



Minutes of the Pre-Business meeting, 8th of August, 20.00-22.00

Participants:

Margaret Clunies Ross, representing Kári Gíslason (Australia), Maria Winkler (Austria), Sofie Vanherpen (Belgium), Bernardine McCreesh (Canada), Marie Novotná (Czech Republic), Matthew Driscoll (Denmark), Daniel Sävborg (Estonia), Kirsi Kanerva, representing Joonas Ahola (Finland), Grégory Cattaneo, representing Cyril de Pins (France), Hubert Seelow (Germany), Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (Iceland), Massimiliano Bampi (Italy), Tsukuso Itó (Japan), Fernando Guerrero (Mexico), Kees Samplonius, representing Lars van Wezel (Netherlands), Odd Einar Haugen (Norway), Jakub Morawiec (Poland), Tatiana Jackson, accompanied by Fjodor Uspenskij (Russia), Teodoro Manrique (Spain), Agneta Ney (Sweden), Jürg Glauser (Switzerland), Carolyne Larrington (United Kingdom), Merrill Kaplan (United States), and as organizers of the Aarhus Conference: Pernille Hermann, Jens Peter Schjødt and Ulla Loumand,

Referent: Lisbeth H. Torfing

Chair: Pernille Hermann

Agenda

- 1: Presentation of the delegates
- 2: New delegates 2012-2015
- 3: Minutes from the Uppsala meeting
- 4: Proposed agenda for the Business Meeting, Saturday the 11th of August
- 5: Forthcoming conferences
- 6: Size of future conferences
- 7: Pre-print volumes
- 8: Other matters

1: Presentation of the delegates

The delegates were presented.

2: New delegates 2012-2015

It was suggested to add Argentina to the list of countries with national delegates. The national delegates were asked to find their representative for the next period before the Business Meeting. A certain time and place was appointed for all national groups to convene.

3: Minutes from the Uppsala meeting

The minutes from The Uppsala saga conference, 2009, were available beforehand and at the meeting. The minutes were accepted.

It was decided that in the future minutes from the saga conferences must be available online after the conferences. They can be available on the conference webpage of the individual conferences. To secure that they will not disappear, Matthew Driscoll suggested that the domain sagaconference.org could function as an additional archive. It was discussed whether it should be an archive



of links, pdf-files, or copies of the original conference webpages of the hosting institutions. It was pointed out that it would not cost much to maintain a domain and pdf-files of the relevant material do not take much server space. The difficulties of finding documents from all the previous conferences were pointed out, since they were much more informal earlier and possibly did not have formal minutes in the same way as now. It was pointed out that all previous conferences had pre-prints and that at least the table of contents could be scanned for the archive. It was asked who will be responsible and who will pay for such an archive. Matthew Driscoll said that he would hire a student and spend the remaining money from the Saga Society for this purpose. It was decided to propose such an archive at the Business Meeting.

4: Proposed Agenda for the Business Meeting, Saturday the 11th of August

The organizers and the Danish representative of the international advisory board proposed an agenda, based on previous business meeting agendas. It was decided that the agenda should reflect discussions at this meeting.

5: Forthcoming conferences

Jürg Glauser presented a proposal for the 16th International Saga Conference, 2015, in Zürich and Basel. An informal proposal was presented already at the last conference in Uppsala. Letters of invitation and support were presented. Organization will be much like this conference, but with a university secretary handling all formal matters rather than a congress office. The budget and price will be at the same level as at this Saga Conference. As Switzerland is expensive, costs for the conference itself will be kept down. The proposed structure is most days in Zürich and one full day in Basel (one hour's drive from Zurich). This structure would be much like the Durham conference and give the opportunity to visit two cities. The dates suggested are 9th – 15th August, but the previous week was mentioned as a possibility as well. Switzerland is easy to reach from many places. The proposed theme is Sagas and Space, which links well with the theme of the Aarhus conference, which has to do with time. Proposed sessions are Constructing Space; Mediality; Textuality and Manuscript Transmission; Bodies and Senses in the Scandinavian Middle Ages; Continental Europe and Medieval Scandinavia; Literatures of Eastern Scandinavia; Reception of Old Norse-Icelandic Literature; Open Session. The plan is to keep the format of poster presentations and extend with a new category of project presentations. Three excursions were suggested. It is also possible, provided there is interest, to arrange a longer tour to other Swiss cities after the conference.

