OTSEM
OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES:
EPISTEMOLOGIES AND METHODS

A NORDIC-GERMAN NETWORK FOR
OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES

Minutes

From the Third Steering Committee Meeting, Göttingen, 24 May 2005

Present: (a) members of the Steering Committee: Terje Stordalen, Else K. Holt, Hanne Løland, Hermann Spieckermann; (b) network node contact: Fredrik Lindström; (c) for the Local Committee of Göttingen: Corinna Körting, (d) for Timo Veijola: Martti Nissinen.
Absent: Timo Veijola, Helsinki, Hans M. Barstad, Oslo

1) Evaluation of the Second Annual Conference

A preliminary review of the evaluation forms handed inn by *all* participants indicates that the Göttingen conference was a devastating success. General impressions: On a scale from 1 (best) to 5, the Short Paper sessions in general were rated to 2, the overall impression of the conference scored 1.5, and the organising of the conference was rated 1.2.

Six participants explicitly remarked that their best experience was the response to and discussion on their own paper. An additional 10 participants remarked more in general that the short paper sessions were among the most positive experiences.

Congratulations to the Göttingen Local Committee and to Corinna Körting!

Specific issues:

1) The panel discussion was a success and should be followed up. The Committee proposes that the Third Annual Conference contains a workshop on one given biblical text (preferably a poetic text from within the prophetic corpus), with a group of panellists presenting a cluster of approaches to that text; for instance redactional critical, socio historical, comparative and synchronic readings. Every member should be informed about the choice of text and so have an opportunity to prepare their own reading.

Terje Stordalen will follow up on preparing this element for the next conference.

2) For the coming conferences, it is desirable that lectures offered will be formed as part of a doctoral education program, rather than being specimen of "hard research". They would preferably give an overview of research field at hand, and be delivered in a communicative manner.

2) Elections for the Steering Committee

Hermann Spieckermann has announced a need to withdraw from the Steering Committee due to his heavy work load as Dean in Göttingen.

The Committee proposes the following two candidates for the Steering Committee (both may be elected): Fredrik Lindström, Lund and Corinna Körting, Göttingen.

3) Finances and Network Activity

The OTSEM economic situation is good. There was a surplus of around 11.000 Euros after the Granavolden conference, and it has increased to a total of approximately 31.000 Euros (a tentative figure!) after the completion of the Göttingen conference.

Some doctoral students have asked for funds to sustain travelling and visiting within the network. The Committee proposes the following arrangement:

A total of 10.000 Euros is allocated for travel funds for the year 2005. Each travel project can release up to 1.000 Euros. All members that are otherwise without travel funds may apply. Doctoral students are encouraged to apply and to travel within the network.

An application, describing the purpose of the travel, duration and estimated cost is sent directly to Terje Stordalen. The application must be accompanied by a welcoming letter from a professor or researcher at the receiving institution. After having travelled, a report must be submitted to the network leader.

OTSEM is dedicated to continuing this kind of funding to increase and sustain future network activity.

4) The Third Annual Conference

The Third Annual Conference will take room in Ebeltoft, outside Aarhus, Denmark from the morning of 29 May 2006 to the early evening of 31 May 2006. The Aarhus Group serves as Local Committee, headed by Else Holt.

Important dates: Proposals for Short Papers are to be sent to Else Holt by the end of January 2006. Even preliminary registrations should be submitted at the same time. The actual short papers are to be handed in around 15 April 2006. Final registration for participation also is to occur around 15 April 2006.

5) Prospective Annual Conferences

The OTSEM grants are given only through 2006, with an option for prolongation for 2007 and 2008. If prolongation is given, the 2007 conference will be in Helsinki, probably in the end of April. The 2008 conference is scheduled for Lund, also in the end of April.

6) Minor Questions

- The evaluation form and process of the Second Annual conference was reviewed. The Steering Committee opts not to make any changes neither to the form nor to the procedures for evaluation.
- Peter Porzig, Göttingen has promised to try to help putting pictures from the OTSEM conferences on our website. Thanks to Peter!
- Large groups (Göttingen, Lund and Helsinki) can have more members and also more conference participants than smaller groups. The local groups are themselves to decide policy in this matter. However, only a certain number of participants from each group are financially sustained for the annual conferences.

7) Perspectives for OTSEM in the future

The present OTSEM funding will end in 2006 or 2008, at the best. We need to start planning for continuation, if there is to be one. A possible scenario was sketched by Terje Stordalen.

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