The aim of this two-day conference is to take a closer look at the interplay between charity and foundations in the Eastern Mediterranean in a longue-durée-perspective. By choosing a broad chronological and more narrow geographical perspective, we seek to bring together strands of research that have until now been looked at separately. Although the history of both charity and foundations has attracted significant attention in the last twenty years, studies have either privileged a certain religious tradition, a specific time frame or a more general spatial approach.

Rather than following a Western (colonial), Braudel-inspired, perception of the (Eastern) Mediterranean as a static and archaic space with only very few structural changes over time, we are interested in the continuities and ruptures of discourses, practices, structures and norms of philanthropy and foundations from Late Antiquity until the present day. Our aim is to explore examples of giving and endowing in, but also between, the three monotheistic traditions that were most prominent in the region and to contribute thereby, to borrow Peregrine Horden’s and Nicolas Purcell’s phrase, to the history of charity and foundations in, and not of, the Mediterranean. Our special interest is in certain conjunctures and turning points of these discourses and practices: both the charged religious landscape of the Crusades or the 1860s were historical moments in which Christian, Islamic and Jewish philanthropic institutions were created all around the Mediterranean. Although most papers will concentrate on a specific religious tradition at a concise time and geographical space, we encourage the contributors to endeavor to compare their case studies to other religious traditions and other geographical and temporal spheres, in order to find out more about the reciprocal influences of the development of charity and endowments in the Eastern Mediterranean.
Thursday, 23 May

14.30 Welcome and Introductory Remarks

15.00 Session 1: Discourses of Giving and Endowing
Chair: Noémie Duhaut Mainz

Motivations and Misconceptions: Transnational Jewish Philanthropy 1918–1940
Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah Leiden

My Church, My Association: A Constellation of Coptic Christian Charity (21st Century)
Mina Ibrahim Gießen

16.30 Coffee break

17.00 Session 2:
Practices and Structures of Charity and Endowing
Chair: Birgit Kynast Mainz

Foundations in Byzantium from a Social-Historical Perspective
Johannes Pahlitzsch Mainz

The Role of Islamic Charitable Endowments in the Provision of Health Services
Ignacio Sánchez Warwick

18.30 Summary of the First Day’s Discussion

18.45 Travel to Dinner Location

19.00 Dinner for Conference Participants

Friday, 24 May

9.00 Session 3:
The Legal, Political and Economic Dimension
Chair: Roman Shliakhtin Mainz

»Religious« dimensions of charitable waqf making: Legal, political and economic implications
Astrid Meier Halle

Slaves, Philanthropy and Foundations in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire
Veruschka Wagner Bonn

10.30 Coffee break

11.00 Session 4:
The Gender Dimension
Chair: Katharina Stornig Gießen

Women Endowers and Choice of Beneficiaries: Comparative Examples from the Geniza to late Ottoman Times
Randi Deguilhem Aix-en-Provence

12.30 Lunch

14.00 Session 5: The Regional Dimension
Chair: Stanislau Paulau Mainz

»Michigan in Arabia« – a U.S. Studentled Charitable Endeavour to Shape the Future of Iraq beneficiaries: Comparative Examples from the Geniza to late Ottoman Times
Sarah Epping Berlin

Between State Politics, International Relations and Local Charity Traditions: Humanitarian Aid in 20th Century Egypt
Esther Möller Mainz

15.30 Summary of the Conference and Final Remarks

16.00 Departure of Conference Participants