

THE APPLICATION OF ISLAMIC ARTS DECORATION IN MOSQUE INTERIOR: A CASE STUDY OF THE TRADITIONAL MOSQUE IN MELAKA

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ABSTRACT

This research discussed the concept of ‘*Tawhid*’ as the doctrine in Islam; and the way Islam perceives Beauty in its decorative arts as a mean of contemplation and Remembering Allah. In order to understand these hidden functions and messages, the overall approach, roles, functions and typologies of decoration are explained. The uniqueness of Islamic Arts’ characteristics, roles, meanings and principles are governed universally by the Islamic doctrine – ‘*Tawhid*’ which expressed Oneness and Unity towards Contemplation to the One God – Allah. By looking at these aspects, one can truly assess whether the current usage of decorative motifs in mosque is in full success or not. A cross-reference of these usages is established with the true roles and functions of these decoration motifs as decoration in relation to Islamic Art as a whole. Successful applications of the interior decorative motifs can then be established and recommended for future applications. It is the intention of the study to be as an impetus for other broader and more critical analyses which can be made by others to fully comprehend the underlying concepts of the decorative motifs in the mosque interiors. A base reference study was made onto the oldest traditional mosque in the South East Asia region- *Masjid AgungDemak* in Central Java, Indonesia. Field studies were made to cover eight selected traditional mosques in Melaka: *Masjid Peringgit*, *Masjid KampungHulu*, *Masjid Tengker*, *Masjid KampungKeling*, *Masjid KampungDuyong*, *Masjid SerkamPantai*, *Masjid Alai* and *Masjid Al Azim*. These mosques were chosen based on their built age – on two separate eras – the old traditional mosques: *Masjid Peringgit*, *Masjid KampungKeling*, *Masjid KampungHulu*, *Masjid KampungDuyong*, *Masjid Tengker*, *Masjid SerkamPantai* and *Masjid Alai* have been built since the 18th and 19th Century and been treated as community mosques. These mosques are still in use, well maintained and conserved. The new traditional mosque, *Masjid Al Azim* is of the 20th Century, is a new and larger scale mosque, treated as the State Mosque in Melaka. Surveys were done to record and identify the decorative motifs in these mosques and to evaluate the users’ awareness and the effectiveness of these decorations. The aesthetic criteria of the decoration elements which have profound impacts onto the users are also identified. Furthermore, a close examination and analyses regarding certain aspects of the physical characteristics of the decorative motifs are presented. Through the survey and observation study of these decorations,

various physical and aesthetic factors were identified. These factors were then referred to formulate the general design criterion in relation to the application of decoration in mosque. By fully understanding the role of decoration, further improvements can be recommended to ensure better and effective usage of decoration particularly in mosques.

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