

Islam and Asia

Chiara Formichi explores the ways in which Islam and Asia have shaped each other's histories, societies, and cultures from the seventh century to today. Challenging the assumed dominance of the Middle East in the development of Islam, Formichi argues for Asia's centrality in the development of global Islam as a religious, social, and political reality. Readers learn how and why Asia is central to the history of Islam, and vice versa, considering the impact of Asia's Muslims on Islam, how Islam became an integral part of Asia, and its influence on local conceptions of power, the sciences, arts, and bureaucracy. Grounding her argument in specific case studies, Formichi ultimately concludes that the existence of Islamized interactions across Asia have allowed for multidirectional influences on Islamic practices and interpretations throughout the Muslim world.

CHIARA FORMICHI is Associate Professor at Cornell University. Her publications include *Islam and the Making of the Nation: Kartosuwiryo and Political Islam in Twentieth-Century Indonesia* (2012).

New Approaches to Asian History

This dynamic new series publishes books on the milestones in Asian history, those that have come to define particular periods or to mark turning points in the political, cultural, and social evolution of the region. The books in this series are intended as introductions for students to be used in the classroom. They are written by scholars whose credentials are well-established in their particular fields and who have, in many cases, taught the subject across a number of years.

A list of books in the series can be found at the end of the volume.

Islam and Asia

A History

Chiara Formichi

Cornell University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10612-3 — Islam and Asia
Chiara Formichi
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107106123
DOI: 10.1017/9781316226803

© Chiara Formichi 2020

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2020

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Formichi, Chiara, 1982- author.

Title: Islam and Asia : a history / Chiara Formichi.

Description: New York, NY, USA : Cambridge University Press, 2020. |

Series: New approaches to Asian history | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019040425 (print) | LCCN 2019040426 (ebook) | ISBN 9781107106123 (hardback) | ISBN 9781107513976 (paperback) | ISBN 9781316226803 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Islam—Asia—History.

Classification: LCC BP63.A1 F67 2020 (print) | LCC BP63.A1 (ebook) | DDC 297.095—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019040425>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019040426>

ISBN 978-1-107-10612-3 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-51397-6 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10612-3 — Islam and Asia
Chiara Formichi
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

To my students

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-10612-3 — Islam and Asia
Chiara Formichi
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Maps</i>	x
<i>List of Boxes</i>	xi
<i>List of Sources</i>	xii
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv
<i>Note on Transliteration and Foreign Terms</i>	xviii
<i>Maps</i>	xix
Introduction	1
1 Islam across the Oxus (Seventh to Seventeenth Centuries)	10
2 Becoming Muslim (Seventh to Eighteenth Centuries)	43
3 Networks and Renewal (Thirteenth to Nineteenth Centuries)	75
4 Pan-Islamism and Nationalism (Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries)	105
5 Muslims in the Nation-State (1940s to 1960s)	143
6 New Imaginations of Piety (1960s to 1990s)	177
7 Islam as Resistance	206
8 De-centering Islamic Authority	237
9 Studying Asia and Islam	264
<i>Glossary</i>	272
<i>Notes</i>	278
<i>Index</i>	301

Figures

1.1 The mausoleum of Mahmood of Ghazni (Ghazna, Afghanistan). Sammlung Werner Otto von Hentig © Stiftung Bibliotheca Afghanistanica, www.phototheca-afghanica.ch	page 10
1.2 The shrine of Satuq Bughra Khan, Atush (Xinjiang, China). © Chiara Formichi	24
2.1 The Baiturrahman Mosque in Kutaraja (Banda Aceh, Indonesia). © Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Coll. no. TM-60023672	42
2.2 Fort and mosque in Indrapuri (Aceh). © Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Coll. no. TM-60008438	42
2.3 Shrine of the People of the Cavern, Tuyuq (Xinjiang, China). © Chiara Formichi	53
2.4 Mosque, Linxia (Gansu, China). © Chiara Formichi	55
2.5 <i>Mantingan</i> , elephant suggested in stylized lotus rods, leaves, and flower scrolls. © Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Coll. no. TM-60054170	61
2.6 “Radha Turns her Gaze Away from Krishna,” page from the <i>Rasikaproya of Keshavadasa</i> , 1665–80. Photo courtesy of the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University	64
3.1 Mosque incense burner, Linxia (Gansu, China). © Chiara Formichi	75
4.1 Blue and white headcloth with Arabic calligraphy. © Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Coll. no. TM-5663-2	104
4.2 Anti-veiling state propaganda mural (Xinjiang, China). © Chiara Formichi	136

