

Foreword

This volume records the proceedings of the International Seminar *Contemporary Expressions of Islam in Buildings* held in Indonesia in October 1990. The opening ceremony took place in the Jakarta State Palace, while the seminar proper was held in the historic city of Yogyakarta.

Throughout the seminar, the position papers and ensuing comments and discussions focused on a key theme: the exploration of the interaction between Islam, as a social and cultural phenomenon, and the built environment of Muslims. The specific topics addressed included a wide range from the more expected themes of tradition versus modernity or the architecture of the mosque to the less frequently studied but equally important topics of women and architecture and Muslims in the West.

From the opening speeches in Jakarta to the last farewell in Yogyakarta, two key concepts dominated the seminar and left a lasting imprint on the participants: the need for *ijtihad* or innovation in all our endeavours and the “tolerance” evident in Indonesia as an example to other nations. Certainly, the Indonesian dimension of the seminar enriched all present, both through formal contributions and through visual stimulation.

All participants left with the feeling of having learned and profited from the discussions. It is to be hoped that these published recordings will convey not only the information accumulated but also some sense of the interaction of ideas and arguments that took place. As in past volumes of the series, priority has been given in this publication to the excitement of the deliberations and the spontaneity of the debates, even if at times this had to be done at the expense of syntax and grammar. In this way the reader will be better able to share in the seminar experience.

The diversity of the contributions and the constraints of time and space have made the editing of this volume a challenging if not always easy task. Françoise Lombard and Danielle Chouet deserve special thanks for their unfailing optimism while typing and retyping the many versions and revisions.

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Editor

