

## MINUTES

From the NSM Boardmeeting, Oslo, Nov. 15, 2008

Present: Kjersti Berg, Jacob Høigilt, Sylvia Akkar and Anitta Kynsilehto, Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, Annika Rabo and Pernilla Myrne.

1. Introduction and approval of Agenda  
Head of meeting: Pernilla Myhre. Referent Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen.  
The agenda was approved.
2. Minutes of the Jan. 08 Board Meeting  
The Minutes from the January meeting were approved
3. Reports from individual countries.
4. Report from the Ph.D. course in Egypt.

Overall, the Ph.D. course in Egypt was a success. As the evaluations also testify, the Ph.D. students were enthusiastic about the program of visiting media and meeting with media personalities in Cairo, and they found that the system whereby their individual projects were commented upon by both instructors and fellow students worked well and was useful for their work. Also, the cooperation with both the Danish and the Swedish Institutes worked fine.

There were some changes from the original design, and some lessons to be learned. The original intent of combining two themes - the new media and the constitution of texts – fell apart when Lena Ambjørn had to withdraw from the course. So only the media part was implemented. In the selection of the Ph.D. students several things did not go according to plan. Although we tried to contact them personally, no Danish candidates applied. Also, the Danish Institute insisted that the contract explicitly limited the candidates to come from the Nordic countries. Finally, we met with Egyptian scholars, but not with Ph.D. students, as we had hoped.

The Board found that such Ph.D. courses should be continued, as they bring Nordic scholars together at an early stage of their career, and the Nordic region provides the critical mass of Ph.D. students not found in the individual country. Ideally, a Ph.D. course should be held within each period of three years, and cooperation with the Nordic institutes in the region is an attractive option.

5. The financial situation

- a. We have 99.914 NOK and will receive 2588 Euros from Helsinki conference.
  - b. Members to 2010: 106 members.
  - c. With board meetings as an annual expense of app. 20.000 nok per year, there is some surplus.
  - d. The Bergen Center cannot handle the finances any longer. The Board asked Kjersti Berg to look into ways of reorganizing
  - e. The Board could apply to Nordforsk. A working group will look into this.
6. Discussing activities: the newsletter, Babylon.
- For this point, Jørgen Jensehaugen of Babylon gave a presentation of the journal which is relaunched as a peer-reviewed journal, The Nordic Journal for Middle Eastern Studies, expanding into Denmark and Sweden, both for reviewers, writers and readers. It will have a database and distribute.
- Still, the journal will be predominantly in Scandinavian, but English language articles are accepted. The Board discussed various formulas for cooperation.
- It was decided that the Society distribute a formula calling for peer reviewers for the Journal, and a call for papers.
- On the newsletter: Jacob reported that there has been only one issue during the latest year, and it was not very structured. It was decided that the next Board meeting shall discuss a web strategy.
7. Future Activities: The Next conference in Bergen 2010
- Kjersti Berg informed on the preparations. A committee has been established, which is now seeking funds, in the first instance from the Norwegian Research Council. A sketch of the conference title, themes and keynote speakers was presented.
- The Board requested that a subject on language or literature also be included. The committee will inform the Board on the progress in fund-raising and its deliberations on themes and key-note speakers.
8. Other Future Activities. The Board set up a committee (Jacob, Jakob, Annika) to look into organizing an MA-course for Nordic students, together with a university Department. This is very dependent on how funding would flow with the students.
9. Statutes.
- a. The Board decided that there should be a limit to board membership of three periods.
  - b. Ulla Holm (Denmark) has had to step down from the Board which will continue as seven persons until the General Assembly in Bergen, 2010.
10. Next Board meeting will be on Friday-Saturday, September 18-19, 2009, in Stockholm.
11. Other business. No other business.