of the École des chartes, Coville had written a thesis on the Estates of Normandy in the fourteenth century. By 1938 his career had taken him to the higher echelons of the Ministry of Education and to the presidency of various bodies and societies, including the Société de l'Histoire de France. The vice-president was the Italian Senator Pier-Silvero Leicht (1874 – 1956), a specialist of the parliaments of Friuli who had pioneered the editing of the acts of the hold parliaments of the Italian peninsula. François Olivier-Martin seems not to have sought office, and clearly the most active member of the new bureau was the Secretary, Émile Lousse. He was a young professor at the University of Louvain, where he subsequently created a research centre which became the nucleus of the Belgian section of the Commission, Ancien Pays et assemblées d'états/Standen en Landen.

Among the early members of the Commission were two English parliamentary historians, Helen Cam and Frederick Powicke, the Swiss expert on William of Ockam, Georges de Lagarde, the Hungarian Elémer Malyusz, the German Heinrich Sproemberg, and the Pole Karol Gorski. Lousse started the publications of the Commission in a series of *Studies*, which initially contained conference proceedings. The Second World War disrupted the work of the Commission and cut its members off from each other. Lousse managed to keep the series of *Studies* in existence by publishing monographs in Occupied Belgium. One of these was his own seminal work, *La société d'ancien régime; organisation et représentation corporatives*, a first volume (the second never appeared) published in 1943 and re-edited in 1952. Lousse contribution to the Commission was threefold. He attacked the influence of Stubbs on parliamentary history in Britain and on the continent. He strove to re-invigorate the study of pre-French Revolutionary continental representative assemblies in the context of the society in which they functioned. Finally, believing that such assemblies had their origins in common societal impulses, he encouraged his colleagues to adopt a comparative approach. His emphasis on the corporative nature of pre-revolutionary societies was less favourably regarded after the Second World War, though the force of his arguments, re-stated in a text completed in 1981 and published only last year, is undeniable.



Alfred Coville



Szekesfehervar (Hungary, 1972)

After the war, the members of the Commission met again in Paris in 1950 on the initiative of Olivier-Martin. Coville had died during the war, but Leicht was still alive. Helen Cam (1885 – 1968) was formally elected president. Holding a degree from the University of London, Helen Cam had taught on both sides of the Atlantic, and at the time of her election, she held a chair at Harvard. She had published *Liberties and Communities in Medieval England* (1944). Lousse continued as secretary and had a good access to publishers in Belgium. Sadly the Iron Curtain had severed many links with central and eastern Europe. The Romanian scholar George I. Brătianu was able to send a text which was published with the acts of the Paris conference, but he was already under house arrest and was later imprisoned at Sighet where his inhuman captors brought about his death in 1953. Still some contact was maintained with Sproemberg, Gorski, Malyusz and, later George Bonis in Hungary. In the West, there were new recruits to the Commission: Carlo Guido Mor and Antonio Marongiu in Italy, H.G. Koenigsberger in Britain and W.F. Church and J. Russell Major in the United States, where a thriving section soon established itself.

Perhaps the most significant change that took place in Paris in 1950 was the adoption of a second title for the Commission. While retaining the original name, it acquired that of International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions at the suggestion of Helen Cam. The purpose of adding the new name, which was not translation of the original French title, was to enable the Commission to encompass studies of the English Parliament and to extend its chronological range beyond the disappearance of the *ancien régimes* of Europe. This extension of scope seemed to be matched by the growth of the Commission: there were ten countries represented in Paris in 1950; when it met in Rome in 1955, there were seventeen, grouping some forty scholars. Within a further ten years, when the Commission met in Vienna on its thirtieth anniversary, it could boast a membership of 290 scholars drawn from 32 countries. A post of treasurer had been created in 1950 so that the Commission could collect a modest subscription from its members. Since 1995, Lousse was assisted in his task by an assistant secretary, H.G. Koenigsberger. That year, two vice-presidencies were created, and their number eventually reached ten.

