

## Indonesia

*Islamisation and its opponents in Java: A political, social, cultural, and religious history, c. 1930 to the present*

By M.C. RICKLEFS

Singapore: NUS Press, 2012. Pp. 576. Maps, Bibliography, Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463414000162

With *Islamisation and its opponents in Java*, M.C. Ricklefs concludes his sweeping three-volume history of Islam in Java. Over the course of the book's 500 pages, Ricklefs argues that, during the past century, Javanese society has become increasingly and even predominantly Islamic in its cultural forms, politics, and articulations of identity. In order to examine Islam's growing salience, Ricklefs embraces the system of categorisation — first popularised by Clifford Geertz — of Javanese as primarily either devout, practising Muslims (*santri*) or nominal Muslims who profess more indigenous modes of religious beliefs and cultural belonging (*abangan*). Based on this framework, the book conveys an intriguing narrative of *santri* ascent and a corresponding *abangan* decline in modern Java.

In the opening four chapters, Ricklefs traces how the radical polarisation of Javanese society between devout Muslims (*santri*) and nominally Muslim Javanese (*abangan*) culminated with the devastating violence of 1965–6. While the *santri-abangan* division had been fomenting since the mid-nineteenth century, Ricklefs identifies the Japanese Occupation and then the Indonesian Revolution as critical moments of popular mobilisation when the *santri* and *abangan* labels transformed from cultural–religious identities into high stakes political allegiances. In Ricklefs' assessment, this newly politicised rupture was further exacerbated by fierce ideological competition in the 1950s and 1960s. During these turbulent years, Islamic (Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama), Communist (PKI), and nationalist (PNI) parties did not consign themselves to elections and policy debates alone; rather, they came to represent streams of social belonging (*aliran*), complete with their own youth groups, women's associations, labor unions, and even art collectives. Ricklefs argues that these hardened social divisions laid the foundation for the brutal anti-communist massacres of 1965–6, which were largely perpetrated by an Army–*santri* alliance against the predominantly *abangan* PKI.

The book's strongest contribution is Ricklefs's striking analysis of Islam under Suharto's New Order (1966–98). Challenging the common academic characterisation of the New Order as an opponent of Islam, Ricklefs instead presents the Suharto government as a complicated partner in and proponent of Islamisation. In the aftermath of 1965, fears of a communist resurgence inspired the New Order to police many *abangan* institutions such as political parties and religious sects (*kebatinan*). Consequently, 'when the few institutions which supported *abangan* life ... were removed from the scene, the *abangan* side of Javanese society was left vulnerable and disadvantaged in the face of Islamisation projects' (p. 132). Yet, these Islamisation projects were not merely the provenance of politically marginalised modernists; rather, Ricklefs emphasises that Suharto himself threw his hat into the ring,

building the New Order into an Islamising force in its own right. From the late 1960s to the 1990s, it constructed mosques, integrated religious education into public schools, and created a vibrant system of Islamic higher education. Although some modernists continued to criticise Suharto's politics, many more Muslim leaders and organisations embraced the New Order as a powerful ally in Islamisation. By reframing the New Order's relationship to Islam, Ricklefs persuasively outlines the process by which *santris* pushed the *abangan* to the periphery of Javanese society by the end of Suharto's rule.

In Part II, Ricklefs examines the contemporary religious landscape in post-Suharto Java. Because of widespread Islamisation under the New Order, Ricklefs argues that Islam had, by the twenty-first century, emerged as the prevailing language of public life in Java. Accordingly, 'the contending parties [are] less *abangan* and *santri* than defenders of conflicting interpretations of Islam' (p. 256). For Ricklefs, the small and yet proactive Islamist movements have seized the initiative in this competition for Islamic authority, whereas the more moderate mass organisations of Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, albeit still powerful, have been forced to go on the defensive. With the Javanese public sphere dominated by this pitched battle over who speaks for Islam, Ricklefs stresses that little space remains for non-Islamic alternatives, whether they be Christian, secularist, or *abangan*.

