

THEMES OF CLASSICALITY IN THE MALAY ARCHITECTURAL FORM: PRINCIPLES FROM AN ARISTOCRATIC REALM

(Tema Keklasikan dalam Bentuk Seni Bina Melayu: Prinsip daripada Golongan Bangsawan)

Puteri Shireen Jahn Kassim,
puterishr@iium.edu.my

Noor Hanita Abdul Majid,
hanita@iium.edu.my

Tengku Anis Qariahah Raja Abdul Kadir,
tengkuanis.iium@gmail.com

Kulliyah Seni Bina dan Reka Bentuk Alam Sekitar,
Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia,

NurulSyala Abdul Latip,
nurulsyala@usim.edu.my

Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia.

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Abstract

The term “classical” in past South East Asian and Malay writings, architectural discourse, cultural studies and urbanism has earlier related to a notion of ‘purity’ of form related to and the traditional vocabulary and forms arising mainly from timber constructions and, compositions. This article challenges these current definition by linking the definition to an Aristocratic Realm, and argues that selected palaces and mansions of the Malay world embody these universally understood principles, rules and themes. Such rules of classicality, include a keen sense of symmetry, proportionality in form, controlled decorative character and clean lines. This paper explores the frontages and elevational character of these palaces and highlights the underlying themes as reflections of ‘the assertive character of aristocratic classicality’ which heightened in

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the context of evolvement of Malay socio-polities which reflected in certain palatial buildings and aristocratic houses of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The incursion of colonial influences, had evolved hybrid forms, as the Malay socio-cultural landscape underwent changes due to economic energies and new technologies. These palaces reflect local architectural form which underwent changes in technology but essentially held on to the essence of the Malay form. The language of the Malay 'classical' depict attributes of classicality' and a 'highly' refined style, reflect certain timeless rules of form. The evolution of these classical forms was occasionally 'interrupted' by colonial elements and juxtaposed upon the original Malay characteristic forms. Though at times, this had diluted its essence, it did not compromise it. The Malay elements which survive the onslaught of modernity through colonialism, can be defined as key rules of Malay architectural and urban character. These are argued as part of the same 'tree' of Malay architecture which absorbed colonial vocabulary yet belonging to the same root, and genealogy.

Keywords: Malay Classical style, regionalism, hybridity, architectural tectonics, South-East Asian architecture

Abstrak

Istilah "klasik" dalam hasil penulisan, wacana seni bina, pengajian budaya, serta urbanisme Asia Tenggara dan Melayu pada zaman dahulu biasanya mempunyai kaitan dengan idea bentuk yang "suci" dan juga berkaitan dengan kosa kata tradisional, serta binaan kayu dan gubahan. Artikel ini mencabar definisi semasa dengan mengaitkan istilah ini dengan golongan bangsawan, serta mengemukakan pendapat bahawa istana dan rumah agam dunia Melayu merupakan manifestasi prinsip, unsur dan tema yang umumnya dianggap sebagai "klasik". Unsur keklasikan termasuklah kepekaan terhadap simetri atau kesekataan, keseimbangan bentuk, hiasan yang sederhana dan seni reka yang tidak sarat. Artikel ini meneliti ciri buka depan dan dongakan istana lama, serta mendedahkan tema yang tersembunyi sebagai cerminan ciri keklasikan bangsawan yang agak dominan dan semakin meningkat seiring dengan konteks evolusi sosiopolitik Melayu, seperti yang tercermin dalam reka bentuk beberapa istana dan rumah agam golongan bangsawan pada akhir abad ke-19 hingga awal abad ke-20an. Pengaruh seni bina penjajah Barat menghasilkan bentuk kacukan pada ketika sosiobudaya Melayu mengalami perubahan akibat perkembangan ekonomi dan teknologi baharu. Istana yang dibina pada zaman ini menunjukkan perubahan dalam seni bina tempatan dari segi teknologi tetapi pada dasarnya masih mengekalkan unsur bentuk seni bina Melayu asli. Istilah "klasik" Melayu menggambarkan ciri "keklasikan" dan "kehalusan" gaya, serta mencerminkan unsur bentuk yang tidak lapuk dek zaman. Evolusi bentuk klasik ini adakalanya "diganggu" oleh unsur kolonial yang digunakan bersama-sama ciri bentuk seni bina Melayu asli. Pengaruh ini sedikit sebanyak menghakis unsur Melayu asli tetapi tidak menjejaskannya secara menyeluruh. Unsur Melayu yang

mampu bertahan walaupun menghadapi arus kemodenan akibat penjajahan Barat merupakan unsur utama seni bina dan ciri urbanisme Melayu. Unsur inilah yang dibincangkan dalam artikel ini yang berasal daripada tunjang seni bina Melayu yang sama dari segi asal usul dan salasilah, meskipun menyerapkan kata-kata kolonial.

Kata kunci: gaya Melayu klasik, kewilayahan, kekacukan, peralihan seni bina, seni bina Asia Tenggara

INTRODUCTION

The epitome of Malay architectural style and language has conventionally been discussed as works, and compositions arising from an aesthetic style made from elements and forms of timber-based vernacular construction and craftsmanship. Mohd Rasdi et al. (2005), Shuaib et al. (2014), Halim and Hashim (1997), for example, have usefully shared the compilation of valuable resources of Malay architecture by highlighting the position of Masjid Kampung Laut as an ancient, but high point of timber craftsmanship, reflecting a position of Malay antiquity within a region in which ancient timber forms are ravaged by climate and human hazards. Ghafar (2017) highlighted the nature of Malay ‘classical’ kampung as potential sites for UNESCO heritage status. By reviewing of traditional houses and palaces that reflect the high artisanship of timber-based construction in the Malay Sultanates and settlements of the past, Tajuddin (2005) focused on the contribution of such timber structures to the core character of Malay architecture. Hasan and Nawawi (2014) in their detailed account of the ancient form and construction of Masjid Kampung Laut, Nilam Puri, Kelantan, also known to be Malaysia’s oldest mosque, relates the ‘Classical’ to the timber-forms the Malay vernacular. Hasan and Nawawi (2014) remarks:

*“The Kampung Laut Old Mosque contained all the **classical** elements of the traditional Malay architecture, with elevated raised floor, three-layered roof and carved supporting columns, which are all built using chengal hardwood timber.”*

In all the above, the ‘Classical’ is not related to Classical in the western style of form, but understood as something ancient, rooted, simple in form and comprising of a simple hierarchy of formal elements. However, when construction digresses from pure timber buildings, the connotations of the ‘Classical’ are then described as related to the ‘colonial’. Soe Ju et al. (2015), for example, terms the Malay houses of Kampung Bahru as structures fused with Colonial ‘style’; hence producing a style termed as ‘*Malay Colonial*’. Similarly any infusion of masonry is termed as a ‘mongrelisation’ of the Malay original formal expression. The ‘Malay World’ is

a defined geographical area inhabited by peoples of Malay and share identifiable notions about nature and life from the 11th century in the South East Asian region which had embraced the Islamic faith. Though the Malays are related to the racial stock such as the Minangkabauese, Achehese, Bugis, Banjarese, Mandailings and later in Singapore the Orang Selat, Boyanese and Javanese, what unites them is the essential characteristic of a shared culture and language and amongst them is the architectural vernacular, which is often touted as being rooted in the age-old traditions in timber construction and craftsmanship.