At Stockholm in 1960 Lousse became president (Helen Cam moving to an honorary presidency) with Koenigsberger as Secretary. The Commission continued to prosper during this period as the beautifully produced volumes of the *Studies* appeared regularly. When Lousse left office ten years later, he was succeeded by the Italian Antonio Marongiu (1902 – 1989). Marongiu was a specialist of the Sardinian parliaments, though he ranged widely over the field of European history and political theory. He held chairs in Pisa and later in Rome, and during his presidency the Italian section grew in size and range. In a sense, however, his ten-year presidency coincided with a period of weakness for the Commission. Lousse and the new treasurer, Herman van Nuffel were still in charge of publications, but Lousse's publishers were losing money. UNESCO and university grants were no longer plentiful. It was appointed Director of Publications in 1977 to remedy the seeming inability of the Commission to publish its conference papers.



Lisbon (Portugal, 1992)

It was under the presidency of H.G. Koenigsberger (born 1918), who was elected for a five-year term at Bucharest in 1980 (under a new constitution adopted in San Francisco in 1975), that the problem of publication was solved. I found an English publisher who suggested creating a twice-yearly journal to be called *Parliaments, Estates & Representation / Parlements, États & Représentation* to publish articles and conference papers in English, French and German. Started in 1981 under my editorship, it has continued to thrive under three subsequent editors and a new publisher, though it is now an annual publication in hard covers.

Like Helen Cam, Koenigsberger had taught in America as well as in Britain, where he held chairs at Nottingham and later in London. His work on the Sicilian parliaments and on the Estates of the Low Countries had established his reputation, and he had been associated with the Commission for many years. During his presidency, the Commission established the practise of holding annual conferences, an trend that was maintained under the presidency of his successor, Salvo Mastellone (born in 1920) who was elected at Stuttgart in 1985. Based at the University of Florence, he was already the editor of the journal *Il pensiero politico*. His own work covered a wide field of European political thought. He raised the profile of the Commission's at a time when *Parliaments, Estates & Representation* was beginning to make its mark as a leading journal in its field. The Commission's annual conferences enabled it to celebrate particular events: the 1688 Revolution was commemorated in Durham and London, the 1789 Revolution in Paris.

If the Commission solved the question of its publications, it faced other, more intractable, problems. Membership numbers had peaked under Mastellone's term of office, but had begun to decline. Some national sections were moribund. Economic trends, changes in historical fashion, and it has to be admitted, "some little local difficulties", had contributed to this situation. There was perhaps also the feeling that the Commission had lost its sense of purpose.

This was the background to the first of my two terms of office as president, when I succeeded Mastellone at Madrid in 1990. Born in 1941, I held a visiting chair at the University of Montpellier-III at the time of my election. Despite some initial difficulties, the new Direction was able to stabilize membership numbers. New sections were created and some old ones revitalized. The financial position was placed on a sound footing by a new and committed treasurer, Jacek Jedruch, a task continued by his wife Eva after his tragic death. I set up a constitutional reform committee, which produced a new constitution in time for adoption at Montreal in 1995. The aim was to ensure that members played a greater part in the election of the Direction. New and younger colleagues were recruited into that Direction. I felt the most useful contribution I could make to the Commission was to devote as much time as my university duties in Durham allowed me, to recruit members, to plan and organize the conferences, to solicit articles, and to re-affirm our aims, as stated on the cover of the journal: "to promote research into the origins and development of representation and parliamentary institutions throughout the world in all periods". The Commission "is concerned with the political theory and institutional practice of representation as well as with the internal organization and the social and political background to parliaments and assemblies of estates". Over the period of my presidency (1990 – 1999), the collapse of the Soviet systems, the growing emphasis on regions and federalism in Europe, were catalysts in the Commission's activities, as the conferences held in Warsaw (1991), Budapest (1994), and Bilbao (1997) demonstrated. A conference at Camerino (1993) in honour of Marongiu showed how much the Commission still owed to its founding fathers and their immediate successors. At the same time, new approaches, like prosopography, were increasingly represented in the choice of conference themes.

