

# Muslim Architecture

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1.

2/13/33

Great Hankering to attend an illustrated lecture for my recollections of just how it is done are very vague - However I ~~was~~ very fortunate in obtaining about 20 odd slides on ~~my sub~~ pertaining more or less to my subject <sup>namely</sup> Muslim Architecture, which are very long and with Janis assistance will ~~hope to~~ convey to you a little more of the greatness and far reaching effect of <sup>the</sup> Mohammedanism, especially.

The term Muslim architecture was a bit confusing in Research for it does not head any particular School of Architecture - We read of Byzantine and Saracenic Architecture not of Muslim - but as our subject



2

for the year 25 "Religions of  
the world" I felt we were more  
concerned ~~on~~ with the history  
and impressions ~~made~~ <sup>left</sup> and  
carried down these centuries  
on different countries ~~than~~ their  
plans of worship rather than  
a minute study of architectural  
construction and detail — and  
~~so I will try to~~

Like the early inaugurators  
of various other styles of Architecture  
the first Moslems were not a  
people of culture. They had no  
architecture of their own. Their  
earliest places of worship were  
the temples of the former religions  
as exemplified by the Kaaba



at Mecca, (which as we have  
 been told by Kay) ~~was~~ an ancient  
 Shrine in the day of the Prophet  
 Mohammed; and of Santa  
 Sophia at Constantinople, the  
 largest & the best known of a  
 number of Byzantine Churches.  
 As the Kaaba became a Moslem  
 Shrine with the Islamizing of  
 Arabia, so Santa Sophia or  
 Hozia Sophia became a  
 Mohammedan place of  
 worship when the Moslems  
 conquered Turkey. "Not only  
 " did the Islamic conquest of  
 the Byzantine Empire exert  
 a great stimulus upon the  
 civilization of Europe through

says  
 Arthur  
 Kenney  
 Chubb M.



The sending forth of the classic culture in the Institutions of the Byzantines, so long segregated and withheld from the peoples of western Europe; but the culture of Byzantium had a very vital effect upon the Moslem conquerors themselves - the effect of inspiring them to appreciate learning & art and to emulate the virtues & perfections of this civilization".

Perhaps the most striking phase in the influence of this early Christian Civilization upon Islamic art is found in the architecture of the Mosque - Here the Byzantine Churches, though being



appropriated by the Moslems are used as places for worship, became as it were the point of departure (let us call it) for the development of the new & beautiful styles of Moslem Architecture in the forms & varieties into as they became assimilated in the different countries which <sup>were to</sup> ~~would~~ comprise the Islamic world.

It is interesting to note this comparison. As the Romanesque grew out from the Roman Classic Style, and as the Gothic developed from the Romanesque, both under the impetus given to architecture by the Christian Religion, so the Arabian Style was an outgrowth from the Byzantine under



the influence of Islam -

To be <sup>even</sup> more explicit - The seed of Islamism easily took root and flourished in those Eastern hearts where other teachings were fast decaying and these Moslems readily utilized the places of worship of other creeds and further developed and enhanced their architecture, absorbing as mentioned before the culture which they lacked originally -

"The earliest mosque of which we have any record was that built by <sup>some 65</sup> A.D. Mahomet himself at Medina - as however it contained apartments for his wives & other rooms for domestic purposes - it might be more properly designated a dwelling house rather than a mosque -

But in those early days the



the idea was <sup>but</sup> one Temple and  
the worshippers <sup>1</sup> need only  
turn toward <sup>Mecca</sup> when they  
prayed. But when the  
Islamism invaded the temple-  
building nations, they seem  
early to have felt the necessity  
of some material object, some  
visible monument of their  
religion.

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The Arabian Style was the first distinct style of Moslem Architecture its most beautiful examples are in Cairo -

— One of the later ones —

This is the Mosque of the Sultan Hassan built in 1356.

In some respects it is one of the most remarkable mosques ever erected in any country & differing considerably from any other with which we are at present acquainted.

Its appearance is singularly bold & massive on every side; the walls being nearly 100 ft in height & surmounted by a cornice, which adds another 13 ft and projects about 6 ft - This great height is divided into no less than nine stories of small apartments, but the openings are so deeply recessed



& the projections between them so bold, that, instead of cutting it up & making it look like a factory, the building has all the apparent solidity of a fortress & seems more worthy of the descendants of the ancient Pharaohs than any work of modern times in Egypt -

Internally, there is a court open to the sky, measuring 117 ft by 105 enclosed by a wall 112 ft in height - on the side toward Mecca is the Tomb of the founder square in plan as these buildings almost always are & covered by a lofty & elegant dome resting on pendentives of great beauty & richness (which we can not see in this view). It is flanked on each side by 2 smaller minarets, one of which is the



highest & largest in Cairo and probably  
in the world -

Next

We have the Tomb of Kait Bey  
built 1463 outside the walls  
of Cairo - a perfect gem externally  
& internally, Its small dimensions  
exclude it from any claim to  
grandeur, <sup>James</sup> Ferguson <sup>of the Royal Institute of Architects</sup> says It is  
a perfect model of the elegance we  
generally associate with the architecture  
of this people and is perhaps  
unrivalled by anything in Egypt  
& far surpasses the Alhambra  
or the other Western buildings of its  
age! (What concerned our family most  
was what that fellow with the cone  
round his head was picking up)



