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**William Noseworthy**

**Philipp Bruckmayr. *Cambodia's Muslims and the Malay World: Malay Language, Jawi Script, and Islamic Factionalism from the 19th Century to the Present*. Leiden: Brill, 2019.**

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This book provides a clear and concise picture of rural development in Southeast Asia based on Rigg's solid, in-depth, and longitudinal fieldwork (mainly in Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos) as well as further engagement with both classic and recent secondary literature covering mainland and maritime Southeast Asia. As Rigg notes, many of the issues discussed—such as aging, gender, and (inter)generational relations—are not limited to Southeast Asia but extend also to East Asia. Although similarities or similar development trends have been noted in both East and Southeast Asia, their interactions and interdependence are not highlighted or analyzed in depth in this book.

Rigg also reflects on the differences between some key concepts (pp. 19–20), such as small-holder and small-scale farmer, which have historically been used interchangeably in the literature. He inspires us to think about rural development from multiple perspectives, such as rural-urban and lowland-upland interactions, as well as telecoupling. Generally, this book provides an insightful and comprehensive summary of a changing rural Southeast Asia that could also be a starting point for (re)thinking the future of rural development.

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## ***Cambodia's Muslims and the Malay World: Malay Language, Jawi Script, and Islamic Factionalism from the 19th Century to the Present***

PHILIPP BRUCKMAYR

Leiden: Brill, 2019.

There are many notable recent books and articles on Cambodia's Muslim communities, including works by Farina So (2011), Ysa Osman (2002; 2006; 2010), Jorge López-Cortina and Alberto Pérez-Pereiro (2017), Emiko Stock (2012; 2016; 2019), and others. Much work, necessarily, has focused on the period of 1975 through 1979 and 1979 to the present. Nicolas Weber's *Histoire de la Diaspora Cam* (2014) broke incredible new ground but was unavailable to readers who could not read French, although Weber has published several excellent English-language articles and chap-

ters on aspects of Cham history related to his book (Weber 2008; 2011; 2019). To add to this conversation, Philipp Bruckmayr's *Cambodia's Muslims and the Malay World* is the single best study of Jawi source material to date. In the book, Bruckmayr examines Jawization, i.e., the adoption of the Malay language and the Jawi script among Cambodia's Muslims, and the spread of "Islamic factionalism" in Cambodia from the nineteenth century onward. Through a combination of studies of Jawi source material, French colonial documents from Cambodia archives, and fieldwork from Cambodia, he argues, "*jawi's* unifying and homogenizing role was potentially disruptive in nature because it marginalized Islamic discourses and literatures in other local languages" (p. 1).

To support his claims, Bruckmayr takes readers on a journey through the formulation of similar processes elsewhere in the Muslim world, especially island Southeast Asia. He also considers the critically important historical context of Cambodia's Muslims, whom he divides into two ethnic classifications, Cham and Chvea. He includes a cursory examination of the origins of Cambodia's Cham in the last Champa civilization kingdom, Pāṇḍuraṅga—now the lands associated with Ninh Thuận, Bình Thuận, and Đồng Nai Provinces in Vietnam—followed by a much more in-depth exploration of Cham connections to Malay scholarly centers, particularly the Patani network, and diversification of Chvea (often glossed over as "Malay") influence in eighteenth-century Cambodia. Chapter 3 digs deeper into the precolonial and early colonial periods, while Chapter 4 examines the structural and processual dispositions for Jawization. The fifth chapter focuses more deeply on the 1930s, mapping out emergent Islamic factionalism. Chapter 6 focuses on the agents and vehicles of Jawization, moving up through the middle of the twentieth century, while Chapter 7 leaps backward in time again to the colonial era, to give a detailed analysis of the French colonial role in the process of Jawization. The book concludes with the legacies of Jawization and anti-Jawization.