Yet a review of Malay palatial architecture, often demonstrates that palaces range from a purely timber expressions to a hybrid language. Due to its associations with the archetypical timber house, the palace as a typology is seen as a offshoot of the traditional timber house. Yet by the 18th century with the onset of Colonial influences to the region, palaces reflect the infusion of masonry elements, particularly stylised elements of columns, capitals and arches with mouldings or cornices. Yet these are often seen as the absorption of the ‘Colonial style’ or being influenced by the Colonialist, rather than a language *grown from the natural evolution of technology in the region and whose forms are related to the innovativeness of the Malays*. While one cannot deny that some palaces, particularly few of those in the Straits Settlements took on the usurping of Colonial vocabulary undiscerningly into traditional form, some of the hybrid palaces – fusion of timber and masonry - must be seen as natural offshoot of the technological expressions of the time, linked to a natural evolution of the Malay culture within the same structure of socio-political system and civilisation. Kahn (2012) had aptly observed that the perception the the origin of the Malay culture including its architecture having origins in the *kampung* (village) is in fact, part of the projections, and consequences, of Colonial writings, which saw racial compositions in spatial terms. Past writings by Colonialists about the Malays had always been tinged with ‘spatial’ perception of its times, which depict Malay life as centred on the idea of the ‘*kampung*’. The *kampung* is always seen as the origins or *locus classicus* of the Malay civilisation. Hence the ‘image’ of the kampung house as the ‘classical’ origins had persisted till today. Yet in many studies, Malays are originally seen as ‘urban’ and ‘maritime’ and in a recent study, Mikvic (2016) and earlier, Andaya (2010) highlighted that South East Asian civilisations, were in fact a concoction of traders and urban masonry centers at the heights of its civilisations along the Straits of Melacca. Their cities and constructions have displayed hybrid masonry types of typologies and urban design. Their populations were more maritime and commercial, rather than sedentary and agricultural. At the centre of these communities, is a public power structure which ensured the stability and prosperity of a multicultural population. As these centres

grew, the stylistic forms of their public architecture and urban design had reflected hybridity, with more masonry elements in their building traditions. Their structures are still infused with a high level of refinement and skills of traditional artisans regarding timber artisanship.

An alternative definition of ‘Classicality’ is one from the field of literature, and relates to the advent of the influence of Islam and Islamic sources on the language, which later became the *lingua franca* of the region. Reid (2004) summarises the attributes of “Malayness” as perceived in the 16th century:

“In the 16th and 17th centuries, Malayness in maritime South East Asia retained these two associations – a line of kingship acknowledging descent from Srivijaya and Melaka or Pagaruyong (Minangkabau), and a commercial diaspora that retained some of the customs, language and trade practices developed in the emporium of Melaka. The kingship role was more prominent in the Melaka area than elsewhere.”

‘Classicality’ can thus be argued as a temporal attribute related to a kind of refined level and epitome of civilisational practices, including its styles and symbols. As society evolved, the realm of rationality and the ‘learned’ become heightened, and thus leaders of the society including aristocracy become used to aesthetic stylings that are essentially refinements and beauty. Thus classicality, in all evolving societies, can be linked to a certain form of visual traits and connotation; that of a controlled aesthetic approach, including the predominance of ‘clean’ lines, and the rule of proportion in form, elements, spaces and building compositions.

Classicality as a style in the Western realm

A Classical style is often contrasted with its opposite anti-Classical position, which the European West often associated with a nostalgic and romanticist position, later known as “picturesque,”. This is often depicted visually as the rambling style of the English countryside style. The picturesque style was linked to the more “organic” and “emotional” approach of architects as contrasted to the more ‘composed’, ‘rationally-grounded’ Classical approach. A more modern definition or reference of Classicality is as suggested by Eisenman(1984):

“Before this time, the ‘classical’ was taken to be either synonymous with ‘architecture’ conceived of as a continuous tradition from antiquity or, by the mid-nineteenth century, a historicist style.’ This implies that architecture since the mid-fifteenth century had often aspired to be a paradigm of the *classic* (italicised initially by the

author); *it is timeless, meaningful, and real.*”

Architecture that attempts to recover what is classic can thus be called “classical”. The ‘Classic’, as defined by Merriam Webster dictionary, is “serving as a standard of excellence”, characterised by “graceful design and simple tailored lines,” while Cambridge dictionary has defined the meaning of the *classic* as “*traditional in style or form, or based on methods developed over a long period.*” Classicality may thus refer to formal archetypes that recur again and again as which are taken as standard bearers of society. They often arise from an intention to create a ‘whole’ piece of architecture rather than grow organically. They are designed to have a visual impact to the outsider. Classical architecture requires a visual approach, in which a complete composition is conceptualised and composed for a particular visual impact externally. This is contrasted with from the act of composing based on an additive or more organic process, or merely adding on decorative effects. Hence the epitome of Classicality, in Western architectural history, is the Parthenon, a temple which was design to look a certain way and to have a maximum effect, including the effect of ‘entasis’ i.e. the bulging of columns to appear straight when viewed from afar. The aim is for the highest visual impact, and which later, had influenced the Renaissance and the Palladian development of the language.

Classical in the East Asian societies

It is argued that the lack of study of the stylistic disposition and public expression as contained in the local palatial architecture, has created a vacuum in created a resource for identity making in public architecture . As cities grow, large buildings and monuments become the norm. A language to express their identities and frontages needed and these have become filled with Western models including , modern interpretations , translations, templates and images. Such monumental forms however have previously derived from the region’s local skills, genius and artisanship. The Malay aristocracy, though centred around the Sultanates, had amongst their kin, those who were occupied with the interpretation and expression of Malay identity. Hence palaces, and public spaces, long been the source of these refined forms . Though the Malay world is a highly diverse region, many of these reflect certain universal principles. Jahn Kassim et al.(2017) has attempted to define the Malay ‘regionalism’ i.e, is defined as the essences of the Malay language, when encountering the ‘other’ i.e. the tropical international style as it evolved through centuries till present day. After 1957, the tropicalised International Style

had predominated the local public buildings, as these were seen as ‘progressive’ and ‘scientific’ and thus had contributed to further erasing the memory of local tradition in city centres. The dominance of the colonial mind-set had still prevailed till today, and invade the imagination as these forms of public architecture become linked with the idealisms of Independence.

Yet during its times, it was the interpretation of the ‘few’ - anxious to follow the ‘times’ and concerned with the creation and image of “newness.” During the 1960s, any semblance to the Malay style or tradition was seen as backward and regressive’. However by the late 1970s, the lack of cultural sensitivities was felt and the trend swung back to a search for cultural identity. The late 1800s, is defined by many, as the onset of colonial control in the region. However it can also be argued that during this time, a Malay- Classical hybrid style emerged which elements that reflect the emphasis on identity amidst change. These had evolved from an essentially vernacular foundation towards reflecting the eternal and universal values of the ‘Classical’ - being themes that reflect what identity meant in the public realm. Though some of these buildings were mosques and reflect the Islamic eclectic style, it can be argued that members of the aristocracy had each, to varied extent, attempted to express a language of public architecture in the Malay world. What they produced, was a style that can be argued as a reflection of what Scruton (1995) defined - the language of the ‘Classical vernacular’, which are essentially expressions of the creative arts within which is modern but within the vernacular at the same time. The “classical” vernacular is linked to the emphasis with socio religious frameworks and is differentiated from thought systems that have no religious roots. Scruton then termed Modernism as the complete departure with tradition and linked an “age of nihilism”.

THE 1800S, THE ARISTOCRACY, AND THE “CLASSICAL.”

