

Dear Readers,

As I leave my role as Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) at Lund University, I am able to reflect on how our education and research environment has developed significantly since its founding ten years ago.

We have had the privilege of hosting great scholars who have inspired and challenged us to continue in our work. Aside from the lectures that these visitors have given to the public and to our student body, for me the most important aspect of these visits is the lively discussions that take place in the informal margins of these events. These discussions are vital to the continued innovation of our educational community.

During this time, funding has been granted to interesting and innovative research projects which have allowed our scholars to push forward the state of knowledge in this field, and have allowed our center to grow.

Our extensive outreach program has become well known as a resource for those whose work intersects, in different ways, with the Middle East; people working in the spheres of business, public administration, and education have been able to tap into our expertise. This program grew further in 2016 as we began developing courses that are offered to various state authorities.

And of course our MA Program in Middle Eastern Studies, now in its seventh year, has trained new scholars and equipped them with the knowledge and expertise necessary to make valuable additions to the field. I am delighted to see the work our students and alumni presented here and elsewhere.

For all of this, I am extremely proud of my colleagues and the work they have done, be they students, administrators, or scholars.

With all these developments in mind, it is difficult to pinpoint one that has been the most significant since CMES was inaugurated in 2007. However, launching our first issue of the online, interdisciplinary, journal of Middle Eastern Studies, *Nidaba*, in 2016 made me especially proud. While there are many journals in the field of Middle Eastern Studies, I believe our efforts to produce one that is truly multidisciplinary contributes to the study of the Middle East and reflects the mission of CMES. Starting a new journal is no easy task, and I wish to thank all those whose efforts have culminated in this issue: Not least our Editor, Associate Professor Dalia Abdelhady, and all the scholars who have contributed to this volume. I leave CMES with high expectations that this journal will continue to reflect the creative and lively research of the center that produces it.

Building on the vital contributions made in the first issue of *Nidaba*, this second issue hosts insights from various scholars on the topics of youth, social change, literature and society, and human rights. I trust that it will prove to be a meaningful resource for ongoing research in the field.

Leif Stenberg

Director of Lund University's
Center for Middle Eastern Studies

