Pascale Ghazale (ed.)

*Held in Trust* is a collection of nine articles plus an introduction and a concluding chapter discussing Islamic pious endowments (*waqfs*) in the Mediterranean, from Thrace to Morocco from the fourteenth century to the twentieth century and beyond. It originated in a 2005 annual history seminar at the Department of Arab and Islamic Civilizations of the American University in Cairo, under the aegis of Nelly Hanna. The past few years have seen a growing interest in the history of Islamic charity in general and the *waqf* system in particular. However, there are still gaps in our knowledge regarding the actual uses of pious foundations by founders and recipients of charitable services alike. This volume contributes to our understanding of specific local institutions on the micro-level, but also to the cognizance of the overall phenomenon of religious endowment in Islam, and its development and change through time and space.

The articles, organized chronologically, are written by an international group of scholars working in Egypt, Italy and Turkey. Some are well-known scholars, but there are also new names in the international arena, some of whom are in fact leading figures in their national academia but are not necessarily known by outside readers. Together they offer a variety of vignettes regarding *waqfs* as social institutions, covering a vast range of periods, regions, and types of endowments. Rıza Yıldırım writes about *waqfs* in the early Ottoman expansion in Thrace; Husam cAbd al-Muqtari authors an article on the Egyptian pious establishments for Mecca and Medina (for the benefit of its inhabitants, services for the pilgrimage, and the pilgrims themselves) during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; Nasir Ibrahim discusses the eighteenth century realities concerning Saladin’s twelfth-century endowment for the benefit of the poor of Alexandria; Michael J. Reimer tells the story of pious endowments in al-Salt in Jordan from the second half of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century; John A. Shoup reconstructs the survival of a medieval *zawiya* in Tafilalt, in the western Sahara, to the middle of the twentieth century; Nelly Hanna concentrates on guild *waqfs* during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries drawing attention to modest endowments and how they served the guilds’ interests rather than conforming to *waqf* practices and regulations; Anna Maria Medici unfolds the history of the Sanusiyya *waqfs* in Cyrenaica during the Italian colonial rule of Libya; Dina Ishak Bakhroum describes the maintenance of several Cairene *waqf* institutions, their present state and architectural conservation; Tuba Akar likewise analyzes the conservation of *waqfs* in an urban...
setting. She elaborates on the ways in which waqfs shape the urban space by looking at the historical commercial centre of Adana; and Engin F. Isin concludes the volume by suggesting looking at Ottoman pious establishments in a more philosophical way as acts of citizenship, even before the advent of the modern state.

The volume posits local narratives. The first four papers and the concluding chapter follow the concerns of the rulers, dynasties, and empires (Yıldırım, ʿAbd al-Muʿtī, Ibrahim, Reimer, and Isin) in the context of local actors’ bid for power. Chapters 5 to 9 problematize the ambivalent relationship of government-local groups revolving around waqfs (Shoup, Hanna, Medici, Bakhoum, and Akar). In this way we get glimpses into everyday realities with regard to founders, many of whom we learn, for instance, are of humble origins. We are also informed regarding the ground administrators who actually kept the waqfs going, and those who were served by the waqfs. Several articles relate also to the legal theory pertaining to waqf and analyze the negotiation between practice and theory, demonstrating the ways in which practice differed from theory, according to the needs of whoever was involved with the waqfs, servers and served.

Similar to other collected volumes, the papers differ from each other, at times quite dramatically. Yıldırım, Hanna, Reimer, Medici, and Isin, for instance, are analytical in their approach to waqfs, while ʿAbd al-Muʿtī, Shoup, Bakhoum, and Akar tend to be more descriptive, summarizing the primary evidence regarding their case studies. The papers also rely on a variety of genres of primary material, either in the original manuscript form or published editions of endowment deeds (Ghazaleh in her introductory chapter, ʿAbd al-Muʿtī, and Akar); hagiography (Yıldırım); court records (Ibrahim, ʿAbd al-Muʿtī, Reimer, and Hanna); financial records (ʿAbd al-Muʿtī, Ibrahim, and Reimer); and modern state records from Egypt (Bakhoum) and Italy (Medici).

In many respects the papers of this volume stand alone and do not refer to one another. Yet the editor, Pascale Ghazaleh draws them together in her introduction by referring to two main recurring themes: the consequences of waqf foundation depended on the uses to which social actors put it (the institution in itself lacks intrinsic impact); and how the community and its ever-changing needs shaped the waqfs, sometimes quite fluidly.

While the volume as a whole works well and presents a coherent picture of the waqf system, past and present, and is well contextualized in the introduction, some of the individual papers could have related more to the relevant comparative published case studies. For instance, the study discussing pious Egyptian endowments to Mecca and Medina, could have provided a much wider view of the case by comparing it to the parallel case of the