List of Figures	ix
5.1 December 1947: Lady Nusrat Haroon, Moslem League activist and heiress to a sugar fortune. Photo by Margaret Bourke-White. © The LIFE Picture Collection via Getty Images/Getty Images	142
6.1 Indonesian domestic workers participating in a demonstration in Hong Kong. © Kees Metselaar	176
8.1 Advertisement for “Malaysia Drink” in Turfan (Xinjiang, China). © Chiara Formichi	236

Maps

1 Muslim lands 900–1700	<i>page</i> xx
2 Continental Asia, ca. fourteenth century	xxi
3 Southeast Asia and coastal China	xxii
4 Contemporary China	xxiii
5 Greater South Asia	xxiv
6 Asia in the age of Empires (1914)	xxv
7 Contemporary Asia	xxvi

Boxes

0.1	The <i>Umma</i> in the Qur'an	page 4
1.1	<i>Dhimmi</i>	15
1.2	The Five Pillars	16
1.3	Siam	34
2.1	The <i>Hajj</i> Rituals	48
2.2	Islamic Law	66
3.1	Shi'ism	91
3.2	Jadidism	97
4.1	Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani" and the Roots of Pan-Islamism	110
4.2	<i>Al-Manar</i> and Its Impact	115
5.1	Abu A'la Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb	154
6.1	The Muslim Brotherhood	180
6.2	The Vocabulary of Islamic Activism	183
6.3	The Veil and Politics	189
7.1	Afghanistan	211
8.1	Islamic Female Authority	251

Sources

1.1	<i>The Conversion to Islam of Tughluq Timur Khan</i> . Text by Mirza Haydar Dughlat (1499–1551)	page 22
1.2	<i>The Malay Annals of Semarang</i>	28
1.3	Ibn Battuta Travels through China (1345)	36
1.4	Baba Palangposh	38
2.1	<i>Selected Explanation of the Norms and Rites of Islam</i> , by Liu Zhi (1710)	71
3.1	<i>Tazkira</i> of the Qarakhanid Satuq Bughra Khan	81
3.2	<i>Taqwiyyat al-Iman</i> , by Shah Isma'il Shahid (1771–1831)	82
3.3	<i>A Visit to the Shrine of Baha ud-Din Naqshband</i> , by Sayyeda-ye Nasafi (d. 1707 or 1711)	85
4.1	The Ottoman Jihad Fatwa (1914)	108
4.2	Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Occidentalism	113
4.3	<i>The Future of the Japanese from the Perspective of Religion</i> (1910), by Abdurreshid Ibrahim	119
5.1	Pakistan's Objectives Resolution (1949)	156
5.2	<i>Islam in Secular India</i> , by Mushir Ul-Haq (1972)	166
6.1	Minah's Veiling	188
6.2	"Recommendations of the Muslim World League's Delegation to China," 1981	199
7.1	"Islam's Heroes," by Hanif (October 28, 2008)	207
7.2	<i>The Struggle for Gender Justice</i> , by amina wadud (1999, 2006)	209
7.3	<i>The Blaze of Truth</i> , by Ahlam al-Nasr (a.k.a "The Poetess of the Islamic State") (2014)	220
7.4	The Last Testament of Iqbal alias Arnasan alias Acong (2002)	225
8.1	"Feminist Islam," Interview with Zainah Anwar, Radio National, Australia Broadcasting Corporation (August 3, 2003)	257

Preface

This book offers a transregional approach to the intersection of Islam and developments in other spheres of the human experience across Asia. Here Asia is broadly conceptualized as the territorial expanse from the Mediterranean to the Pacific; and although I include recurrent references to the “greater Middle East region” as “West Asia,” the main focus of this book lies with the lands beyond the Oxus/Amu Darya river – in cruder terms, all that lies east of contemporary Iran.