At the heart of the traditional Malay world are the custodians of its culture, the Malay Sultans and the Sultanate aristocracy. Gullick (1987) similarly notes that the core of the Malay culture and practices of these rulers was due to

“...the justification for giving so much prominence to them is that they play a leading part in their communities. By their office, they were men of influence, whose precept and example had a widespread effect, especially in the upper class of Malay society, which came into close contact with them and related their status to ties of kinship with the royal dynasty, or the holding of court office. The rulers were also more exposed than most of their subject to external influences. ..”



Figure 1: Melaka 1509: from Portuguese sources, lithograph the arrival of Diego Lopes de Sequeira.

(from M. L. Dames (ed.), *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, Hakluyt Society, London, 1918)

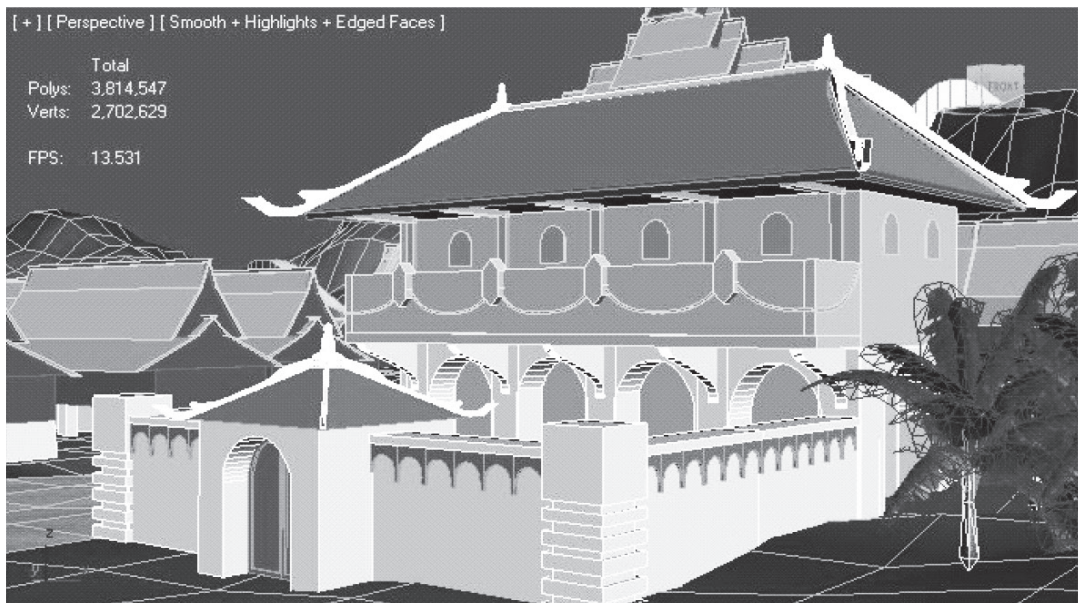


Figure 2: Visualisation of what the building of the “left” could look like architecture is masonry and timber with the Malay-Chinese roof (Sources: authors’ visualisation)

The ‘classicality’ of Malay palaces of this time arose from a time in which modernity and urbanisation reigned. These had produced the ‘hybridity’ or combination of timber-masonry language. In the visualisation of typical Melaka architecture as seen in the lithographs of the sixteenth-century city of Melaka. Before the colonisation by the Portuguese in 1511, Malacca was an urban city whose structures were masonry and timber. The urban forms exhibited a combination of timber, typically in roof forms and masonry language and construction, as seen in the lithographs of 1509 of de Sequeira (*Figure 1*) and visualisation of guards’ house (*Figure 2*). It can be seen that Malacca, as a classical Malay civilisation and culture of the fifteenth century, was a timber-hybrid civilisation.

The Colonialist influences were a form of ‘modernist’ influences as described by Amoroso (2014) as “*the intrusion of the industrialised world seeking raw materials, areas of investment, and free trade.*” In later years, the more aggressive diffusion and control of Colonialists emerged. From the key outposts of Straits Settlements such as Penang, Melaka, and Singapore, the Colonialists extended their foothold in Malaya and Sumatera and matched their expansionist agenda with the rate of development including the expression of public buildings in their style. The change was driven by the need to protect their commercial interests which began through protectorate and concession agreements with the local rulers. To ensure the enhancement of trade and safety of transactions, agreements were made with the ruling class, who saw the Colonials as an ally and source of protection against recurring attacks by, or the antagonism of neighbouring powers. Amoroso (2014) summates, about Malaysia, how the British saw that the maintenance of particular symbolic regalia, including architectural style, were part of parcel of extending their rule through the existing power structures. Certain traditional symbolism, iconography and structures were key to their continued presence, and which must be preserved.

Gullick (1987) provides another summary and insight into the times:

“The nineteenth century appears to have been the large age of unchanging stability and the twentieth century mars the beginning of accelerating processes of social change which continue own to modern times. The end of an epoch and the beginning of another cannot be dated precisely, but one can recognise that say by 1920, age had ended, and another had begun.”

The case studies selected in this study, display hybridity that is characteristic of the changing times, and such hybridities in architectural expression are crucial and part of the definition and characteristic of a form of ‘Classicality’, they contain recurring rational principles yet vary according to the characteristic of a location or

place. By ‘place’ or ‘region’, one does not mean “nation” as defined geographically today, but rather the Malay polities of this era and a past. Not only were the cases built at the height of an era of tradition, but they were also the monumental expressions of such local streams of knowledge and genius. They stem and grew from the local vernacular archetype, yet they contain a ‘Classical’ archetype which its rules.

Distinctive aesthetic additions and stylisations include ornamentation and the refined use of complex decorative motifs are symbols of such styles and often expressed in the ‘edges’ of such forms, i.e. adorning the eaves, fascia boards, and finials, like decorative ‘lace’ adorning a dress or clothes of a person. In architecture, these motifs draw their inspired patterns from the surrounding flora and fauna, instantly reflecting the closeness between the building and the spirit of the artisans. Palaces, as in the words of Andaya (2010), are a reflection of the social structure of the Malay world and its socio-cultural system. It reflects a hierarchy and systemic power in its layout, architecture, and these manifest in outward physical forms. Hence such hierarchical form displays the ‘galactic’ forms of Malay polities, containing aristocratic power centres, structures for their extended families, which encircle the central place of the ruler. As the monarchs, rulers built palaces as the key custodians of their culture. In many cases, there are the extended and refined versions of the Malay palace and aristocratic houses that reflect the highest form of technology and craftsmanship available in the locality.

TRACING GENEALOGIES

It is thus crucial that the Malay genealogy of architecture be reconstructed and these includes the stylisations which is different from the Colonial position. Chang (2016) outlines the stylistic themes of Colonial styles include the tropical style, which is different from what is briefly calls the local ‘Malay style.’ The Malaysian colonial style and its roots are a Neo-classical or Victorian architecture were part of the diffusion of Imperial power through the era and has evolved through the nation’s climate. The manifestation of elements such as the tropical colonnade or veranda is seen in the mansions of Penang and Melaka. The elements reflect the language of the passive and bioclimatic architecture of tropicalized Colonial style, which focused mainly on the Western view of tropical, which culminated in the tropical nation of the international style. These idyllic visions of the tropical Colonial style evolved naturally into the modernist outcome or part of the language of tropicalizing the Modernist ‘box’. In modern times, such a language is represented as mere louvres or the louvred projections over glass boxes; it implies a continual Colonial mindset that tropicalized International

architecture through the discourses of the AA (Architectural Association) tropical school, in the writings of Koenigsberger, Maxwell and Jane Drew.