In 1999, at Pau, Wilhelm Brauner (born 1943) was elected president. He is editor of the *Zeitschrift für Neuere Rechtsgeschichte* (it is interesting that the last three presidents have all edited journals). A professor at the Law Faculty of the University of Vienna, he is a specialist of history of private law and constitutional law as well as of contemporary institutions. He also has served as a president of the Austrian parliament and as a member of the EU-convention for Human Rights.

He has continued the Commission's expansion into central and eastern Europe (and even into China, with an unofficial conference in Nanjing), in the same way, perhaps, that the successive editors of *Parliaments, Estates & Representation* have extended the journal's range into their own area expertise: French history when I was editor (1981-1990), Spanish with I.A.A. Thompson (1990 – 1995), Scandinavian and Polish with Anthony Upton (1995 – 2001), and probably Holy Roman Imperial with Henry Cohn (from 2002).

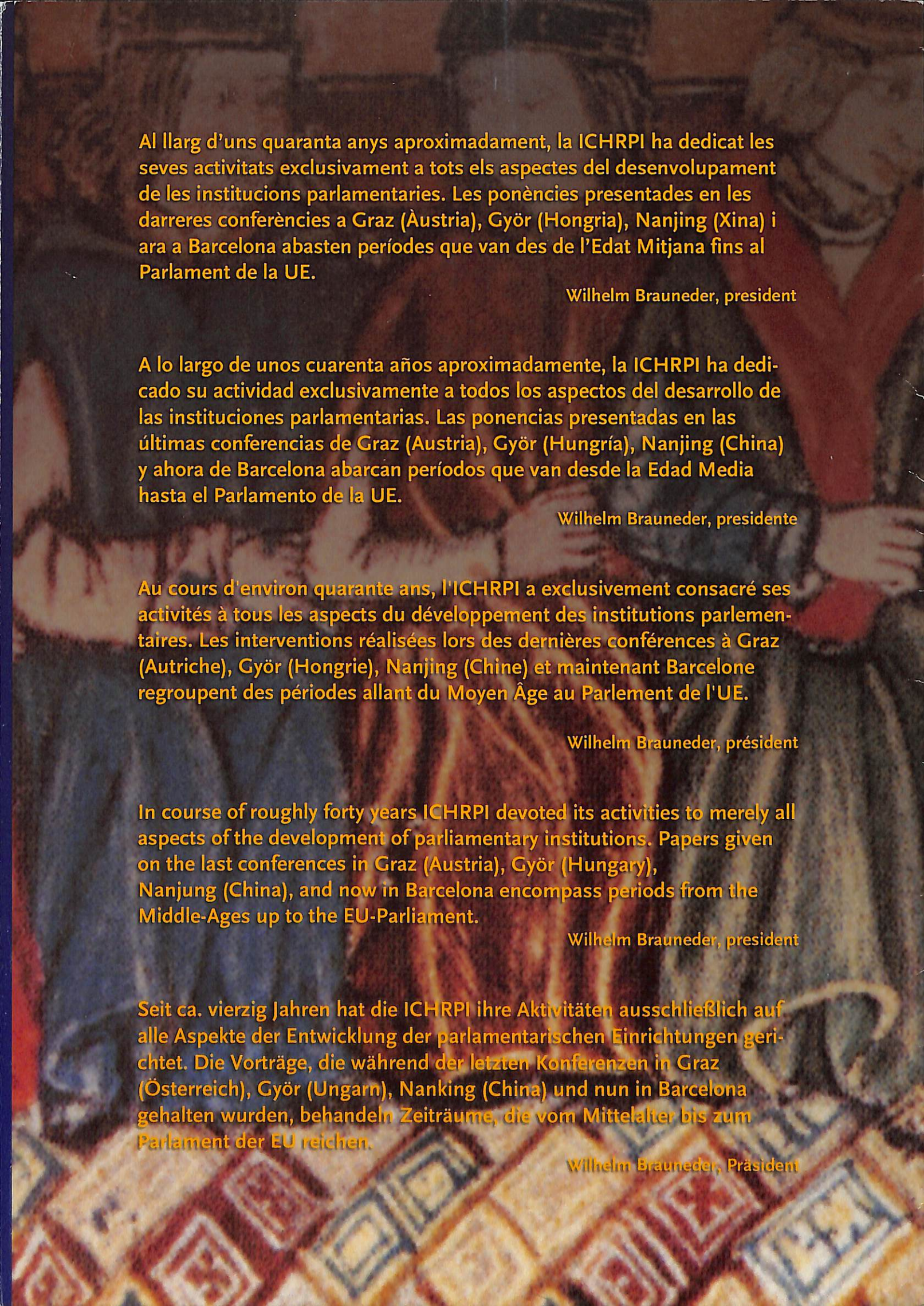
Sadly, in the Commission field of study, there are some scholarly bodies that function without reference to it, particularly in the publication of texts. Closer collaboration would be in the interest of all. Fortunately, the Commission is associated with a project to produce an English translation of all European constitutions. Our venerable series of *Studies*, which seemed doomed at one stage, has reached its eightieth volume, as the journal heads for its twenty-third year of existence. On this seventieth anniversary of the Commission's inception, one has only to look at the programme for the conference in Barcelona to see the range of the Commission's activities and the continued strength of its appeal.