The strongest contributions of this study, Bruckmayr's analyses of Jawi source materials, are woven throughout. Yet, the single greatest contribution in terms of a standalone chapter is Chapter 6, which could likely be assigned to undergraduates. For graduate students, the strong theoretical framework in the first chapter, on "Islamic Logospheres," weaving together ideas from Roland Barthes, Mohammed Arkoun, Talal Asad, Pierre Bourdieu, Stephen Gath, Leif Manger, and other pillars would make excellent reading (especially pp. 4–8). The last chapter, on the lasting legacies of Jawization, collapses vast collections of evidence from the deep historical past through the present into a sweeping single analysis; it would be useful for advanced graduate students and scholars focusing especially on Cambodia. While these discussions are fascinating, one might wonder: How do the recent works from the many scholars in the field of Cham Studies in Cambodia fit into Bruckmayr's theoretical discussions? He relies on them but does not discuss them. Critiques of this excellent book may be summarized in three categories: (1) the style of the prose, which with further refinement would have broadened potential readership; (2) a critique of a *lack* of standards with regard to the Cham language; (3) criticism of analyses of social and his-

torical contexts, especially beyond the borders of Cambodia—in Vietnam—which nonetheless make their way into the text.

First, there are several passages in the book with problematic prose. These include the statement “the country [Cambodia] reconnected with the outside world in 1992 after two decades of international *isolation* [emphasis added]” (p. 3) and the contention that “*isolation*” played a role in the creation of the Cham Bani community (p. 26). To temper the language, the author notes locals were “far from frozen in time” yet cannot help making the tragically flawed assumption that Cham, Javanese, and Sasak script communities were “far less dynamic” than those that used Jawi (p. 69), despite having no expertise in those three scripts evidenced in this book or other works to back an evidence-based comparative assessment of them. This language is reminiscent of Bruckmayr’s predecessor, Antoine Cabaton—who went on to be an excellent scholar on *insulinde*, leaving behind earlier works in Champa and Cham Studies—and the prose could have been airbrushed to avoid overstating any claims.

Next, although Bruckmayr provides a fascinating description of the origins of the term “Jawi” (pp. 9–11), readers would have benefited from a more straightforward description that clearly disambiguates Jawi as an Arabic or Perso-Arabic derived script used to write Austronesian languages—predominantly Malay—from historical Cham (*cawa/jawa*), Vietnamese (*cha va, đò bà*), and Khmer (*chvea*) terms with meanings that changed over time. It would be useful for readers to understand that Jawi adds new glyph forms (often six) to replicate the phonemes of Austronesian languages. Thus, Malay, Acehnese, Banjarese, Minangkabau, Cham, and so forth all have slightly different variants of Jawi. Furthermore, this is strikingly similar to the Arwi script of the Tamil language, also historically present in South and Southeast Asia, although Arwi adds 13 glyph forms. More strikingly, readers will not find an easy-to-read overarching description of the sheer diversity, historical and contemporary, of the main subject of the book, Cambodia’s Muslims. Granted periods of flux, Cambodia’s Muslims have also included, variously, Arabs, South Asians, Indonesians, Malaysians, Thai Muslims, and even Vietnamese, Chinese, American, and European Muslims, not mentioned at all at the outset—although, occasionally, some such individuals make appearances in the book. Instead, the book simplifies the community principle ethnic classifications, Cham and Chvea (80 percent). Although we also do not get a clear description of what is meant by *chvea* over time, astute readers may find the author understated, even too humble, about the dramatic impact of Jawization, especially in reference to Cham language communities.

Among Cham Muslims, the symbolic counter to the spread of Jawi is the persistence of the Cham script of Cambodia: Akhar Srak. Akhar Srak is a variant of the Eastern Cham Akhar Thrah script, typically associated with the last historical kingdom of the Champa civilization, Pāṇḍuraṅga. Akhar Srak—like Akhar Thrah—is a southern Brahmi script, also much like the Cambodian script in oblique letters, Âksâr Chriêng, or other mainland Southeast Asian scripts, as well as the island Southeast Asian scripts of Batak and Balinese communities. Although the author uses “Akhar

Thrah” throughout the book, the Cham manuscripts in reference in most cases are written in Akhar Srak, giving one the sense that a needed layer of expertise in Cham languages was absent from the editorial process. A similar lack of standards for Arabic, or even Jawi, would be considered haphazard in the halls of Leiden but is somehow forgivable in the case of Cham. Consider the important statement, summarizing eight chapters of well-thought-out argumentation, suggesting that Jawization and anti-Jawization culminate in the divergence of Muslims into two communities, “one headed by the Mufti of Cambodia and the other by the *ong g’nur*” (p.2). According to the Moussay romanization system the author claims to use, *g’nur* should be *ginuer*. *G’nur*, rather, is a common re-transcription into French and English based on oral transmission, not romanization of script. Elsewhere, the author writes *khnour* based on a Cham → Khmer → French language pathway (pp. 64, 124, 133, 140, 145, 146, 256, 265, 344, 350). Bruckmayr does not follow either of the perfectly acceptable transcription systems of the École française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO) or the Library of Congress for Khmer or Cham. The problem is not that these systems do not exist, just that the author does not use them. Instead, he follows transcriptions from secondary scholarship or already present in French translations of archival documents.