My primary interest is in offering the big picture of how and why Asia beyond the Oxus/Amu Darya river is central to the history of Islam, and vice versa. The materials presented cover a vast territory and a wide chronological span, during which these lands saw many social, religious, economic, and political transformations; any one reader is likely to think that something is missing, but I had no intention of achieving encyclopedic coverage. As I endeavored to capture the interplay of these changes across time and space, offering selected but rich and detailed examples, the main narrative threads are thematic, secondarily bounded by temporal considerations, with an evident bias toward the late modern and contemporary eras. In terms of geography, the “units” of reference necessarily fluctuate, depending on the historical period of analysis, ranging from transregional bird’s-eye views of “Asia” to patchwork colonial possessions and clearly defined nation-states. Because the primary lens of each chapter is thematic, most chapters address a selection of locales, depending on what I saw as most illustrative of the matter at hand, and sometimes also to provide some degree of continuity across chapters. Hence, whereas I have attempted a balanced coverage of Asia’s subregions – defined as Central, South, East, and Southeast – with relevant references to the Muslim Mediterranean, this book is by no means a complete survey of “Islam” in each and every polity/nation in “Asia.” Similarly, not all themes could be addressed to the same depth. I have tended to favor political history, with a nod to intellectual and social phenomena, but – for example – issues of race and racialization of Islam are not addressed in a systematic fashion, and imperialism only

takes a background role; much to my regret I was not able to include a fair elaboration of the impact of Islam (and Europe, in fact) on renegotiation of traditionally fluid sexual identities, but the role of women is integrated into the narrative through most chapters.

The theoretical contribution of this book is in its approach, in its endeavor to bring together two fields that have rarely (and only recently) spoken to each other – namely Islamic Studies and Asian Studies, as addressed in Chapter 9 – and to present an interwoven history that gives each of these two subjects due consideration. Hence, while this takes the form of a “history book,” written by a historian for readers interested in understanding the historical trajectories of Islam across the Asian expanse from the seventh century onwards, the methodology deployed has more affinity with the field of “Area Studies,” which I see as deeply rooted in and committed to multi-disciplinarity. The scholarship this book is grounded in, and the materials used throughout, hail from the “traditional” field of history as well as the fields of anthropology, archaeology, history of art and architecture, religious studies, political sciences, cultural studies, and more.

Beyond this theoretical intervention in the study of Islam and Asia, I intend for this volume to be accessible, useful to teachers and students at all levels, scholars of global history, and lay readers. Related to this intention was my choice not to delve too deeply into scholarly debates and theoretical approaches specific to any given subtopic addressed in the book. The “Further Reading” sections that conclude each chapter are curated lists of classic or recent scholarly works that can help readers further explore both the debates I tangentially touch upon and the details of the subject matter.

The book can be read from cover to cover, or one could pick sections through the book to follow the history of Islam in a specific subregion of Asia; individual chapters could be extracted from the book as inserts in a variety of syllabi, or a lecturer could offer any chapter’s opening image and related text as a starting point for their own class. In whichever way you peruse this volume, I hope it will enhance your understanding of how and why Islam and Asia have been two intersecting subjects for the past 1,400 years.

Acknowledgments

As an undergraduate student majoring in Islamic Studies and with a keen interest in Southeast Asia, I often felt bounded by the structural limits of my department and by the discipline more broadly. Even in the most adventurous instances, a line seemed to exist coterminous with the usage of the Urdu language. But my professors encouraged me to follow that interest, to “cross” that line, and to explore what they saw as “the peripheries” of Islam.

