Rudolph Peters’ book is about crimes and their punishments as laid down in Islamic law. In recent years some Islamist regimes, such as those of Iran, Pakistan, Sudan and the northern states of Nigeria, have reintroduced Islamic law in place of Western criminal codes. This was after the abolition of Islamic criminal law in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Previously, during the pre-modern period, Islamic criminal law was applied across the Muslim world, and there are many examples of that application in the abundant archives and other sources of the period. Peters gives a detailed account of the classical doctrine and traces the enforcement of criminal law from the Ottoman period to the present day. The accounts of actual cases which range from theft to banditry, murder, fornication and apostasy shed light on the complexities of the law, and the sensitivity and perspicacity of the qādis who implemented it. This is the first single-authored account of both the theory and practice of Islamic criminal law. It will be invaluable for students, and scholars in the field, as well as for professionals looking for comprehensive coverage of the topic.

Rudolph Peters is Professor of Islamic law at Amsterdam University. He has published extensively on the subject. His books include _Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam_ (1996) and _Sharia Criminal Law in Northern Nigeria_ (2003).
Themes in Islamic Law offers a series of state-of-the-art titles on the history of Islamic law, its application and its place in the modern world. The intention is to provide an analytic overview of the field with an emphasis on how law relates to the society in which it operates. Contributing authors, who all have distinguished reputations in their particular areas of scholarship, have been asked to interpret the complexities of the subject for those entering the field for the first time.

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Acknowledgements

I owe a great debt of gratitude to the many persons and institutions that have contributed to the completion of this book. A fellowship awarded to me from September 2001 to March 2002 by the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) in Leiden enabled me to start writing it. I want to thank Muhammad Khalid Masud and Peter van der Veer, the two directors at that time, for giving me that opportunity. Parts of the book were written at the Department of Middle East Studies, New York University, which hosted me in February–March 2002, and at the Harvard Law School, where I worked as a guest researcher during April and May 2002. I am very grateful to Michael Gilsenan, director of the Department of Middle East Studies, NYU, and Frank Vogel and Peri Bearman of the Islamic Law Program of the Harvard Law School for inviting me. I am indebted to Marianne Nolte, then European Union Co-ordinator for Human Rights and Civil Society in Lagos, Nigeria, for being instrumental in securing EU funds that allowed me to visit Nigeria in September 2001 and study the reintroduction of Shari’a criminal law in the north of the country. I want to thank Dr Sami Aldeeb of the Institut Suisse de Droit Comparé in Lausanne for his assistance in collecting the texts of the various Shari’a penal codes enacted in the Muslim world. I am grateful to the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Amsterdam for awarding me travel grants to collect the necessary materials. During my stays in Cairo I was always able to use the facilities of the Nederlands-Vlaams Instituut in Cairo. I want to thank its successive directors Han den Heijer and Gert Borg and its librarian Anita Keizers for making me always feel at home. Khaled Fahmy offered me hospitality in New York and Cairo at various occasions. I thank him for his friendship and owe him a debt greater than he realises. Finally I want to express my thanks to the series editor Wael Hallaq for his comments and criticisms on the first draft of this book.
Map 1. The Ottoman Empire around 1600
Map 2. Countries implementing Shari’a criminal law (dark grey)
Map 3: The spread of Shari'a criminal law in Nigeria (dark grey)