In Part III, Ricklefs briefly explores the significance of Javanese religious history in relation to broader disciplinary conversations. He highlights important parallels between the Islamisation of Java and global upswings in religiosity in the Islamic world and beyond and discusses how Javanese politics reflect critical philosophical debates concerning freedom and justice.

In order to craft his clear and nuanced history of Javanese Islam, Ricklefs draws masterfully on a diverse range of sources. He interweaves in-depth case studies of Islamic politics in Surakarta, Kediri, Yogyakarta, and Surabaya with carefully considered statistical data on political and religious affiliations across Java. Likewise, in addition to expertly synthesising existing scholarship from both Indonesian and Western academics, he also introduces readers to new historical sources, including numerous Indonesian publications and oral interviews, and thus to a fresh perspective on key events and individuals. This wide array of material enables Ricklefs to produce a rich and yet comprehensive history of Islamisation in Java.

Although primarily a work of political and social history, at times the book calls for closer attention to Islamic intellectual history. For example, while Ricklefs often mentions competing Muslim views on implementing *shari'a* in Indonesia, the book rarely interrogates specific conceptualisations of *shari'a* and the arguments marshalled to support or reject them. Similarly, Ricklefs chronicles recent attacks against Islamic liberals, among others, but does not expound upon the terms of the criticisms. Without more detailed examination of such intra-Islamic debates, the book leaves questions concerning the nature of these conflicts over Islamic authority and the religious and intellectual stakes for those involved unanswered.

Overall, Ricklefs' *Islamisation and its opponents in Java* brings his wide-ranging and richly textured history of Islam in Java to a highly satisfying conclusion. Whether read together with his two earlier volumes or as an independent work of scholarship,

Ricklefs's book is both easily accessible for non-specialists and thoroughly engaging for those already well-versed in modern Indonesian Islam.

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*Potent landscapes: Place and mobility in eastern Indonesia*

By CATHERINE ALLERTON

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013. Pp. ix + 221. Maps, Plates, Notes, Bibliography, Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463414000174

*Potent landscapes* is bookended by a greeting often heard by visitors to a southern Manggarai village: 'This is the shape of our land here'. A 'humorous apology with modest pride' (p. 1) but also a glint of defiance, it encapsulates the complex, fluid entanglements between people, things, spirits, places and the land around which Allerton's highly readable monograph revolves. Its ethnographic focus is the 'two-placed, partly resettled village' (p. 5) of Wae Rebo-Kombo, where Allerton has conducted ethnographic fieldwork since 1997. Consisting of two sites between which residents shuttle regularly — the older, more 'traditional' Wae Rebo in the highlands, and Kombo, its lowland offshoot which was constructed in the 1960s as part of a wider governmental resettlement drive — the village serves as a very particular lens on the processes by which Manggarai persons and places are created and given value.

The chapters expand outwards in ever-widening 'concentric circles' (p. 15), beginning with the smallest and most intimate of spaces, the sleeping room, and ending with much larger 'landscapes of movement' (p. 175) — simultaneously physical, political, historical, and spiritual spaces in which both ordinary and extraordinary journeys are undertaken. Running through them is a concerted desire to take 'everyday life' seriously (p. 16): to understand the small-scale, deeply personal and embodied ways in which Manggarai people engage with each other, spirits, places, and the landscape. In this respect, Allerton positions her ethnography — possibly a little too forcefully at times — as a critical rejoinder to the extant anthropological literature on eastern Indonesian societies (hitherto dominated by the influential Leiden School), which she charges with 'ignor[ing] or trivializ[ing] the messy and contradictory aspects' of life in its (neo)structuralist quest to describe cosmological coherence, symbolism, rules and classifications (p. 7). However, rather than eliding any mention of 'the extraordinary, the ritual, or the ancestral' (p. 9) — all prime Leiden fodder — she teases out their complex, shifting relation to everyday practices and experiences in her fieldsite, particularly in and through the landscape. As she explains, if '[i]t is through the repetition of numerous everyday practices that the landscape gains potency', it is also 'through ritual performance that people explicitly create the presence, or utilise the power, of the landscape's agency' (p. 16).

The close entwining of ritual and everyday life is fluently and often movingly borne out by the book's chapters. Influenced in part by recent phenomenological