With reference to Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, Chang (2016) summated that an urban ‘tropical’ that has been dominating the language of cities was derived from (1) the tropicalization of past Colonial legacies and (2) a form of technoscience, whilst referring to the ‘sciences’ of tropical as associated with Koenigsberger and the tropical school. This timber-masonry hybrid language must be differentiated from the Colonial language. The latter is described by Chang (2016) as beginning with the Colonial architecture of the bungalow, and reflecting the tropical of the Far East region, and tracing through its genealogical seed or source. The sources include the tropical Colonial bungalow, the tropical Military Barracks, pavilion-type hospitals, and later large public buildings. In Malaysia, the Palladian-style bungalow is perhaps the seed of a whole spectrum of tropicalized Classical language in urban buildings. This style, which included the extension of verandas and porticos, was the symbolic form of Colonial lifestyle and East Indies and became a cultural form in itself.

The Malay style is thus a specific style - the abundant use of columns, pitched roofs, naturally ventilated porticos, louvres, tall windows, adornment of roof finials, and decorative panels, amongst others. . The palace is typically a large house with an enhanced portico, and the general monuments were imbued with a ceremonial character of the structures. These forms were later recognised as aristocratic complexes and thus, reflected the apotheosis of the Malay vernacular. They have become the identity of Malay urbanism and can be seen not only on facades and frontages but also in the public spaces and walkways. Although some bear traces of Colonial influences and syncretism, they hold the capacity as part of the language, which has absorbed global influences to become expressive symbols, and quasi-urban forms. Malay settlements and its palatial cores have constituted overlapping ‘civilisations’ across time that has been described as dynamically changing ‘galactic’ forms (Andaya, 2010) through out the time. This became an expression of hybridity which is also a form of ‘Classicality’ because it’s derived from the ingenuity of the Malay social structure, imbued with local craftsmanship and local motifs. Abdul Halim Nasir (1987);

“The beautiful carvings produced at the palace are associated with the status symbol of an administration and indirectly had accorded recognition to the art of traditional Malay woodcarving under this system.”

It reflects local resources and the skills of their societies and the derivative of local socio-political systems. In the words of Andaya (2010, p: 80);

“A simple arrangement prevailed in the Malayu areas, with a Malayu kingdom consisting of a sultan with many of his residing close to the royal residence, and other family networks headed by powerful officials or chiefs with their constituencies. The boundaries of these Malayu polities were never stable because they expanded and contracted by the movement of their subjects.”

CASE STUDIES AND THE REGION

The following cases are linked to the Malay Sultanates in Sumatera and Malaysia, and which arose from ancient lineages, such as Perak and Kedah Sultanates, and to the Sumatran side are locations such as Langkat, Deli, and Batu Bara. The case studies are derived from the late 1800s and 1920s. The cases were focused on the loci of a Malay-Nusantara region taken as encompassing Sumatera, Malaysia, South Thailand, and the eastern part of Java, Borneo, South Philippines, South Vietnam, and South Thailand. It is linked to what Andaya (2010) defines as the heterogeneous nation of the Malay region:

“Throughout this study, I have decided to retain the Malay word and spelling ‘Malayu’ to refer to the Malays in preference to the current usage of ‘Melayu’. The former was the way the name was more commonly transcribed in inscriptions and early documents, by using ‘Malayu’ i am including not only those in Malaysia but also those living in various parts of Indonesia, particularly on the east coast of Sumatra and the offshore islands to the south of the Malay Peninsula.”

DESCRIPTION OF CASE STUDIES

The Palace of Lima Laras, Batu Bara, Sumatera

The Palace of Lima Laras (*Figure 3*) is located in the village of Lima Laras, district of Tanjung Tiram, in Batu Bara. The palace was built in 1907 and completed in 1912. The Batu Bara settlement grew from the confluence of two rivers. Hence its economy grew from trade rather than from agriculture or concessions. Its location was a strategic trade route between Riau, neighbouring states, and Malacca like the Langkat palace. This palace is symmetrical and balanced in form, with exact proportions across both sides of an axis. Yet it recalls the essentially timber expression of the Malay world with its many columns, some of which is moulded in masonry pillars, giving the whole structure a rhythmic, lighter, more open-air ambience. The mansion also reflects the essentially Malay language of open-style porticos that extend from left and right, and the space that extends to the back are

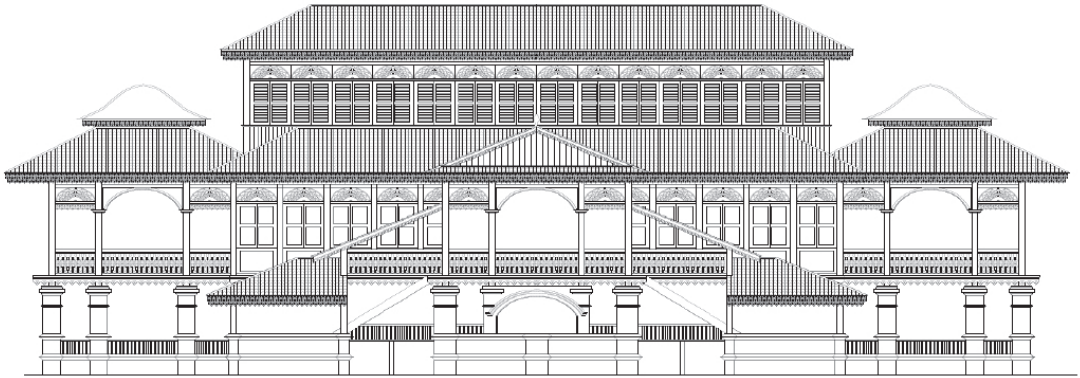


Figure 3: Istana Lima Liras, Batu Bara, Sumatera

for more private functions. There are four open-air verandahs like platforms, each facing the four cardinal directions.

The palace has five floors, with the ground floor servicing the house and in the past, housing the army and prisoners. The first floor was a large ‘anjung’ a meeting and welcoming space for the administrators of the state. Formerly called “Palace of Intention,” the building was said to mirror a front of a ship which was perhaps the intention of the builder, who was active in sea trade, during a time the Dutch practised non-interventionist policy and recognised the political administration of Mohammad Yoda and its dynasty.

Istana Langkat, Tanjung Pura, Sumatera

Langkat is one of East Sumatera’s oldest Sultanate or kingdom. It was relatively unknown until the opening of rubber plantations and discovery of oil in Pangkalan Brandan. It is also known in the present day for its contributions to refined Malay literature. The palace of Istana Langkat (Figure 4) was built in 1921. Its form is also

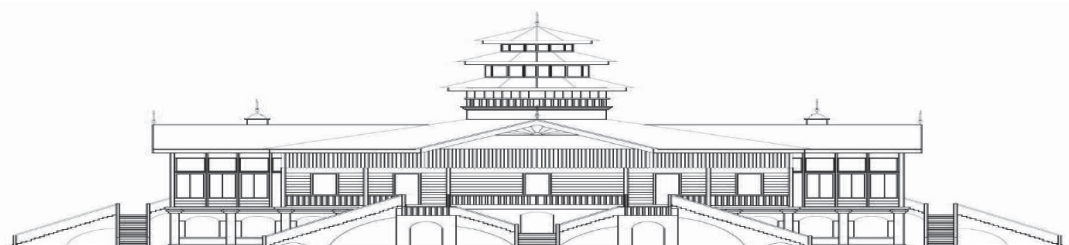


Figure 4: The Palace of Langkat - elevation showing the Hybrid language of a Classical palace (source: authors visualisation)



Figure 5: The Langkat of Palace at Tanjung Pura built by Sultan Abdul Aziz (1900).
(Source: Digital Archives, University of Leiden)

axial and symmetrical yet it is capped by a layered pinnacle , at times, interpreted as part of the spiritual expression of the region. Elementally it constitutes a hybrid form of timber masonry that is firmly based on the vernacular of the region. Its local character dominates through the use of roof finials, tall openable shuttered window, and an open ground floor built in a stately masonry whitewashed structure on the ground floor. This combination results in a stunning contrast of colours and forms. The principal timber palace is ornamented with delicate motifs with elements of the *serambi* (extended to the front), *anjung* (extended to the sides), large openable windows, and an open-air collonaded ground floor (Figure 5). Its roof recalls the typical *bumbong panjang* roof that is inserted with a multi-tiered roof, which recalls the Javanese counterpart and its layered forms of tropical roofs.

