

Board Meeting

The Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies

Copenhagen, Denmark, December 2, 2013

Venue: University of Copenhagen.

Present: Ehab Galal, Dietrich Jung, Jon Nordenson, Susanne Olsson, Christina Rothman, Leif Stenberg, Liv Tønnessen, Pekka Tuominen,

1. Leif Stenberg opened the board meeting and thanked Ehab Galal for arranging the board meeting.
2. The board approved of the agenda
3. Leif Stenberg was elected chair of the board meeting
4. Susanne Olsson was elected secretary of the board meeting.
5. Brief reports from the individual countries were made.

Sweden:

The Centre for Middle Eastern Studies in Lund arranges the event 48H in Syria (<http://www.cmes.lu.se/events/48h-of-syria48-timmar-syrien/>), 5-7 December 2013.

Leif Stenberg briefly informed about the recently opened Institute for Turkish Studies at Stockholm University.

Leif Stenberg also announced that the position of director at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul will be announced every third year.

Denmark:

Ehab Galal informed about Islamic public sphere Conference *'Mediatized Nostalgia i the Middle East'* in 19-20 of June 2014, Copenhagen.

Dietrich Jung informed about a conference in Odense, The Levant in Transformation. The Syrian Crisis in Regional Perspective, which will be held at University of Southern Denmark, 23-24 May 2014.

Organized by the Center for Contemporary Middle East Studies, University of Southern Denmark. The conference has received funding from the Danish Institute in Damascus Contact: Dietrich Jung.

Norway:

Jon Nordenson announced that the University of Oslo has decided that the Middle East is a privileged research area, which he hopes will lead to new positions.

Babylon has two new editors, and has celebrated its 10th anniversary.

Finland:

There will be a conference in Åbo in June 2014, arranged by the FIME. The board agreed that board member Hannu Juusola, who could not attend the meeting, could add information about Finland after the meeting:

New Positions etc

Since the beginning of 2014 we will have a University lecturer of Middle East Studies at our unit (ME studies, Department of World Cultures)

Former Board member of the Nordic Society and a Yemen specialist, Susanne Dahlgren is currently holding a position of University Lecturer at the Department of Development Studies

Relevant dissertations in 2013

Päivi Miettunen, who participated in the 1st Nordic PhD School in Cairo & Alexandria, defended her PhD thesis (Middle East Studies University of Helsinki) entitled *Our Ancestors were Bedouin: Memory, Identity and Change. The case of Holy sites in Southern Jordan* in December. The opponent was Dr. Andrew Petersen, University of Wales. The study is a cross disciplinary study on the meaning of the holy sites for the development of Bedouin identity in southern Jordan.

Tytti Erästö defended her PhD thesis entitled *Enforcing the laws of anarchical society: the case of Iran in the United Nations Security Council*, International Relations University of Tampere (published: Acta Universitatis Tamperensis; 1801, Tampere University Press, Tampere 2012. ISBN 978-951-44-9024-8, ISSN 1455-1616. or Acta Electronica Universitatis Tamperensis; 1277, Tampere University Press 2012. ISBN 978-951-44-9025-5, ISSN 1456-954X. <http://tampub.uta.fi>.) She is now a visiting fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School's Belfer Center. To the best of my knowledge, Tytti is the first in Finland who wrote a dissertation on a topic that is related to modern Iran.

Relevant books:

Alaranta, Toni. *Contemporary Kemalism: From Universal Secular-Humanism to Extreme Turkish Nationalism* (Routledge Studies in Middle Eastern Politics, 2014)

Luomi, Mari. *The Gulf Monarchies and Climate Change: Abu Dhabi and Qatar in an Era of Natural Unsustainability (Power and Politics in the Gulf)* (2013). Mari has been working in Qatar (post-doctoral fellow for the Center for International and Regional Studies of Georgetown University's Qatar campus).

Other news

CMI nowadays has a relatively active program on the Middle East headed by Mouin Rabbani (see <http://www.cmi.fi/about-us/staff/directors-heads/733-mouin-rabbani> and <http://www.cmi.fi/about-us/staff/middle-east-and-north-africa>)

6. Christina Rothman gave brief information about the outline and function of the website and the board discussed its form and uses. All boardmembers are responsible for keeping it updated. All boardmembers will be administrators to help out to update the website. Boardmembers takes responsibility to add posts every second week.

News about conferences, publications, events et cetera should be sent to Christina Rothman.

The website should function as a source of information.

It was decided to include also Ph.D. dissertation announcements on the website.

A twitter and a Facebook account of the NSM should be used to spread information about conferences for example, but with low activity. For example once a month.

7. Christina will open the page. The financial status of the Society was presented. The present total sum is 158,000 skr. Leif Stenberg argued that it gives the possibility to make a Ph.D. course, to sponsor the next conference and pay for the travel expenses for board meetings. Leif Stenberg also announced that he has applications in Swedish that can be used to apply for money for a Ph.D. course, and he will circulate this to the board.
8. Activities in 2014 were discussed. Leif Stenberg announced that there will be some kind of Nordic event at the WOCMES.

Leif Stenberg will also attend the FIME conference and represent the NSM.

Christina Rothman will design a flyer with information about NSM to be used at conferences.

As for the Ph.D. course, the board agreed that we should arrange one. That we should apply early 2014 for funding and announce it as soon as possible.

A decision was made that we will only arrange it if we get funding. Leif Stenberg announced that he has an offer from the chair of the Italian society for Middle Eastern Studies to co-arrange an event at Venice University which may host the Ph.D. course. The board members delegated to Leif to continue this discussion.

Leif Stenberg now has the responsibility to apply for funding from Sweden. All board members will check the possibilities to apply for funding in their countries.

As for the theme, it was decided that Dietrich Jung by the end of January shall present a suggestion based on his research on modern Muslim subjectivities. The theme must be broad enough to attract many Ph.D. students.

Moreover, it was discussed to make the even in the form of a workshop where Ph.D. students can apply and make sure it is possible for the Ph.D. students to make it as a part of their education. This discussion will continue in the beginning of 2014.

9. NSM membership

Christina Rothman informed about the current list of members, which is going to be updated. She informed about the registration process on the website and payment.

It was agreed that all board members have the responsibility to recruit new members.

Christina Rothman will design a flyer that can be used to distribute to students and others that may be potential members.

Christina Rothman will send out a reminder in the beginning of 2014 to encourage people to pay the membership fee.

10. Next board meeting

It was decided that we will not have a board meeting during the spring semester. Decisions concerning the Ph.D. course/workshop will be made by e-mail per capsulam. An informal board meeting will be held at the WOCMES.

It was decided to hold the next board meeting in Copenhagen, due to its location and possibilities of cheap flights for the board members. The date will be set later, depending on when there is a need to meet.

11. Other questions

One other question was added concerning the next NSM conference in 2016 to be arranged by Denmark. Dietrich Jung will form a committee to begin the planning of the conference.

Leif Stenberg closed the meeting