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FOREWORD

This issue of the Journal is specifically focused on Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Readers will recall that two years ago volume 5 no. 2 was devoted to the theme of Islam in the Balkans. Encouraged by the warmth with which that issue was received, we have decided that from time to time we shall solicit papers on a single predetermined theme. Hence the present collection.

The focus is in fact less narrow than perhaps it sounds. The chronological span is from the eighth century to the twentieth. The geographical span is similarly extended—from the Black Sea to the Great Wall of China—and includes the Volga-Ural region as well. Despite this breadth of coverage, we hope that a coherent thread may be discerned running through all the papers here presented and that they will throw some new light on our understanding of Islamic civilization in this region.

We should like to acknowledge the assistance we have received from our readers and advisers as well as our contributors in putting together this special issue.

F.A. Nizami