Oslo 11 September, 2019

OTSEM
OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES:
EPISTEMOLOGIES AND METHODS

Minutes - Coordinating Comittee Meeting – OTSEM II - London 2019

Sunday 1 September 2019, 11.30-12.30, Room 2.47, Franklin-Wilkins Building, Waterloo Campus, KCL

Present at the meeting: Joanna Bauer (Stavanger, PhD rep.); Manfred Hedley (KCL, PhD rep.); Ingunn Aadland (MF, newly elected Postdoc rep.); Anti Laato (Aabo, LC); Jan Dietrich (Aarhus, LC); Frederik Poulsen (UCPH, LC); Anja Klein (Edinburgh, LC); Reinhard G. Kratz (Göttingen, on behalf of F. Ede, LC); Martti Nissinen (Helsinki, LC); Corinna Körting (Hamburg, LC); Paul Joyce (KCL, LC); Fredrik Lindström (Lund, LC); Kristin Joachimsen (MF, LC); Urmas Nõmmik (Tartu, LC) and Anne Katrine de Hemmer Gudme (Oslo, LC + NC + minutes).

1. Reflections on the current meeting

-News from the PhD Students

Joanna Bauer and Manfred Hedley were both re-elected as PhD representatives. Congratulations!

Positives: very good schedule; sufficient time for breaks and socializing between sessions; the conference reader was very helpful; dietary requirements were excellently handled; accommodation was (very) close to conference venues; single rooms were much appreciated; the website and the mailing lists are a source of joy (!).

Problems: some participants received confirmation of their participation quite late; some of the key words on the website were a bit messy (we can avoid this when planning future meetings)

Suggestions for future meetings: 1) remember to announce start and end times as early as possible + preliminary sign-ups as early as possible; 2) invitation-email -> remember to make it clear that anyone who wishes to join the meeting should sign up freely (prelim registration). In case it is necessary to limit numbers due to restrictions of space and time, the organizers will be in touch. No OTSEM members should impose self-restrictions on participation at the prelim registration stage; 3) It would be helpful, if other paying options than credit card could be made available; 4) it would be particularly helpful for the PhDs if name badges could somehow be coded (with a colour?) so that they could recognize each other at the meeting; 5) perhaps organize food on arrival, because people have been travelling?(if finances allow it of course); 6) The OTSEM requirements may be in need of a revision/clarification with regard to the structure and content of the 10-minute presentation -> the CC will ensure that the OTSEM requirements are clear on this point.

Questions and discussions:

1) Some PhDs were missing an introduction-to-OTSEM before the meeting. We encourage all LCs and all network members to advertise the OTSEM requirements (available on the website), and we take the opportunity to remind the LCs that they are

responsible for initiating new members into the OTSEM format (again, the requirements are a good starting point).

2) Would it be possible to have longer meetings? In the CC, we see this as a most positive request! Unfortunately, it is difficult for OTSEM members with teaching obligations if the meetings are significantly longer, but we can encourage PhDs and postdocs to start their program earlier (see 4. below).
3) Would it be possible to have more slots? Regarding total length of meetings, see above. We agreed that it is not a good option to shorten sessions, but we can do three parallel sessions in each slot instead of two. The three parallel sessions has been tried in earlier years with varying success, it makes more 'room' in the program, but it also dilutes the common conversation a bit. In the end, it is up to the local organizers to decide if they want regular parallel sessions or if they want some sessions to be triple sessions.
4) The PhD-students would like to have a social event or 'mixer' just for doctoral students – perhaps on the first day. The CC encourages the PhD rep.s to get in touch with the local organizers of the 2020 meeting as soon as possible in order to add a social event to the program. The postdocs are invited to do the same, of course, if they feel that it would be helpful for them (see below).
5) Is the CC willing to issue a guarantee so that PhD rep.s are always able take part in meetings? The CC cannot issue such a guarantee, because it would make the task of planning meetings even more difficult for local organizers than it already is. We are very conscious of making life as easy for the local organizers as at all possible. We are also most grateful to the PhD and postdoc rep.s who take it upon themselves to represent the interests of their peers, but we maintain the OTSEM tradition that if a representative (PhD/Postdoc/Local) is for some reason unable to attend a meeting, the rep. makes sure that a stand-in is in place for the relevant meetings. This ensures the necessary representation and continuity and it has worked throughout the network's history.

-News from the Post-Docs

Ingunn Aadland was elected as a new postdoc representative. Jessi Orpana was re-elected as postdoc rep. Congratulations!

Positives: postdocs are happy to give responses; very good conference format; very good atmosphere during sessions; accommodation -> nice to stay in the same place + much appreciated to stay in an inexpensive place, because many postdocs have little or no funding for work-related travel.

Problems: Some participants received confirmation of their participation quite late -> try to make this (+ start and end times) known as early as possible -> it significantly reduces costs when you book tickets early; There seems to have been some confusion in some sessions regarding whether both PhDs *and* postdocs (or PhDs only) are invited to give first responses during discussions -> the CC will ensure that the OTSEM requirements are clear on this point; the program on Saturday was quite full.

Suggestions for future meetings: some kind of social event for postdocs would be nice (cf. 4. above)

-Reflections in general

This has been a very successful meeting; the organizers have done a tremendous job

Paper presenters are encouraged to observe the 6500 word limit for papers (cf. the requirements).

2. Organisation of the next meeting(s)

2020: Göttingen (Fri Sept 4-Sun Sept 6 2020)

AKG will send a handy summary of the most relevant points from 1) (above) to the organizers of the 2020 meeting in Göttingen in order to help them with the preparations.

2021: Lund

Fredrik Lindström will be in touch regarding dates for the meeting over the coming months (before the end of the year).

2022: We have asked the Kiel-group to consider if they would be willing and able to host the annual OTSEM meeting in 2022. They are looking into it and will get back to AKG in November 2019.

3. Membership application from the OT/HB group at Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel

The CC unanimously agreed to recommend to the OTSEM business meeting that OTSEM accepts the membership application from the OT/HB group in Kiel.

4. OTSEM membership and level of participation

(Discussion point – not a decision point)

The CC had a good and constructive conversation about the need to balance pragmatism and flexibility with the network's need for actively participating member institutions.

As a network we remain deeply grateful to and appreciative of all the members who invest time, energy and money in the OTSEM meetings.

OTSEM's primary goal is to create a high-quality academic experience (in-depth responses, professional networking, collegiality) for PhDs and postdocs, and therefore the ideal is that both senior and junior scholars from all member institutions participate in the meetings as often as possible. We understand and appreciate that this ideal cannot always be met by all, but we do encourage all network members to aim for it as often as possible.

5. The OTSEM charter

The draft for the revised OTSEM charter was approved by the CC.

Paul Joyce kindly accepted to help with proofreading before the document is made public.

6. The Red Rose Ceremony

(Discussion point – not a decision point)

We did not have sufficient time to discuss this point in detail, but we shall keep an eye on the rose ceremony over the next couple of years and see how it develops and consider if any changes are necessary.

7. Any other business

Corinna Körting asked if it would be possible to allow international students to write papers and present in German instead of English, if they are more familiar with academic German than academic English, but have neither German nor English as their first language. The CC agreed to give this a try and see how it goes.