Istana Indragiri, Rengas Sumatera

Istana Indragiri was built in the 1920s in Rengat, Sumatera. Its name is derived from the Sanskrit of *India*, which means palace, and *giri*, which means a high status or country. The present palace is a renovated version. Its form is symmetrical,



Figure 6: Replica of Istana Indragiri, Danau Raja, Kota Rengat

Source: <https://lancangkuning.com/post/175/wisata-sejarah-ke-5-istana-kerajaan-melayu-di-bumi-lancang-kuning.html>


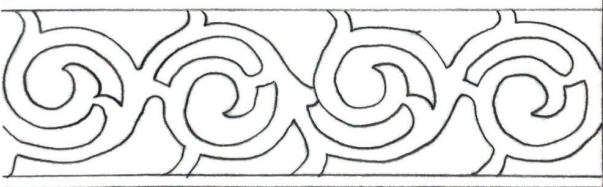
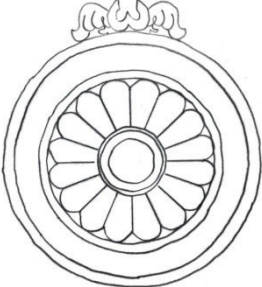
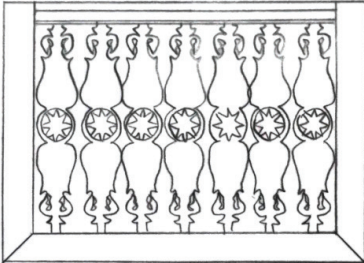
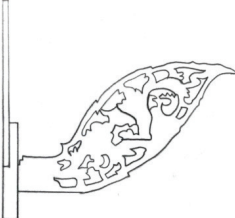
proportion and majestic and depicts a peristyle form of architecture, with wide verandahs and colonnades. During its time the palace was the seat of the State of Indragiri Kingdom at the time of Raja Iskandar, whose surname was Narasinga I. (Refer Figure 6):

Compared to Istana Langkat and Istana Lima Liras, the masonry core of the Indragiri palace is surrounded by a colonnade of columns. As discussed by Tengku Anis et al. (2017), the peristyle form represents one of the five generic forms of palaces that abound and which recur across the Malay Sultanates generally before the early 1900s. These forms reflect the essential archetypes through what is known as a diverse region, yet each reflect a sense of symmetry and degree of formal rules. These forms commonly have the Malay features of embellished components that visually elevate these utilitarian structure into refined expressions and even urban counterparts.



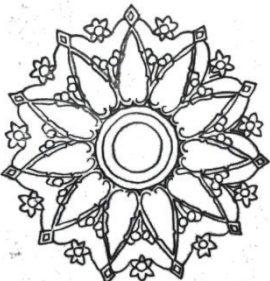
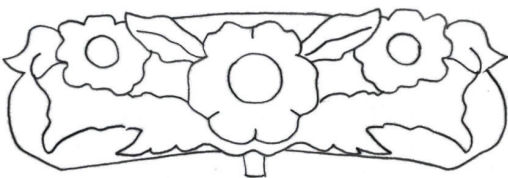

The Balai Besar, Alor Setar, Malaysia

Kedah is one of Malaysia's oldest Sultanates and polities. Its palatial complex is located in the midst of its capital Alor Setar. The Balai Besar or Royal Audience hall of Alor Setar Kedah in its present form is an evolution from pure timber to a timber-masonry-cast iron hybrid. Decoratively, it reflects the expressions of Malay-Siamese elements and absorption of Colonial influences, yet still



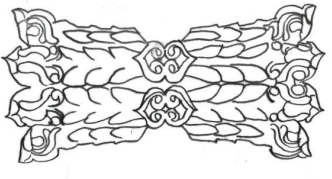
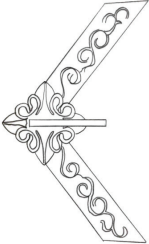

Table 1: The range of Malay embellishments in the Audience Hall of Kedah, recalling varied motifs used in localising the Palatial language – Balai Besar, AlorSetar (Source: Fadzidah Abdullah et al. 2005 , IIUM KAED Heritage Lab, IIUM)

NO.	PATTERN OF MOTIF	NAME OF THE MOTIF
1.		KERAWANG PAPAN DEPAN BALAI BESAR
2.		AWAN LARAT
3.		BUNGA TAMPUK MANGGIS
4.		MOTIF JERAJAK
5.		MOTIF SELEMBAYUNG

sambungan **Table 1:** The range of Malay embellishments in the Audience Hall of Kedah, recalling varied motifs used in localising the Palatial language – Balai Besar, AlorSetar (Source: Fadzidah Abdullah et al. 2005 , IIUM KAED Heritage Lab, IIUM)

6.		BUNGA TERKUKUR
7.		KERAWANG SULUR BAYANG
8.		BUNGA TERUNG
9.		MOTIF FLORAL
10.		KERAWANG TANGGA BALAI BESAR

sambungan **Table 1:** The range of Malay embellishments in the Audience Hall of Kedah, recalling varied motifs used in localising the Palatial language – Balai Besar, AlorSetar (Source: Fadzidah Abdullah et al. 2005 , IIUM KAED Heritage Lab, IIUM)

11.		BUNGA SULUR PAKU 2
12.		MOTIF <i>BRACKET ENHANCED</i>
13.		BUNGA SULUR PAKU 1
14.		SILANG GUNTING
15.		ELEMEN KALIGRAF

retains the essence of Malay form: fusing timber, masonry, and the technology of cast iron. The complex was built by Sultan Muhammad Jiwa Zainal Abidin Shah (1710–1760), the first Sultan of Kedah, and is sometimes known as “Balai Penghadapan” (Grand Audience Hall). Located in front of the “Istana Pelamin,” this heritage structure has witnessed a series of events that marked the history of Kedah and Alor Setar.

The original structure of Balai Besar was completed in 1735 (Wan Shamsudin bin Mohd Yusof, 2007), and since then, Balai Besar has faced several attacks from foreign forces. The first attack was by the Siamese for the reason that Kedah delayed the delivery of “Bunga Emas” to Bangkok in 1767. In 1986, the Balai Besar was renovated with the infusion of an eclectic mix of Malay, Javanese, Thai, and Colonial influences. Its final form became a hybrid between Greek pillars, Flat Renaissance arches, sweeping Viennese staircase, and a Malay/Thai roof. The Siamese had close relations with Kedah during this era through political and cultural ties. Colour schemes of yellow and green recall varnished roofing tiles of palaces and temples of Siam, with slender columns reaching a height of over nine meters, and with openwork at the joint between the roof and column.

