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BAJS Annual General Meeting – 11 July 2016

University of Birmingham

Present: James Aitken, Martin Goodman, Francois Guesnet, Charlotte Hempel (President), Hannah Holtschneider (Web Officer), Sarah Pearce, Andrea Schatz, Helen Spurling (Secretary), Sacha Stern, Holger Zellentin (Treasurer) and other members.

Apologies: Nathan Abrams, Maria Diemling (Bulletin Editor), Daniel Langton, Larry Ray, James Renton, Zuleika Rodgers

1. Welcome, Apologies and Matters Arising

Helen Spurling opened the meeting and welcomed members.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were confirmed as an accurate record of the previous AGM at Manchester.

3. Committee and Officers

The approval of the AGM was requested for the re-election of Nathan Abrams and James Renton to the committee for a further period of five years, which was granted. Yulia Egorova was approved for the position of President Elect 2018. Helen Spurling requested the approval of the AGM to create a new Social Media officer role, which James Renton would take up in recognition of his regular work in this regard on behalf of BAJS. James Aitken asked whether members had been notified and HS explained the procedures. Approval for the new role was granted. HS reported that Hannah Holtschneider would be stepping down as Web Officer in order to take up the Presidency in 2017 and Zuleika Rodgers had agreed to take on the role. HS announced that Daniel Langton would be stepping down from the committee after over 15 years of dedicated service in different roles, and the AGM thanked Daniel for all his contributions.

4. BAJS Essay Prizes

Helen Spurling reported that there were 8 entries for the essay prize this year, which consisted of 5 UG entries and 3 PG entries from a range of institutions in the UK. The submissions were particularly strong this year and so the level of competition was high. Two prizes at UG level were announced and one winner at PG level. The winners were: Emilie Wiedemann (Edinburgh) for 'Processes of Narrative Construction and the Politics of Memory in the Interpretation of Holocaust Art'; Adam Groves (Southampton) for 'From Gaza to the Streets of Britain: British Social Media Coverage of the 2014 Israel-Gaza Conflict'; and Miruna Belea (Manchester) for 'The Magical Use of Religious Texts: A Cognitive Approach to Religious and Cultural Textual Elements on an Amulet from Gaster's Collection at the John Rylands Library'.

5. President's report

Charlotte Hempel reported that the conference was going very well, with some thought-provoking approaches to intertextuality and a lot more still to come. CH thanked contributors for all their input, and also the committee for all of their support in the lead up to the conference. CH reflected that we are working in uncertain times with regard to government HE policy and that we need to work together more than ever before as an Association. CH called for members to help to grow the organisation and promote the field of Jewish Studies.

6. Treasurer's report

Holger Zellentin presented a financial report for the year, which showed that BAJIS is in a healthy position financially, although the cost of producing the Bulletin was high and increasing. HZ noted that subscriptions are often unpaid by members, or the amount of money paid does not reflect current subscription rates. HZ requested that anyone with outstanding subscription dues should get in touch with him. HZ reported that 13 new applications for membership had been received since the AGM at Manchester, including 8 student applications. The list of applicants approved by the committee for membership was circulated for information.

7. Secretary's report

Helen Spurling reported on communications with members. In order to save money and promote more regular contact, HS asked the AGM for feedback on a proposal to switch from the mail-out once a year in hard copy to electronic newsletters throughout the year. The Bulletin could still be available in hard copy for those who opted in to receive this. Sarah Pearce suggested that electronic communications are the best way forward if they provide a substantial saving for the Association. Martin Goodman also agreed that electronic communications were a good idea if they provided more regular contact. It was agreed to move ahead with e-newsletters rather than a mail-out. HS reminded the AGM that Katie Power (Southampton) was elected to the BAJIS studentship. Katie works on Yiddish theatre in London in the early twentieth century and she had provided a profile for the Bulletin. HS noted the benefits of the studentship both in terms of career development for Katie and support for the Association. Katie had worked on updating the BAJIS database to ensure that members receive communications, and she would now begin working on redeveloping the BAJIS website as a longer-term project. HS reminded that the last AGM had approved the appointment of a PG/ECR representative to sit on the committee and help to build and support a postgraduate community in Jewish Studies. Interviews were held during the conference and HS was delighted to announce that Marton Ribary (Manchester) would be the first PG/ECR representative. HS also announced the decision by the committee to affiliate with the Arts and Humanities Alliance, which is an association of societies that work together to promote the interests of Humanities at a national level.

8. Web officer's report

Hannah Holtschneider reported that everything is going well with the website, and there is a good amount of usage. Members are encouraged to pass on announcements to HH for posting on the website. Members are also reminded to sign up for automatic notifications at <http://britishjewishstudies.org/>. HH noted that the website would be overhauled during the next year and that she had handed over to Zuleika Rodgers to take this forward.

9. Bulletin editor's report

Helen Spurling reported on behalf of Maria Diemling. HS noted that the Bulletin was available in conference packs and the committee hoped that members enjoyed reading about news and successes over the last year. MD had made a huge effort again with the Bulletin this year, and HS thanked MD for all her hard work. HS noted that we rely on members to give us information so called for members to send news items. HS also noted that MD would welcome feedback on the Bulletin. Sacha Stern commented that not everyone responds to reminders and he appealed to members to contribute, as this builds up the Association and demonstrates all the activity going on in Jewish Studies. SS also pointed out that it is really important in the event of political activity (such as regarding recent events in Manchester) for members to participate and show support.

10. Conference 2017

Hannah Holtschneider presented the CFP for the 2017 conference to be held in Edinburgh. The conference will run from 10-12 July 2017, with a non-academic programme on Sunday 9 July. The current theme is 'Migration of People, Texts and Ideas', which should bring together scholars from different disciplines and chronologies. HH requested feedback on the CFP to ensure it is inclusive of all fields.

11. Social Media

Helen Spurling reported on behalf of James Renton. The Association now has a Facebook page and Twitter account, but these only work well with contributions from members, and HS noted that JR encouraged members to send material to him.

12. Any Other Business

On behalf of the membership, Helen Spurling thanked Charlotte Hempel for a highly successful conference.

13. Date of next meeting

The next AGM will take place during the 2017 conference in Edinburgh.

provisional minutes, 27/07/16