

MOSQUES IN ISLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA (15th–20th CENTURY)

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study is to highlight factors causing transformations on the mosque's form and functions, through critical analysis on the mosque's physical attributes. The mosques are selected from various important port cities of the region, spanning from the 15th to the 20th century. The research adopts analytical and generative typological method in conducting comparative study between the data retrieved from the selected mosques and the data acquired from the analysis on the Prophet's Mosque archetype. As every typological study must be based on a certain 'ideal type,' the Prophet's Mosque serves as a controlling factor in determining the level of changes made to the models under study. From this aspect, the level of changes (i.e. variations to the ideal type, which is the Prophet's Mosque) occurring in the mosque samples can be recorded and evaluated in order to seek explanations for the emergence of distinctive patterns or lack thereof. This methodology allows generation of useful metaphors and insights of emerging patterns, which in return cater to the development of specific theories or ideas that can be used to examine these patterns. The outcome of the study provides alternative visual or perceptual models, experience, or thought systems pertaining to the mosque; thus expanding existing knowledge. It demonstrated the distinguished qualities of the vernacular mosque in Island Southeast Asia that, prior to this study, was often treated as being 'less authentic' than the models found in mainland Islam.

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the research background, problems and methodology adopted for the study. Chapter 2 reviews available literature pertaining to the study of mosques in Island Southeast Asia, while Chapter 3 looks for the function and form of mosque in Islam by reviewing Islamic classical sources. Chapter 4 is a catalogue of mosques selected for detailed analysis, outlining each mosque's brief historical background and its salient features. The remaining chapters present detailed analyses conducted on the mosques and discussions on the findings. The detailed attributes of mosques in Island Southeast Asia are highlighted and compared to the design parameters of the Prophet's Mosque archetype. The results uncovered the ingenuity of the vernacular mosque as the product of Islamic civilisation of the region. This thesis concludes by tracing the changes occurring into the building culture of the Muslims in Island Southeast Asia. The emphasis is upon interpretation of the material culture as a way of understanding the thinking of the Muslims of Island Southeast Asia in relation to the mosque as a religious institution.

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