Book Launch for
Beth Baron’s
The Orphan Scandal
Christian Missionaries and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood
(Stanford University Press, 2014)

On a sweltering June morning in 1933 a fifteen-year-old Muslim orphan girl refused to rise in a show of respect for her elders at her Christian missionary school in Port Said, an intransigence that led to a beating. News of the beating quickly spread throughout the country, generating a vehement anti-missionary movement. That missionaries had won few converts was immaterial to Egyptian observers: stories such as Turkiyya Hasan's showed that the threat to Muslims was real. Exploring the historical aims of the Christian missions and the early efforts of the Muslim Brotherhood, Baron shows how the Brotherhood developed alongside and in reaction to missionaries. Patterning the organization and social welfare projects on the early successes of Protestant missions, the Brotherhood launched their own efforts to "save" children and provide for the orphaned, abandoned, and poor. In battling for Egypt's children, Islamic activists created a network of institutions and a template for social action across the country—the effects of which, we now know, would only gain power and influence across the country in the decades to come.

Beth Baron is Professor of History at City College and the Graduate Center, CUNY, and the Director of MEMEAC. She is the author of Egypt as a Woman: Nationalism, Gender, and Politics (2005) and The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society, and the Press (1994).

Friday, Sept. 12, 2014
6:30 pm
Room 6304.24

Copies of the book will be on sale

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