Charity in Islamic Societies

Muslim beliefs have inspired charitable giving for over fourteen centuries, yet Islamic history has rarely been examined from this perspective. In Charity in Islamic Societies, Amy Singer explains the basic concepts and institutions of Muslim charity, including the obligation to give on an annual basis, as well as an array of voluntary activities undertaken at every level of society and across the span of individual lifetimes. Charitable endowments – bestowed by rulers, wealthy individuals, and even those of more modest means – shaped Muslim societies and cultures in every era. This book demonstrates how historical circumstances, social status, gender, age, and other factors interacted with religious ideals to create a rich variety of charitable practices, from the beginnings of Islam to the present day. Using written texts, buildings, images, and objects to anchor the discussions in each chapter, the author explores the motivations for charity, its impact on the rich and the poor, and the politicization of charity, arguing that the study of philanthropy affords a unique prism through which to examine the past. This lucidly written and accessible book will capture the attention of anyone who is interested in the nature of Islamic society and the role of philanthropy throughout history.

Amy Singer is professor of Ottoman History in the Department of Middle Eastern and African History at Tel Aviv University, Israel. Her recent publications include Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials (Cambridge, 1994), Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem (2002), Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts (ed., 2003), and Feeding People, Feeding Power: Imarets in the Ottoman Empire (ed., 2007).
THEMES IN ISLAMIC HISTORY comprises a range of titles exploring different aspects of Islamic history, society and culture by leading scholars in the field. Books are thematic in approach, offering a comprehensive and accessible overview of the subject. Generally, surveys treat Islamic history from its origins to the demise of the Ottoman Empire, although some offer a more developed analysis of a particular period, or project into the present, depending on the subject-matter. All the books are written to interpret and illuminate the past, as gateways to a deeper understanding of Islamic civilization and its peoples.

Editorial adviser:
Patricia Crone, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University

Already published:
Chase F. Robinson, Islamic Historiography
Michael Cook, Forbidding Wrong in Islam: An Introduction
David Cook, Martyrdom in Islam
To the memory of Mine An Ener (1965–2003),
friend and colleague
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Acknowledgments

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absence too great for words.
Note on spellings and foreign words

Non-English words have been written in the most familiar form, to the extent possible, for example: Qur’an, qadi, Mecca. Arabic words have been transliterated without diacritics above and below the letters. However, the ‘ayn character (‘) has been retained. Turkish words have been written as they are written in Turkish; where possible, they have been written in familiar forms (for example, pasha). In some cases, they retain Turkish characters, including ç (like the j in jam), ç (like the ch in cheese), ğ (silent), š (like the sh in ship), i (like the u in cushion), ö (like a German ö), ü (like the French ú). Only the first occurrence of a foreign word is italicized. Brief definitions will appear at the first use of a word and in the index.
Abbreviations

d. died
İA İslâm Ansiklopedisi, 13 vols. (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basimevi, 1945–88)
TDViA Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi Genel Müdürlüğü, 1988–)
USC-MSA University of Southern California, Muslim Students Association
Women in Islamic societies: a selected review of social scientific literature. A Report Prepared by the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, under an Interagency Agreement with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence/National Intelligence. p 57 Years of Service to the Federal Government p 1948 – 2005. Library of Congress â€“ Federal Research Division. Women in Islamic Societies. PREFACE. Half a billion Muslim women inhabit some 45 Muslim-majority countries, and another 30 or more countries have significant Muslim minorities, including, increasingly, countries in the developed West. The Islamic Charitable Society is a non-profit charitable organisation located in Hebron in the West Bank. The charity was founded in 1962 to take care of orphans and expanded through years. It is now responsible for two orphanages, three schools for boys and girls, dairy, sewing workshop, two bakeries, a large mall and a 30-apartment building. According to a 2006 episode of the BBC's series