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Articulating Islam: Anthropological Approaches to Muslim Worlds

 Springer

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Acknowledgments

This book is the outcome of a two-day conference held at the School of Oriental and African Studies in July 2009. The conference was made possible by generous funding from SOAS and the Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre at Cambridge, and personal support offered toward the initiative by Prof. Graham Furniss and Dr. Anil Seal. The conference, entitled ‘Thirty Years of the Anthropology of Islam: Retrospect and Prospect’, sought to launch an in-depth investigation into the history of the development of the anthropology of Islam, with the aim of charting the sub-discipline’s key thematic and ethnographic concerns and highlighting the comparative importance of anthropological work on Islam to scholarship within and beyond the discipline on world religion. Participants were invited to reflect on the emergence of the anthropology of Islam in relationship to the analytical questions that had driven it, and to the nature of anthropological scholarship on Islam in particular ‘cultural areas’. In order to stimulate reflection on the relationship between anthropological work on Islam and the study of other world religions we also invited scholars who have actively contributed to the study of other world religious traditions, especially Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism: Simon Coleman, Chris Hann, J.D.Y. Peel, and Susan Bayly presented research papers and acted as discussants at the conference. The panels also included several scholars whose approaches to Islam and Muslims have been original, bold and innovative: Michael Gilsean, Benjamin Soares, Heiko Henkel, Filippo and Caroline Osella, and Mahnaz Marashi presented papers at the conference, and while these are not part of the current volume, the influence of their work across its pages is clearly evident. In addition, the conference was injected with further scholarly rigour by the presence of Richard Fardon, Trevor Marchand, and David Mosse.

As we have come to realise, the publication of such an edited volume requires the efforts of many people besides the contributors and editors. This book has benefited much from the editorial supervision of Springer, and, in particular, the editors of the Muslim Studies in Global Societies Series who have responded with much speed and efficiency to our enquiries. In addition, Marleen Moore and Anita van der Linden have played a critical role in guiding the volume to publication. The comments and suggestions of various anonymous reviewers have helped us greatly

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