

Book Review

Yasin Alder Translated by Sabine Kraft

*Philipps University in Marburg, Germany**

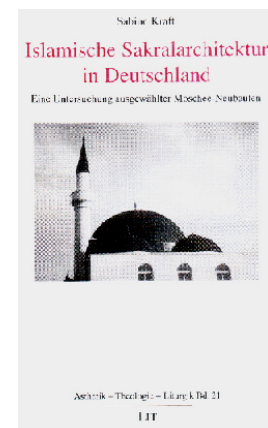
Islamic Religious Architecture in Germany: A Study of Selected Mosques. (Islamische Sakralarchitektur in Deutschland) *By Sabine Kraft, Eine Untersuchung ausgewählter Moschee-Neubauten.* LIT Verlag, 2002. ISBN 3-8258-5502-3
Written originally in German and translated for GBER by the Author

This remarkable book, based on the author's doctoral thesis at the University of Marburg, is perhaps the most comprehensive work on mosques in Germany and will make an excellent addition to an earlier work by Dr. Thomas Schmitt which particularly studied the conflicts arising out of mosque-building in Germany.



An architect and an art-historian, the author examines the architectural, structural and aesthetic characteristics of different types of mosques and their respective functions. After describing the essential elements of the mosque and its history in the west, the work proceeds to examine in detail six selected mosques in Germany. Three of these, Aachen, Munich-Freimann and Hamburg Außenalster represent the earlier purpose-built mosques while those in Pforzheim, Lauingen (Donau) and Mannheim are the more recently built examples.

Each of the selected mosques is studied and analysed for its design and planning and also for the difficulties and conflicts faced during their approval and execution. Each mosque is then assessed for its architectural design and artistic approach using a system adopted from American mosque architecture. Accordingly, mosques are classified into two categories: either traditional based on historic design and motifs, or as examples of innovative modern architecture as practiced in the west. Comparisons are also made with similar mosques in America and other western countries, and references are given to relevant works on the subject by other scholars.



There is a discussion of the emotional and psychological need - and often the insistence - of the Muslim community for the inclusion of historic symbols such as domes and minarets which has often led to some tension with the host community. In conclusion, the author advocates, and hopes, that as the Muslim community feels more at home and grows in confidence, it will begin to take more account of the local context and building tradition in order to evolve a contemporary architecture for the German mosque.

The work concludes with an extensive bibliography, including numerous newspaper articles as well as references to works in English, which will also be of much value to other scholars working on this subject.

**Sabine Kraft is a Lecturer at Philipps University in Marburg, Germany. No details can be found for Yasin Alder the original Author Email:nsdaoudi@yahoo.fr*