The Audience Hall is another symmetrical and axial semi-outdoor area which resonates universal Classical proportions yet manages to still capture the localised essence of a *serambi* form or the *anjung* reminiscing the simple Malay house. The recurring feature of the Malay palace is that it is a heightened and amplified version of the archetypical vernacular structure of the Malay house. In each case, slender columns are maintained and recall the simple vernacular house composed of stilts, various lintel structures, and a pitched roof. Although the palace is embellished, it is surmounted by a simple *bumbung panjang* roof, which shelters the audience hall yet allows natural ventilation. The roof is organised in different heights and ornamented with intricate pinnacles and *awan larat*, which creates an eye-catching visual form. The columns were further localised and decorated with types of local flora such as *Bunga sulor paku* and *Kayu berlurah buah gelugor* (Table 1).

There are also Corinthian-like columns further into the building although they are not apparent from the frontal elevation. The columns on the ground floor are shaped like *Kayu berlurah buah gelugor* are 16 in total and decorated with *Bunga sulor paku* on the top of them. Capitols of the columns on the upper floor are decorated with the Malay *sailor paku* motif consisting of a single motif shoot of fern. The eight pieces of the fern motif carved from wood are secured to the plain capitol with two nails each based on the octagonal cross-section of each column. Internally, there is a chandelier reflecting a *Bunga terong* at its base.

Externally, the columns are decorated by brackets based on triangular forms, which reflect a ‘sulor-paku’ like the floral pattern. Other than that, there is an ‘architrave’-like element which functions as a supporting system between the frontal columns and has three layers of *awan larat*. Other motifs such as ‘silang gunting’ and ‘jerejak’ are designed with exquisite detail and can be viewed externally.

Baitul Rahmah (1905) and Baitun Anwar (1912)

Sultan Idris, the late 1800s monarch of Perak’s, first son, Raja Harun Al-Rashid. Raja Harun Al-Rashid married his first wife Cik Rahmah Binti Ngah Ahmad, and built a house called Baitul Rahmah, in 1915 to tribute her name. Later he designed for the second wife, Cik Sarah, and built Baitul Aman; the house has its possibility built in the same year of Baitul Rahmah and named after their son, Raja Aman Shah. The Baitul Rahmah mansion (Figure 7) is a form of ‘dual-symmetry’ and is essentially a Malay royal mansion located near the compound of the main palace in Kuala Kangsar, Perak. It has a symmetrical “double” extended portico or verandah which is a variant of the *anjung* or verandah. The portico unites elements of roof finials and decorative panels with the columnar nature of the form, and these are embellished by woodcarving



Figure 7: Baitul Rahmah, Kuala Kangsar: A hybrid masonry plinth and column base fused with timber columns, portico, side balconies, and decorative eaves



Figure 8: Elevation of Baitul Anwar, Kuala Kangsar
Sources: Noorhanita Abdul Majid and Heritage Lab, KAED, IIUM

inspired by the character of honey bees. The capitals of the columns are decorated with woodcarving of the *kerawang* motif (Figure 14).

In 1912, he constructed Baitul Anwar named after his first son, Raja Anor Shah with his third wife, Raja Mentera @ Raja Zubaidah Binti Raja Sir Chulan. Raja Mentera is the lineage of royal family and daughter in law of Sultan Idris Murshidul' Adzam Shah. Sultan Idris Murshidul 'Adzam Shah married the second wife, Tengku Pemaishuri Che Uteh Mariah Binti Haji Sulaiman, and had their first son named Raja Harun Al-Rashid. Raja Harun Al- Rashid married his first wife Cik Rahmah Ngah Ahmad, and built the house called Baitul Rahmah in 1915 to tribute her name. Later he designed and built Baitul Aman for the second wife, Cik Sarah; the house has its possibility built in the same year of Baitul Rahmah and named after their son, Raja Aman Shah.

In the Baitul Rahmah, the Malay mortise and tenon technique can still be seen in the connections of beams and timber column, yet these combined with the brick footing, shaped and arranged to form like a stepped pedestal. The footing laid to half of the wall height. Its surfaces finished with decorated plaster cornice detail that influenced colonial style. Timber post integrated into the brick footing and secured with a wedge on a brick footing at the centre. The language is the "half-column" height and is either columns or a continuous masonry base. The expression itself is a refined form of the timber Malay house on its concrete footing. The language is made up of a masonry pedestal base in about half the height of the full ground floor, combined with a full floor

of timber architecture as in Baitul Anwar (Figure 8) and Baitul Rahmah (Figure 7). The base is stylised with stepped moulding and constitutes a base from which the columnar structure and structure of the building rise.

THE TIMELESSNESS OF THE MALAY FORM

Apart from the universal principles of Classicism, the timelessness of the Malay style can be related to other theories of architecture. Semper (1820) theorised another framework from the origins of architecture by condensing architectural forms into what he calls “the four elements of architecture.” He had observed that the Carribean hut (the plinth or earthwork, hearth, the frame, and the enclosure) are present in all forms of architecture. These fundamental elements can describe any “language” of architecture, and Semper observes that the language is almost always associated with lightweight, linear components, and the stereotomic as a form of massive earthwork constructions. It is this classicality that is timeless and universal that can be used to describe the elements of aristocratic Malay architectural style and its motifs. As Semper reflects,

“The product of human artistic skill, not with its utilitarian aspect but solely with that part that reveals a conscious attempt by the artisan to express cosmic laws and cosmic order when moulding the material.”

Semper (1820) goes further by implying that the above principles arise from the tectonic rather than from the symbolic, which aptly defines the Malay expressive language and composition as arising from the constructed act that has been imagined as a mere form and symbol. The building in the Malay is inherently linked to artisan as an expression of its context. However, by the stereotomic, Semper (1820) means that an architectural expression is also a form of “earthwork formed out of the repetitious stacking of heavy-weight units.” Semper then relates the stereotomic mass as an extension of earth that provides the tectonic a base to ascend from. The stereotomic element is more closely associated with creating volume, and the tectonic is an open frame. Semper then suggests that it is the transition between the tectonic and stereotomic that the language of architecture exists within and in that moment “the very essence of architecture becomes a physical manifestation.”

Hence, rather than merely focusing on timber artisanship as the epitome of Malay architecture, one can read the hybrid forms of the aristocratic in the late Colonial period as a kind of apotheosis of Malay civilisation before it gave way to foreign dominance. This is an argument that can give an alternate reading of

Malay architecture and its evolution in the region. Frampton (1995), in his studies in *Tectonic Culture*, similarly recognises the use of Semperian theories in explaining the principles of architecture in both the Western and the Eastern worlds. The tectonic and the stereotonic can be aligned to discuss and articulate the nature of the Malay Classical form and the significance of this theoretical framework in deriving an identity amidst globalisation. He relates that this is another approach in producing expressiveness within the act of construction to architecture—the importance of the “tectonic” in critical regionalism. He addresses the tectonic as the play of heaviness and lightness and the sky that reflects the style of Malay architectural Classicality. When Frampton discusses the stereotonic, he refers to the heaviness and weight of its presence and its connection to the earth, mainly by linking the principles to the elements of the Malay aristocratic language:

“The human experience is somewhere in between the earth and sky; a tension exists between the two materials which embody opposites.”

Frampton asserts that Semper’s theory separates the “tectonic and stereotonic” and as such the building can now be discussed as “mass and skin” or “mass and frame.” He illustrates that the inherent meaning of architecture can be read, and it evolves through this physical manifestation.

Thus the presenting of work is inseparable from the manner of its foundation on the ground and the ascendancy of its structure through the interplay of support, span, seam and joint – the rhythm of its revetment and the modulation of its fenestration. A building’s connection to the earth is just as important as its physical presence above the earth. Buildings acquire meaning through their act of building from the ground up, articulating a connection to both the earth and sky, heaviness and lightness.