JOHN ROGISTER

Corresponding member of the Institut de France
Honorary President of the International Commission for the History of
Representative and Parliamentary Institutions / Commission internationale
pour l'Histoire des Assemblées d'états.



Gernika, Basque Country (Spain, 1997)



Al llarg d'uns quaranta anys aproximadament, la ICHRPI ha dedicat les seves activitats exclusivament a tots els aspectes del desenvolupament de les institucions parlamentàries. Les ponències presentades en les darreres conferències a Graz (Àustria), Győr (Hongria), Nanjing (Xina) i ara a Barcelona abasten períodes que van des de l'Edat Mitjana fins al Parlament de la UE.

Wilhelm Brauner, president

A lo largo de unos cuarenta años aproximadamente, la ICHRPI ha dedicado su actividad exclusivamente a todos los aspectos del desarrollo de las instituciones parlamentarias. Las ponencias presentadas en las últimas conferencias de Graz (Austria), Győr (Hungría), Nanjing (China) y ahora de Barcelona abarcan períodos que van desde la Edad Media hasta el Parlamento de la UE.

Wilhelm Brauner, presidente

Au cours d'environ quarante ans, l'ICHRPI a exclusivement consacré ses activités à tous les aspects du développement des institutions parlementaires. Les interventions réalisées lors des dernières conférences à Graz (Autriche), Győr (Hongrie), Nanjing (Chine) et maintenant Barcelone regroupent des périodes allant du Moyen Âge au Parlement de l'UE.

Wilhelm Brauner, président

In course of roughly forty years ICHRPI devoted its activities to merely all aspects of the development of parliamentary institutions. Papers given on the last conferences in Graz (Austria), Győr (Hungary), Nanjung (China), and now in Barcelona encompass periods from the Middle-Ages up to the EU-Parliament.

Wilhelm Brauner, president

Seit ca. vierzig Jahren hat die ICHRPI ihre Aktivitäten ausschließlich auf alle Aspekte der Entwicklung der parlamentarischen Einrichtungen gerichtet. Die Vorträge, die während der letzten Konferenzen in Graz (Österreich), Győr (Ungarn), Nanking (China) und nun in Barcelona gehalten wurden, behandeln Zeiträume, die vom Mittelalter bis zum Parlament der EU reichen.

Wilhelm Brauner, Präsident

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