In another important example where knowledge of the Cham language is a critical factor in providing evidence for the argument, it seems that Bruckmayr does not notice that “to follow the *jawa*” *tuei cawa* (alt.: *jawa*) is not the only phrase that is important in the linguistic context he is discussing, but also that “to enter the Bani religion” (*tamâ agama Bani*) is present in some of the very same manuscript collections scholars have been analyzing in Cambodia. The presence of the historical usage of the term “Bani” in contexts of communities associated with the *Ong Ginuer* (i.e., the *Kan Imam San*) suggests the Cham term *Bani*, like the term *Chvea* in Khmer, is historically and geographically contingent, a point that actually services Bruckmayr’s argument (see also Weber 2005; Noseworthy and Pham Huyen 2020). In another instance, he struggles to pin down the location of *Mâkah* in Cham manuscripts written in Akhar Thrah per “Pāṇḍuraṅga traditions,” without cohesively explaining that interpretations of *Mâkah* simply vary in Pāṇḍuraṅga contexts. Sometimes *Mâkah* is a “beyond space,” sometimes obliquely “overseas,” while in others “Mecca,” and still others “Kelantan, Malaysia.” This brings us to critiques of analysis of social and historical context.

It is very curious indeed that Bruckmayr does not explain that the term *Kan Imam San*—the followers of the *Ong Ginuer*—appears to be a Cham language neologism. Two previous terms in scholarly circulation were *Kaum Imam San* and *Kaum Jumaat* (Friday group) (De Féo 2004; 2005; Guérin 2004; Weber 2005; Pérez-Pereiro 2012; Stock 2012). Very likely, *Kan* was reasserted quite recently to replace the usage of *kaum*, meaning “group,” because the latter is Malay, not Cham. *Kaum* is quite absent from Cham lexicons or other language sources until the 1950s–70s, when all of a sudden variable records of local pronunciations of *kaum* begin to appear, even in Eastern Cham. Likely this is a loanword being adopted from the social climate of the 1950s–70s, where *kaum*

*muda/tua* discourse so influenced Cham language as far as the Thuận Hải (now Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận Provinces). The notion of a *Kaum/Kan Imam San* itself seems to be a bit of a new construction, as nineteenth- and twentieth-century Akhar Srak manuscripts almost unanimously use the term *Bani* as a self-referential. In other words, the adoption of the term *Kan* likely is a marker of the anti-Jawization position that Bruckmayr posits. In reference to important Cambodia-Pāṇḍuraṅga cultural connections, Bruckmayr refers to a “Bani *rija* ritual.” Yet, *rija* are in fact a category of rituals for both the Bani and Ahiér (Cham particularist/localized Hindu) communities. Bruckmayr intends, evidently, to refer to the Rija Praong ritual yet references only a single text for this ritual’s origins, as if there were not an entire vibrant, and dynamic, series of ritual texts providing different versions of the backstory, narrative, events, significance, ritual order, ritual vocabularies, mantras, and so forth for Rija Praong. We need not expect Bruckmayr to get these Pāṇḍuraṅga-Cham contexts right, but readers do need to know that the reliability of the information dissipates outside the Jawi logosphere.

While I put forward criticisms of the style of prose, a critique of attention to details of the Cham language, and a critique of social and historical contexts in this review, readers should walk away with a clear understanding: This book is one of the single greatest contributions to the field of Cham Studies in relation to the fields of Islamic Studies and Cambodian Studies published in recent English-language scholarship. This is precisely why the renowned scholar of Islam in Southeast Asia Nico J. G. Kaptein (2020, 418) was able to muster only a single criticism in his review of the book, that “at times the book is too detailed,” a complaint I beg to differ with. The detail-driven analysis of Bruckmayr’s study is indeed quite refreshing.

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