

*Minutes
Board Meeting
The Nordic Society of Middle Eastern Studies
Lund, February 17, 2012*

Participants: Jørgen Jensehaugen, Anitta Kynsilehto, Leif Stenberg and Liv Tønnessen.

1. *Opening of the board meeting*
2. *Approval of agenda*
3. Liv Tønnessen elected chair of the meeting
4. Leif Stenberg elected secretary of the meeting
5. Brief report from individual countries:

Finland: Four positions advertised at the Tampere Peace Research Institute, and a new MA-program starting in September 2012 including modules on the Middle East. A postgraduate seminar in Middle East studies established at Tampere. The Tapri grantee of 2012 finalizes a thesis on Lebanese youth to be defended at the University of Tampere. The Finnish institute in Damascus has, due to the situation in Syria, been relocated to Amman, Jordan.

Norway: Bjørn Olav Utvik, Oslo University, has been appointed to the rank of Professor, and Kjetil Selvik has been taking up a position at Bergen University. The Center for Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at Oslo University is developing and scholars from Oslo and Bergen have been active participating in public discussions and blogging on the Arab spring.

Sweden: At Lund University the Center for Middle Eastern Studies continues to develop and plans for a relatively large conference on the Arab Spring in late April 2012. In general, scholars in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies are active in the public discussions on the Arab spring.

Denmark: No board member from Denmark present.

A general comment is that the study of Islam, the Middle East and relevant languages appear to be prosperous in the Nordic countries. The number of students and PhD students are fairly high in all Nordic countries.

6. *Future activities of the Nordic Society:* Leif will work on an application during March concerning funding for the society in general, and for the PhD course. The aim is to arrange a PhD course entitled *Secularism, Nationalism and Religion: The formation of the future Middle East?* in Istanbul, October 8, 2012. This will also be the title of the next conference of the Nordic Society arranged in Lund 2013.

7. *Administration of the Nordic Society*: In Lund Christina Rothman, unit administrator, and Olof Heilo, post doc, at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies will together with Leif Stenberg be the core team of the Society. Christina works on the new home page, registry of members, and is the contact person of the society in general, and Olof will have a certain responsibility for the PhD course in Istanbul. One aim of the home page is to present research on the Middle East in the Nordic countries. Jørgen Jensehaugen will also participate in the work on the new home page.

8. *The next conference of the Nordic Society*: The board briefly discussed the planning procedure of the next conference in Lund 2013, and decided that the theme of the PhD course *Secularism, Nationalism and Religion: The formation of the future Middle East?* will also be the title of the conference in Lund 2013. The board also discussed different possible keynote speakers, but decided that the organizers in Lund will make the final decisions on this point.

9. *Babylon*: The board decided that Jørgen Jensehaugen will present an idea on how to relate the journal *Babylon* to the Nordic Society to the next board meeting in Finland.

10. The board decided to open a new bank account in Lund and transfer its funds to the new account. The board also decided that Leif Stenberg and Christina Rothman have access to the account and they are responsible for managing it, and reports to the board about the financial status of the society at board meetings. Hence, they are the only ones with access to the account.

11. Next board meeting will be in Tampere August 24-25, 2012, and in conjunction with the Finnish colloquium of Middle East and North African Studies.

Lund March 7, 2012,

Leif Stenberg

Liv Tønnessen
Certifier/Attestant

Jørgen Jensehaugen
Certifier/Attestant