

EDITORIAL FOREWORD

This special issue on the Politics of Benevolence is dedicated to the memory of Mine Ener (1965–2002). She died in tragic circumstances, having succumbed to postpartum depression and taken her own life. Her book *Managing Egypt's Poor and the Politics of Benevolence, 1800–1952* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003) appeared a few months after her death.

Mine dedicated her scholarship to searching for the poor: “I set out to find missing people, individuals who until recently had fallen through the cracks of Egyptian historiography,” she wrote in the preface of her book (p. x). Over a decade after her death, she is sorely missed by colleagues, friends, and family. Her life and death should remind us to look out for those on the margins of society, in poverty, and in pain, and to be mindful of those who slip from the security of the center to the edges.

Through this special issue, we hope to celebrate Mine Ener’s work and the maturation of a field of literature that she nurtured. We thank guest editor Amy Singer for the tremendous effort she put in helping to prepare this issue and for introducing the six research articles. Honoring Mine Ener’s work as a social historian, we asked a number of scholars to participate in a roundtable reflecting on the state of the art and include their responses here. To round out the issue, and in keeping with its theme, we invited Jonathan Berkey to contribute a review article on medieval Islamic social history. We hope his fellow medievalists will see *IJMES* as their home, too.

Beth Baron and Sara Pursley