

THE GREEN CULTURE OF ISLAM

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IIUM PRESS

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

Published by:
IIUM Press
International Islamic University Malaysia

First Edition, 2011
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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Mazlina Mansor, Ismawi Hj Zen, Jamilah Othman, Nor Azlina Harun & Nurhayati Abd Malek: The Green Culture of Islam

ISBN: 978-967-418-068-3

Member of Majlis Penerbitan Ilmiah Malaysia - MAPIM
(Malaysian Scholarly Publishing Council)

Printed by :
IIUM PRINTING SDN. BHD.
No. 1, Jalan Industri Batu Caves 1/3
Taman Perindustrian Batu Caves
Batu Caves Centre Point
68100 Batu Caves
Selangor Darul Ehsan

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FERNS AS CARVING MOTIVES IN THE POLYNESIAN COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

This study is an early observation in the period of two months from the perspective of a Malay Muslim who has never been to New Zealand. The topic is related to the discipline of architecture as well as landscape architecture. It suggests the link between plant species, fern, with the cultural habits and values of Polynesian communities in New Zealand and the Malays in Sumatra, Indonesia, and in Peninsular Malaysia. From a view of a cultural landscape perceptions, this study produce a comparisons on fern as an emblem with a comparisons of carving motif using ferns in other Polynesian community such as Maori in the animism society in New Zealand, Malay in Malaysia and *Minangkabau* in Indonesia as the Islamic society. It is important to study the relationship of fern and carving in the Polynesian and Malay architectures in order to see how environment influenced the society. Moreover, how the environment is use as tool or metaphor to educate society. In term of human geography, the sea farers origins of Maori in New Zealand and Malays in the Malay Archipelago can be traced by the sea route around Polynesian island. Though differs in religion the Polynesian have similarities. This is seen in the use of ferns as the carving motives as demonstrate in this study.

INTRODUCTION

The overview on the relationships between 'our long lost family'- the New Zealand, Maori, the Indonesian *Batak*, *Minangkabau* and the Malaysian *Malay* exist beyond their DNA similarity (Addis, p.4, 2007). As a Malay Muslim, it seems the ties that bind the similarity relationship is in accordance to what has been repeatedly mentioned in the holy Quran. The most important thing is the essence of the findings shows that there are similarities in the contents of the cultural landscape i.e carving motives from all sides in its own special but significant way. It is such as, the way of instilling the Islamic views on nature, development and stewardship (*khalifatul-fil-ard*) which are supported by the Quranic verses:

"We have created all creatures in pairs, whether those live on earth, verily they know not"
(Quran: Yassin: 36) and

"Verily, all things have We created by measure" (Quran - al Qamar : 49) and

"...Everything to Him is measured" (Quran - ar Ra'ad : 8) and

"And We have produced therein everything in balance" (Quran - ar Rahman : 7)

This can be seen in the application of the Maori in their distinctive design using vegetation such as Fern in their way of life especially in the application of cultural landscape (way of life assimilation with the environment).