OTSEM Charter

Confirmed by the OTSEM Business Meeting in London, UK, 1st September 2019*

Brief Description

OTSEM is a Northern European network of scholars working in the field of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (HB/OT) studies and affiliated with institutions offering PhD education in this field. The object of the network is to improve the environment for HB/OT research, especially doctoral and post-doctoral research, by inspiring contact and cooperation between members and departments throughout the network. Members are expected to take part in network activities, including that of ongoing academic exchange.

Purpose

The purpose of OTSEM is

• To maintain and enhance a rich and supportive academic context for PhD scholars and post-doctoral scholars working in the field of HB/OT studies.

• To maintain and enhance networking and cooperation between member-affiliated institutions.

• To maintain and develop a sense of academic fellowship between scholars working in the field of HB/OT, continuing a practice that helps them benefit from each others' competences and from the collective academic force that OTSEM as a group embodies.

• To serve as an academic context for members and members' institutions applying for external funding.

The Annual Meeting

The core activity of the network is the annual meeting in which younger scholars present their work and receive feedback. The member institutions volunteer to organize and host the annual meeting as often as they are able. Annual meetings are coordinated by the Coordinating Committee and funded either by central funding (where possible), by local funds (where feasible) or by individual members.

Background and Development

As a network we have gone through several phases of co-operation and growth. In the "pre-OTSEM" period before 2004 there were some ten years of bilateral and trilateral cooperation. During the OTSEM-I period (2004-2008), funded by the research council of the Nordic Ministry, the network grew to include eventually scholars at eleven university institutions. In the present OTSEM-II phase, the network keeps growing. In this second phase, the network continues the academic and social traditions established in its earlier phases (OTSEM-I and "pre-OTSEM" meetings). In this phase OTSEM is a multi-nodal network, where each member

*This charter is a revised version of the 2010 OTSEM charter, which was confirmed by the Business Meeting in Skálholt, Iceland, on 15th September 2010. The 2010 charter was a slight revision of the charter from Granavolden on 8th December 2008, which again was based on OTSEM practice since 2004 and on deliberations in the OTSEM Steering Committee in Copenhagen on 26th February 2008 and in the OTSEM Business Meeting in Lund on 23rd April 2008.

group or institution takes responsibility for planning and conducting network activity – bilaterally or multilaterally – within the network. In its second phase, OTSEM aims to maintain network activities that include seminars and conferences, PhD courses, exchange of teachers, exchange of tutoring services, research visits, assistance in publication, etc. Whenever feasible, relevant arrangements are openly announced within the network and admission is granted to all members, albeit with their own economic support.

Organization

Individual Membership

Each institutional group is responsible for deciding precisely what is necessary to fulfill affiliation criteria and hence to be an OTSEM member.

Local Representatives

Each member institution appoints a local OTSEM representative. This local representative is responsible for distributing information between the local group and the OTSEM network (through the Coordinating Committee).

Coordinating Committee

The OTSEM Coordinating Committee consists of all the local representatives plus the two PhD representatives and the two post-doctoral representatives, together with the network coordinator. The Coordinating Committee is responsible for (a) maintaining and developing the network so as to support the OTSEM purposes (above), (b) giving advice and, if relevant, support for local representatives and institutions undertaking network activities, and (c) securing that host institutions and organizers for OTSEM annual meetings are found well in advance.

PhD and Post-doctoral representatives

PhD and post-doctoral representatives are elected in separate meetings in these groups during the annual meeting. In order to ensure adequate representation in the annual Business Meeting, two representatives are named from among the PhD and post-doctoral members respectively. These two agree among themselves how to represent their groups in the Coordinating Committee meeting and in the Business Meeting.

Network Coordinator

The OTSEM Network Coordinator is nominated by the Coordinating Committee and elected by the OTSEM Business Meeting for a period of three years. If there is a need to elect a new coordinator without a Business Meeting being convened, election is conducted by all members voting by e-mail to a member of the Coordinating Committee. The Coordinator and her or his institution are responsible for (a) promoting the network and its purposes, (b) maintaining a simple website that presents the network and facilitates OTSEM's purposes, (c) acting on behalf of the network, when members need network endorsement of their applications for external funding, etc., and (d) administrating any funds that are awarded to the network.

The Business Meeting

The OTSEM Business Meeting is the highest authority of the network. It elects the Network Coordinator and discusses all matters pertaining to the policy of the network. The Business Meeting convenes whenever there is a plenary OTSEM Meeting and if the Coordinating Committee or five of its members request a sitting.