Over the years I have incurred more debts than I could ever repay; this is only an attempt to acknowledge a few of them.

I am thankful to my earliest teachers at the Facoltà di Studi Orientali, Università di Roma La Sapienza, *Professore* Francesco Noci and *Professoressa* Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti, who constantly reminded me with their own work that Islam stretched much further than the Arab lands. To *Professore* Gianmaria Piccinelli for supporting me in my desire to explore Indonesia for my *tesi di laurea*. To William-Gervase Clarence Smith, who at SOAS first gave me guidance in thinking about Indonesia as an integral and legitimate part of the “Muslim world” and who exposed me to global history as a field. And to Michael Feener, who since my postdoctoral fellowship in Singapore has pushed me to broaden my perspective, thinking regionally and comparatively.

A more specific intellectual debt rests with Ilyse Morgenstein Fuerst and Zahra Ayubi, who in April 2015 invited me to participate in the conference “Shifting Boundaries: The Study of Islam in the Humanities” at the University of Vermont, Burlington. This was the first opportunity I had to express my discomfort with the Arab-centric approach of Islamic Studies beyond the confines of my classroom. The conversations and collaborations that have since ensued have made this book and its larger framework much stronger than they would otherwise have been.

This book would not even have been conceived without Lucy Rhymer. Her work as Commissioning Editor at Cambridge University Press has been extraordinary. She first approached me when I was an Assistant Professor in Hong Kong, asking if I would be interested in writing a book

xvi Acknowledgments

based on my teaching of courses on “Islam in Asia.” Since that day much has happened – a transcontinental move, a marriage, a child, and working toward tenure – but Lucy did not relent. Some of the final edits were dealt with at my grandmother’s bedside. She never really understood what I was doing, and I had hoped that this book would help; alas, it came too late.

I am most grateful to those colleagues and friends who read the manuscript when it was still in draft form. From Eric Tagliacozzo (who got “first dibs,” reading the very first semi-complete draft), to David Kloos (whose thoughts on Chapter 8 have been absolutely crucial), to the anonymous readers whose feedback was constructive and truly helped make this a better piece of scholarship, and to Michael Feener, Rian Thum, and David Atwill, who participated in a Manuscript Development Workshop I was able to host thanks to the financial support of Cornell University’s College of Arts and Sciences. Their input and detailed feedback have been invaluable. Broader thanks go to all the colleagues whose amazing scholarly work has allowed me to rethink how we approach the study of Islam in Asia. Without the painstaking work of detail done in the field, broader “approach” endeavors would not be possible. All mistakes remain nonetheless mine.

The “big push” to fine-tune the conceptualization of the book and get a few core chapters written took place at the Asia Research Institute (National University of Singapore). I am most grateful to Kenneth Dean and Jonathan Rigg for facilitating my return to Singapore, hosting me as a visiting senior fellow during a semester of study leave from Cornell University.

The Production team at Cambridge was extremely patient and helpful, as we navigated the usual difficulties of getting a manuscript together, exacerbated by my desire to have many maps and to integrate illustrations in the narrative. Thanks go also to Getty Images, the Stiftung Bibliotheca Afghanistanica, the Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University, the Asian Civilization Museum of Singapore, and Kees Metselaar for providing the beautiful images that accompany this book.

For actually having the time and brain space for the necessary everyday thinking, reading, and writing, I owe more than I can say to my family. My husband, Eli, and daughter, Licia, got “shipped off” to Singapore for a semester, and then “sequestered” in Ithaca for a long summer and (even longer) winter, so that I could put the manuscript together. My mother and my in-laws were similarly displaced and “enlisted to help” when we needed it. I acknowledge that this is a privilege in an age when being an academic almost always entails moving and settling far away

from our support networks. Thank you for allowing me to pursue my intellectual work while choosing to have a family.

