

The Islamic Archaeology of Southeast Asia

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Abstract

Over half a century ago, I. N. Hume famously described archaeology as “the handmaiden of history,” seemingly subordinating it to the more ‘important’ activities of the text-based historian. For the student of Southeast Asian history, however, for whom few written sources have survived, archaeology bears a significance and relevance far beyond that suggested by Hume’s statement. That being said, the archaeology of Southeast Asia remains regrettably understudied, particularly with regards to the region’s Islamic past. Although Islam came to Southeast Asia relatively late, several distinctive and important Islamic cultures have since developed there. This panel aims to bring together researchers working in any area of Southeast Asian Islamic archaeology (broadly defined) whose work informs us about the origins and dynamics of these cultures. Contributions may cover any area or period and have either a specific Muslim focus (i.e. examinations of early Muslim settlement, architecture, funerary culture etc.) or a much broader purview (i.e. trade or European colonial expansion) that nevertheless proves relevant to an understanding of the region’s Islamic past.

Session Type: single (3-4 presenters)