Frampton’s theoretical frameworks of the tectonic and stereotonic elements of language are used to discuss the partner’s forms which demonstrate different dominance and combination of timber and masonry. In these early palaces, both masonry elements and timber tectonics are fused into a vibrant contrast and hybrid. It is argued that some of the later built Malay palaces and mansion had absorbed the Colonial style to the point that the only language and variations in archetypical style are the roof and its finials and fascias. These were retained to reflect the delicate nature of Malay culture, which is the inherent delicacy of Malay aesthetic sense and elements.

Recurring elements of the Classical Malay Form and Language

The recurring elements across the Classical forms include a columnar nature of space (Figure 9 below) characterised by relatively slender columns, the use of roof finials and decorative eaves, the use of brackets in connections are present in all case studies. These elements are typically infused in the column-pedestal hybrid systems and used the ventilated panels as architraves, transoms, and decorative fanlights, the balustrade and long-shuttered windows. The following Table 1.0 describes the ten common elements that can be then related to key expressions of Malay Classical identity.

An architecture that recalls Classicality in the Malay world have the recurring elements as compiled in Table 2. Such elements recur across cases from different regions, and can be expressed as variants of generic forms. In terms of composition, such as in Figure 7 and 8, both Baitul Rahmah and Balai Besar mansions, though different in scales, recall the majority of the essential elements such as having column-pedestal systems, exhibiting the use of decorative brackets, the use of slender columns, the localisation of any features with Malay motifs, roof finials, the use of decorative balustrades, and the use of decorative architraves. In the case of Baitul Rahmah, the architrave was situated above the lattice archway (Figure 10), whereas Balai Besar took the form of *awan larat* panels (Figure 11). Both have variations in their roof finials.

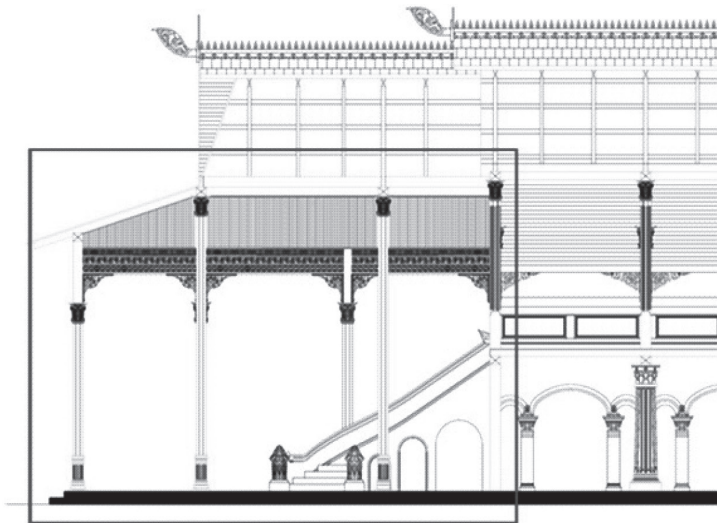


Figure 9: Balai Besar, AlorSetar: Elevation showing the projecting portico with ground floor open space



Figure 10: The roof finial-eave, architrave and bracket language of Baitul Rahmah.

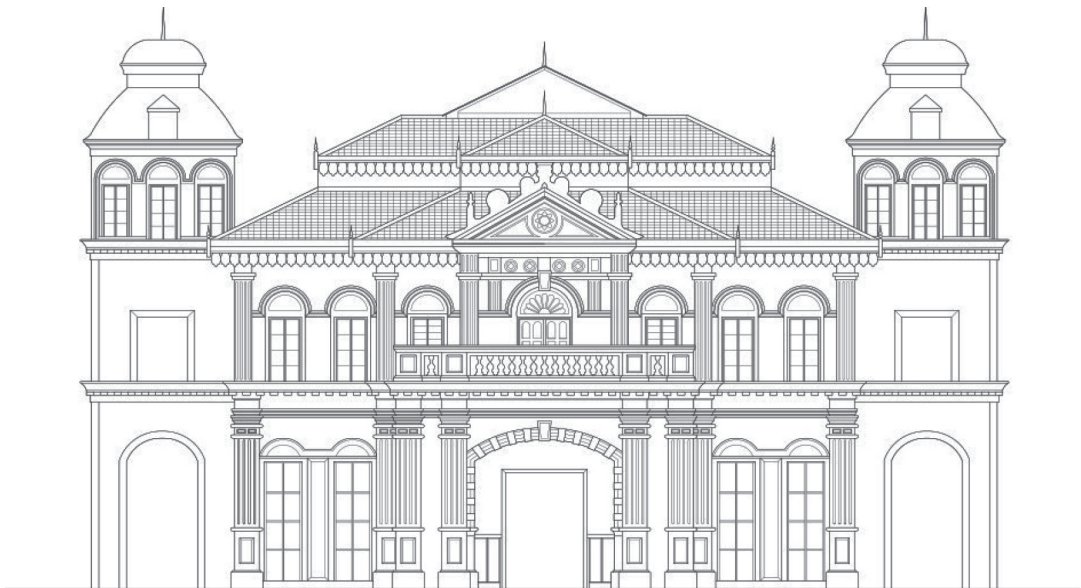


Figure 11: The Istana Hulu: the Malay language is only in the roof form and vocabulary

The ‘Colonial’ root in Language

In later years, i.e. early 1900s, in certain states, the influence of the Colonial style predominates. Many of these palaces were located in the centres within the Federated Malay States closer to Colonial influence and control. The capping of roof finials and ornamental eaves reflect how their functional elements became symbolic and aesthetic. The symbol and representation are, however, in detail rather than in the overall form. Such can be seen in the palaces of Istana Hulu, Kuala Kangsar (Figure 11) and Istana Bandar, Selangor, yet there are essentially classical Malay elements such as the decorative roof eaves.

Istana Hulu can be argued as a Colonial form , yet infused with elements of a Classical Malay language. This can also be seen in the columns with pedestals that are fused with the masonry mass of the palace. The columns are now pilasters and finials appear on the roofs that capped the form. Both Istana Hulu and Istana Bandar exhibit an eclectic style in which some details are Classical Malay, yet the overall language Colonial. In Istana Bandar, the element of “kekisi” or balustrade is fused into the form. Both still exhibit key vernacular elements such as decorative fascia board, *papan manis*, *tunjuk langit*, and the Malay pitch roof.



Figure 12: Malay language in Istana Bandar, Klang

“Colonial- Malay”, “Classical Malay” and “Vernacular Malay”

The different and position of the essentially Colonial style, with the variants of the Malay style can be seen in Table 2. This compares 4 case studies from the same region or settlement yet which demonstrate the different stylisations which are based on different roots and variation. As indicated, the table compares the range of styles and position of hybridity in the 1800s and 1900s in Malaysia. Though the buildings are of similar function, spatial complexity, and scale, yet they grew from different roots and hence different styles. In Istana Gahara, Kuala Kangsar, though the overall form is surmounted by a Malay roof, it is essentially Colonial. In Rumah Meor, the language is the vernacular which reflects an essentially utilitarian “vernacular” style which is essentially less symbolic and more functional in terms of grammar, while in Baitul Rahmah and Baitul Anwar, the language is essentially rooted in the Classical vernacular of the Malay style.

