

Alijah Gordon. *The Propagation of Islam in the Malay Archipelago*. Edited and annotated by Alijah Gordon. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 2001. xxv, 472 pages.

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This substantial publication might best be described as a reader, or perhaps an anthology, containing as it does a diverse range of materials, some entire, some abridged, some excerpted, relating to the events—and, to a lesser extent, the processes—which saw the Islamic faith become a part of people's lives in most of maritime Southeast Asia from around the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, with some reference to later periods. The kernel of the book (and its prime purpose, as the title implies, when it was conceived nearly half a century ago) is a sixty-three-page translation from the Dutch of R. A. Kern's essay "De verbreiding van den Islam" ("The Propagation of Islam"), first published in 1938 in Volume I of F. W. Stapel's *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indie* (History of Netherlands-India). Appended to this are thirty-eight pages of "Editor's Annotations" by Alijah Gordon, which, among other things, try to bring Kern's material up to date. Kern's essay is preceded by a translation of G. W. J. Drewes's obituary of the author, published in the *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (BKI)* in 1958, and by a list of Kern's publications, with further notes by Gordon. It is followed by a reprint, edited by Gordon in ways left textually unclear, of Drewes's article "New light on the coming of Islam to Indonesia?," which appeared originally in *BKI* in 1968.

These materials take up roughly the first third of the book. The remainder consists of republications of six additional articles broadly on the subject of the Islamization of Southeast Asia and its contestation. The first is Charles R. Boxer's "Portuguese and Spanish Projects for the Conquest of Southeast Asia," first published in the *Journal of Asian History* in 1969, and here abridged (in ways not explained) by Ms. Gordon. This is followed by two articles originally published in French in *Archipel* in 1985, Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon's "Islam and Chineseness," and Christian Pelras's "Religion, Tradition, and the Dynamics of Islamization in South Sulawesi," which here appear in the English translation published in the present journal in 1994. This is followed by an edited version of a previously unpublished conference paper of 1999 by Hendrik E. Niemeijer, "Dividing the Islands: The Dutch Spice Monopoly and Religious Change in Seventeenth Century Maluku," to which is appended an abridged translation by Leonard Andaya (or possibly an abridgment of Andaya's translation) of the "Bungaya Treaty" of 1667 between the VOC and the ruler of Makasar. The remaining article, by Pierre-Yves Manguin, on "The Introduction of Islam into Champa," first appeared in French in the *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* (date not supplied) and then in English translation in the *Journal of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society* in 1985. It has been substantially edited by Gordon, with the approval of the author ("Introductory Note," p. 308). Finally, there are seven appendices on diverse matters, ranging from notes on Moro resistance to Spanish colonization and the conversion of the Sumatran Bataks, to tabulated data about religion and ethnicity in Sabah and Sarawak in 1991, to the religious composition of Indonesia by region in 1990. The book also has thirteen black-and-white plates, four maps, a glossary and list of abbreviations, several pages of detailed contributor

biographies, and a supplementary bibliography of titles not included in the accompanying earlier articles.

Reviews of anthologies can seldom offer much more than generalizations, perhaps with some remarks on lacunæ, and that is the case here. The authors are all distinguished scholars in their part of the field, and most of their work has long since entered with advantage discussions on the "originology" of the Islamic presence in maritime Southeast Asia. The book's principal shortcoming—despite the enormous amount of editorial attention it has clearly been given by Gordon and others—is the absence of any serious attempt to draw together and provide a focus for what, for the most part, are the rather disparate essays it comprises. In a four-page, rather fevered, preface, Gordon, writing admiringly of Islamic civilization, is mainly concerned with railing against the manifest evils of early colonial intrusion and conquest in Southeast Asia, likening it in its savagery to the suppression of the indigenous population in her native North America and to that of the Irish at the hands of the English. Well, yes, but there is need, too, given the rich materials set out by most of the contributors to the volume, to look synoptically at the complex sociological, historical, economic, and conversionary factors that help to explain why and how Islam has become the dominant religion across the wide range of societies depicted here, today comprising the largest single Muslim population in the world. That attempt is not made, but the volume is nonetheless a useful *vade mecum* for anyone interested in starting at the beginning.