

Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies
Board Meeting, 16 August 2019, Helsinki University
Minutes

Present: Mark Sedgwick, Thorir Jonsson Hraundal, Pekka Tuominen, Ulla Prien, Magnus Halsnes, Charlotte Lysa, Olof Heilo, Laura Wickström
Absent: Helena Lindholm

1. Opening

- a. Introduction round of board members.
- b. Appointment of secretary of the meeting (to take minutes): Magnus Halsnes
- c. Approval of agenda: The discussion of the MidEast Wire is added in the agenda as point 7c.
- d. Review of minutes of last meeting and updates of their current status (Mark): Member management system Wild Apricot is implemented and works nicely. Earlier member management problems are now under control.

2. Status reports: Membership (Mark)

- a. 92 members registered, fairly evenly across the countries. One-year membership has now been discontinued. There are more student members from Finland than anywhere else, most likely because of the conference. There have been some problems with payment as you need an account to pay with PayPal in Norway. We need and should get more members, both for the income and to engage people as we are a network society.

3. Finances

- a. Discussion of accounts for 2016–19. Mark presented the accounts. We do not yet know if we will have a surplus from the 2019 conference yet, but we are hopeful. Discussion on that BRISMES rent places for publishers at their conference, and that this is an issue to investigate further. The board have no further comments.
- b. Discussion of budget vs actual for 2018–19: Presented by Mark. The board have no further comments.
- c. Presentation and approval of budget for 2019–20: The board approved the budget presented by Mark.

4. Reports

- a. Website and Facebook: Pekka, the communication officer, presents. Webpage works nicely. Discussion if job adverts might work on the website, but this would

create much maintenance on a static site, and Facebook would probably be a better place to post these. Facebook at present have 462 likes/488 followers. The board agreed that there should be an increase in Facebook posts to about one per month. The content being thought of as announcements of new doctoral candidates, doctoral defences and new appointments and other news that is relevant for most of the society's members. To reach out more and make it manageable it was agreed that all members of the board becomes an administrator of the Facebook page and can share interesting relevant information. The information should be information relevant for the Nordic countries, not just at the local level. If the posting becomes too much, it will be scaled back.

- b. Proposal to publish conference papers. Pekka informs that conference papers will not be published by the conference organizers.

5. Officers

- a. Appointment of Secretary: Olof Heilo is appointed Secretary
- b. Appointment of Vice-Chair: Charlotte Lysa is appointed Vice-Chair
- c. Reappointment of Treasurer: Ulla Prien is reappointed.

6. Coming events

- a. 2020 PhD school in Bergen: Last PhD school in London was cancelled, and 2020 should be done differently. A PhD school in Bergen in 2020 is proposed to maybe be a part of the Bergen Summer School. A discussion on what went wrong with the London school was that it was partly a funding issue, in addition to no information on credits, and that it was announce too late. For the next PhD school, the board agreed that 5 ECTS should be recommended for participation and that it should be framed to include most of the Middle East PhD candidates in Nordic Countries. The board discussed various organisational issues of a PhD school.

Matteo Legrenzi from the Ca' Foscari University of Venice presented a proposal for a joint doctoral/postdoc summer school between the Italian association for Middle Eastern studies and the NSMES. This would consist of a workshop over two days, with about 20 people from the Nordic countries and Italy in total. Some funding that would most likely cover accommodation for participants and one speaker would be available. This stage is an exploration stage.

For practical reasons the board agreed to swap the years of the PhD and

MA seminars. The PhD school is postponed to 2021, and the MA school moved to 2020 in Gothenburg. Date to be decided by organisers, Helena and Olof. A board meeting will be held at the same time in Gothenburg, where the board will consider the different options for the PhD school: proposals for the PhD school in Bergen, Matteo's proposal for the PhD school in Italy, and potentially a PhD school in Åbo (Laura will check out this option). To organise the school a PhD student and a more senior researcher needs to be appointed: PhD Candidate: Magnus. Senior researcher: Mark.

- b. 2021 MA school in Sweden. The last MA school was a success and the board agreed that it should be repeated along the same lines. The MA school will be combined with a board meeting. The MA school was to be in 2021, but due to practical reasons it has been swapped with the PhD school, and moved to 2020. Sweden is responsible for the organising of the school this time around and the board hopes for it to be organised in Gothenburg in 2020. Olof follows up.
- c. 2022 conference in Iceland. Not much to be done this year.

7. Other issues

- a. EURAMES bulletin proposal: The board concludes that in future the EURAMES bulletin should be sent only to members of the society.
- b. Possibilities to get grants to support NSMES: Subject deferred to next board meeting.
- c. Discussion on MidEast Wire, and if this should be offered to members for €15 each, to be collected by the NSMES and paid on to the European Association. The board agreed that this should be an offer for members.

8. General brainstorming

- a. Deferred to next board meeting.

9. Any other business

- a. *Nidaba*, the digital interdisciplinary Journal for Middle East Studies at Lund University, has run out of funding, but as it has both an established system and structure, it is open to be taken over by someone.