CONCLUSION

The late 1800s and early 1900s was a time the Malay region was open to external influences, yet was at the threshold of momentous changes. The aristocracy, due the position of power, were the initiators and the custodian at the same time. Hence one of the first to be faced with, or to absorb, the onslaught of drastic changes from such global developments in industrialisation and technology are the palatial archetypes. There are the timber-masonry stylisations of the Malay world which is defined as a ‘Classic’ style’ due to the heightened level of refinements and visual compositions in architecture that reflect a certain degree of aesthetic sense, urban life, economic prosperity, and cosmopolitanism. These developments converged into a tendency that can be described as a specific style, and such stylisations are also observed from other regions are faced with the first onset of modernisation. These cases were not merely “copying ” external forms or merely “transmuting” timber artisanship, but were earnest and novel efforts to instigate a new form yet defend the culture at the same time, and to represent resistance by transmuting such cultural values into new forms of architecture hybrids that arise from new methods and materials. To fully appreciate the evolvement of Malay architectural language, one must analyse its evolution from the earliest era to its last and final phase before independence eras, and this includes a period when it was able to innovate yet withstand the tumultuous changes in the context of the pressure of powers in the global era. The remnant of such a defence in light of such strong forces must be studied, and such new forms appreciated and yet be retraced to its roots, which not only emerge from “the

Table.2. A compilation of the hybrid elements of the Malay “Classical” style







































































3 Building Elements										
Baitul Arweer	Baitul Rahmah	Istana Akhar Kiektan	Baitul Bazaar Ahar Satar	Pinnac of Column Base	Baitul Arweer	Baitul Rahmah	Istana Akhar Kiektan	Baitul Bazaar Ahar Satar	Istana Baudar	Istana Baudar
										
										
										
										
										
										

Table 2: A comparison between the language of Istana Gahara, BaitulRahmah, Baitul Anwar and RumahMeor; all located in Kuala Kangsar.

ISTANA GAHARA	BAITUL RAHMAH	ISTANA ANWAR	RUMAH MEOR
			
Division of the house			
<p>Asymmetrical No 'anjung' Consists of three building: Main house (Front house)-Colonial based -Main house (Rear house)-double storey timber -Servent's house-single storey</p>	<p>Symmetrical Double 'anjung' and central staircase Consist of two buildings: Main house (Front House)-Double storey timber Selang Kitchen-single storey</p>	<p>Symmetrical Double 'anjung' and central staircase Consist of two buildings: Main house (FRont House)-Double storey timber Selang Kitchen- single storey</p>	<p>Asymmetrical Side 'anjung'. Consists of one building: Main house-Timber buildingon stilts Selang Kitchen</p>
Building style and position			
<p>-An essentially Colonial style with minimum Malay influence in the details -The house features advance sanitary and sewerage systems at that time compared to others. -Use load-bearing structure system with steel I-beam -double classical coloum wiyh pediment details</p>	<p>An Essentially Malay Classical house has two anjung which is different from the vernacular house of Perak - Malay classical style - The rich wood carving can be seen at the featured balconies, fascia board, railings and ventilation grilles.</p>	<p>A Classical style which has a central anjung with a central staircase and balconies/soth on both sides.</p>	<p>- a representative of Vernacular architecture of Perak style (bumbung limas Perak) which recalls more organic composition and arise from the essentially forms of timber building on stilts with ornamentations that is common to vernacular style of Perak.</p>

vernacular,” but also which had evolved into the refined ‘Classical’. In this way, the Classical becomes the standard bearer of a local style which is rooted a ‘theory of origins’ and which can constitute a basis of identity that can arrest the loss of a cultural expression in a rapidly disappearing identity of Asian cities.

Aristocratic architecture is always a reflection of ‘permanence,’ ‘status,’ and ‘aesthetic intention.’ Yet it is also a representation of evolution and resistance. The local Sultanates found themselves in positions in which they were administering side by side with the Colonialists. In some cases, the increased wealth and resources began to affect them, it infused a new aesthetic style which at times, succumbed to the external pressure. Yet there were cases which would reflect such changes but still held on to the essence of the region. The Sultans and aristocrats were themselves ‘the architects’ of such changes and hence the precursors of such language of form. The significance of advocating a Classical language is related to the rising urbanisation and wealth of the aristocrat, and yet in these cases, they still infused the local artisanal traditions and evolved language which reflected the impact of modernising forces of its era. These themselves are the temporal and specific visual forms and faces of Modernisation.

This Classical style is important as due to the rising urbanisation in the tropical Asia, many of the imported styles are dominating the multi-storey facades of buildings of the present cities and buildings. Many of the present urban typologies are modelled as modern style and language; they reflect a “sealed” persona and principles rather than explore a rooted style.

The “classical”-rooted in origins-must be differentiated by what is “cosmetic.” Without this distinction, imitation cannot be differentiated from the invention. Past studies of the Malay world did not locate “Malayness” merely in the isolated interior of South-East Asian regions, which witnessed the thriving of not only such timber traditions but also Malay civilisation as ancient and comprising of both masonry-based and timber-based construction. These can be defined as the region’s “quasi-urban archetypes,” which in a way reflect a form of urbanised language with a permanent character derived from the roots of place. At times these palaces are also forms of semi-cities; reflecting a network and conglomeration of spaces, ordered in a certain hierarchy used for administration, the arts, education, and commerce. Palaces or palatial architecture, in such traditional times, were the loci of activity-similar to city centres-and were inextricably linked to the social structure and technological advancement of its times. The overall forms, including the multilevel and layered space, is reflective of their hold onto the Malay essence, reflecting the strict etiquette and hierarchical social conventions among the royal courts of the Malay world,

hence resonating the cultural values that remain in the physical representation of power structures at the centre of the Malay world of the time,.

The Classical Malay language, arising from these aristocratic forms, therefore constitutes a style of its own. It should be treated as a resource of principles and language that can evolve a set of rules that can delineate one of the essential language of Malay identity. Such rules are embodied in formal archetypes (see Tengku Anis et al., 2017) which reflect recurring façade archetypes and spatial forms that represent a common recurring thread across the widely dispersed cultural geography of the Sultanates of the Malay states. During the nineteenth century, these still reflected the traditional systems of the Malay civilisations, and were manifested in forms underlying the core cultural institutions that played both a spiritual role and a cultural one. In the case studies mentioned, physical alterations were done by the ruling monarchs, but these were always principled alterations. Changes were made, but within the archetypal form and aspects of language that were sustained. It was only later after the 1900s, and beyond 1920s that the language were being dominated by imported styles of the West, particularly in the epicentres of Straits Settlements.

It is argued that these forms, are developments that embody series of principles of language and form that can be genealogically traced to an overall “Malay Classical” principle. This has an overall style, grammar and structural foundations and must be differentiated from “imitative” stylistic language. These palatial case studies exhibit a hybrid language which can be argued as the part of the genealogical development of a late Malay style. During this era, one ‘branch’ may die while the other root begins to live.

The relationship among political structures, dynamics of powers, and architectural form were part of the region’s dynamics and reflected eventually within these palatial structures of Malay architecture which thus depicts the essential Malay cosmopolitanism, withheld on to tradition, yet reconciling with other ‘cultures’ in a spirit of coexistence and community. After independences in Asia, there was a stark and rapid absorption of external forces, urban centers including parts of Indonesia and Malaysia were undergoing rapid urbanisation, and gradually their aesthetic principles of architectural language suffer from a “stagnation” as they experienced a kind of impasse, due to a difficulty in reconciling their past, their Colonial history, and their Modernising present.

Hence a genealogy can be formed, and the roots can be reconciled with then technology of permutations and the timeless combinations of the ‘tectonic and the stereotomic’, the perceived ‘heaviness and’, in combination with the redefined notions of the ‘temporary and permanent’, can be contextualised to the Malay region,

and re-instigate a renaissance of an enduring aesthetic approach to a Malay-based architecture.

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