I wrote these pages thinking about my students. The ideas and approaches presented in the following pages were shaped during the years I spent teaching courses on “Islam in Asia” in classrooms in Hong Kong and Ithaca. It was in that effort to make deep scholarly complexities digestible and understandable to my students that these thoughts developed and came together; it was in the everyday conversations that questions were formulated, and that answers were attempted; and it was in seminar discussions that scholarship was explored, dissected, challenged, and embraced. It is thus to my students that I dedicate this book.

Note on Transliteration and Foreign Terms

This book covers a wide geographical, linguistic, and historical span. In an attempt to bridge accuracy and accessibility, I have opted for a single (simplified) approach to the transliteration of “Islamic” terms. There are no diacritic marks. I have avoided placing an “h” at the end of words that in Arabic terminate with a *ta marbuta* (hence, *da’wa*, not *da’wah*), and I have not differentiated between *‘ayn* and *hamza*, both being rendered with an apostrophe. I have compressed all regional variations into one consistent rendering (hence, the Indo-Malay term *dakwa* has become *da’wa*), making exceptions for quoted materials. Words that have entered the English language have been rendered in their English form, without italicization. All dates are indicated in the Common Era calendar.

Maps



Map 1 Muslim lands 900–1700



Map 2 Continental Asia, ca. fourteenth century



Map 3 Southeast Asia and coastal China



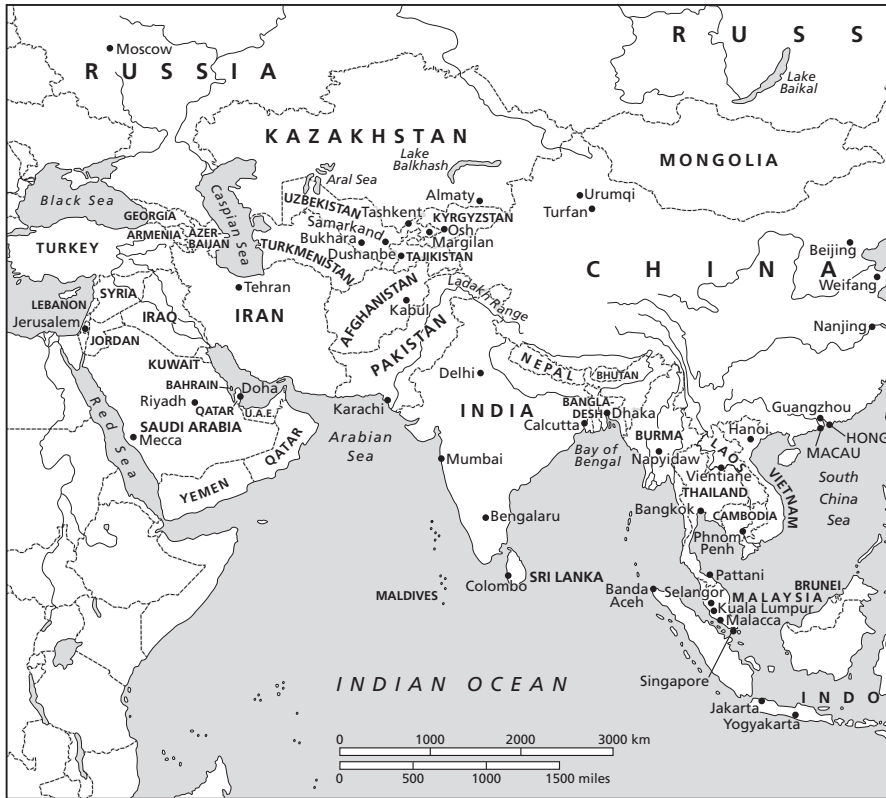
Map 4 Contemporary China



Map 5 Greater South Asia



Map 6 Asia in the age of Empires (1914)



Map 7 Contemporary Asia