It was asked if the organizers would have to pay for facilities, and Jürg Glauser answered that the universities would provide these free of charge and would also support the conference financially. It was suggested that the Business Meeting could be moved to Friday, since many leave the conference on Friday. Jürg Glauser replied that they will try to hold it before the dinner on Friday. The well prepared invitation from Zürich and Basel was accepted with many thanks.

Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir put forward a suggestion for Iceland to hold the 2018 conference with manuscripts as a focus point. The Russian delegation declared that they did not believe that Russia was ready to host a conference yet. There are problems with obtaining visa for Russia. Everyone will hope for a better situation in the future. The proposal from Iceland was welcome among everyone. It was pointed out, however, that it will be the third time in Iceland.

6: Size of future conferences

The length of the saga conferences was discussed, one opinion was that they are too long, and that maybe the excursions could be in the end of the conference, or simply be dropped, so that people could leave before the excursions. An opinion, however, was that the length is good and that it is good to have a break in the middle, also excursions are good for networking, but of course the day for excursions and Business Meeting is up for discussion and can be decided by the hosting university. Another argument for keeping the present format was that shortening the conference would alter it radically and require hard selection of papers.

The high number of papers and paper proposals were debated. It was discussed how the selection of papers are to be done in the future. The present organizers asked for more formalized guidelines for the proposal of papers, for example that they should fit the theme of the conference. Then selection could fairly be more restrictive. It was pointed out, that an automatic exclusion of younger scholars from the conference in favour of senior scholars and professors, is not the way to



go. An argument to stay open to younger scholars, is that this is *the* international conference in the field and the number of young scholars attending is generally seen as a positive thing. They are the future of the field and should not be excluded. It was pointed out that it is not common at other conferences to accept most papers, and doing this has a cost. It was suggested that screening should be harder, and that more parallel sessions could be added, even if there are already many. It was stated that these discussions about length and screening were also present in Uppsala, and that there are differing opinions. The present organizers pointed out that the high numbers of papers and participants had been used as an argument to have the university to support the conference, and that it confirms the relevance and existence of saga-studies.

New formats of presentations were proposed, e.g. project presentations (which may be a good opportunity for younger scholars) and shorter formats, such as 20 min papers.

7: Pre-print volumes

The organizers stated three reasons for the changes made in the Pre-print format this year: changes in bibliometrical system meaning that in many places this format does not count as a publication; uncertain status of previous preprints in relation to the orally presented papers; size of the Pre-Prints, this year two volumes would not be enough, rather three volumes, which would be unpractical to carry around during the conference, and a heavy work load on the organizers. Therefore, a format was chosen which would clearly not have the status as publication, but which would function during the conference helping to choose between papers. It was further argued that if the point is that the preprint is a guide to the conference, the shorter format is better.

It was suggested, however, that preprints should document the contents of the conference, so papers should be full size. It was mentioned that there had been a discussion about electronic storing of papers post-conference, where people would send a text on their own responsibility. It was suggested that a change of name and some editorial work could make them count in the bibliographical systems. It was stated that many people seemed to favour the old way of doing preprints, but that it could cause some problems with referencing if the papers were later on published as articles in journals or other works. It was also argued against the idea of preprints that the amount of work put into something which is not a proper publication could be too high. It was pointed out that papers might be better if people were forced to produce a text for the preprint. Also, in some systems the preprints count as publication. It was pointed out that it is nice to have the preprints if you are not editing them yourself. A good possibility is to give people the opportunity to publish online on their own responsibility. Jürg Glauser said that he would consider the many useful comments and suggestions. It was suggested that preprints should be discussed at the Business Meeting to hear the voices of others. This was agreed.

The agenda for the Business Meeting was decided.

8: Other matters

The meeting was ended as there were no other matters. Refreshments were offered.