(11)

Next a closer view of minaret  
& dome - showing carved detail -  
Next

The Tombs of Caliphs -  
Twin Domes, which show  
very clearly the square shape  
of the Mosques with the supporting  
pendentives & circular ~~roofs~~ <sup>roofing</sup> -  
take notice more about this later

Finally <sup>the arch</sup> ~~what~~ effective frame for  
the citadel - this archway makes.



(12)

Arabia, Turkey & India  
very important

Now we will travel to Turkey.  
Time doesn't permit me to take up all the countries  
~~of the Mohammedan world~~ <sup>so I will treat the three</sup>  
In Constantinople the same  
phenomenon ~~was~~ <sup>happened</sup> as  
everywhere else in the Mohammedan  
world. (Forgive me for reiterating  
but everything I read seemed to ~~make~~  
~~but it did impress me~~  
clapnet on this fact)  
Here again our nation cities  
settled who had embraced that faith  
they at once adapted the architectural  
forms of their new country & set  
to work to mould & modify  
them, so as to bring them more into  
conformity with their special  
requirements. The Turks though  
barbarous belonged to one of the  
great building races of the world  
& so set to work vigorously in Const—



Besides appropriating 7 or 8  
of the principal churches of the  
city. St Sophia at the head of the  
lent to the new worship. Mahomet II  
founded six or seven new mosques.

There are <sup>now</sup> in <sup>+</sup> about the city  
100 mosques erected in the four  
centuries during which the Turk  
had possession of it —

Not one is a pillared court like  
those of Egypt <sup>& Arabia</sup> or an arcaded  
square like those of India — all  
are copies more or less modified  
of St Sophia. It exemplified how  
readily these Moslems were to grasp  
the <sup>made</sup> beauty of this Christian creation



As I said before my subject  
 is Moslem Architecture not  
 Byzantine ~~nevertheless~~ As I must  
 digress a bit and call your attention  
 to the difference between the  
 dome of Rome & the mosque  
 of Byzantium —

Both the ~~the~~ Byzantium dome  
 & the vaulted architecture of the  
 mediæval cathedral owed  
~~their~~ their perfection of expression  
 very largely, to the successful  
 working out of a special & difficult  
 form of building construction <sup>method</sup>,  
 and while doing this, eliminating  
 whatever did not belong to or  
 assist that form of construction.



It is thus a symbolism based on or arising out of the grappling with a constructional problem —

Some authorities have claimed that the science of construction acquired by the Romans descended to the Byzantines, This would mean the Hagia Sophia is the architectural descendant of the Pantheon, "Further in regard to construction or detail is there any alliance between the two" — says Henry Statham of the Royal Institute of Architects — He continues — The constructional problem in Hagia Sophia is totally different



from that of the Pantheon & is solved in a totally different manner - The Roman system is the erection of a dome over a circular plan, the Byzantine is the erection of a dome over a square plan

(It is one thing to roof a circular building another to dome a square)  
 Historical facts bear this man's contention out for traces and remains of this idea ~~more~~ found toward the east in Persia during the Sassanian dynasty, rather than <sup>Roman</sup> in the West -



how for some slides —

First a present day picture  
of Constantinople & city burned  
many times —

Hagia Sophia —

So often <sup>was</sup> called St Sophia — Really  
means Holy Wisdom — This building  
represents an epoch of complete  
& perfect symbolism one of the  
most beautiful buildings of the world  
<sup>this is</sup> especially true of its interior —

I hesitate to <sup>attempt to</sup> describe this precious  
gem remembering how well it was  
done by an eye witness in "Our  
Mediterranean Cruise" and am



glad to work to the slides —

~~next~~  
Please note that here we have  
the main dome & beyond, East & West,  
two semi-domes of diameter equal  
to the great dome & these are again  
cut into by 2 smaller domes —

The first building which had been  
erected by Constantine was burnt to  
the ground in the 5<sup>th</sup> yr of Justinian  
A.D. 532 when he determined to  
re-erect it on the same spot with  
more magnificence & with less combustible  
materials. So rapidly were the works  
pushed forward, that in six years it was  
ready for dedication A.D. 537. Twenty  
years afterward a portion of the dome  
fell down in consequence of  
great quake but rebuilt right away



Next Slide —

Interiors ~~the~~ defaced — somewhat  
by the texts from the Koran which  
are all out of keeping. It is still  
I sight to thrill the senses and  
inspire the soul —

The eye wanders upwards from the  
large arcades of the ground floor to  
the smaller arches of the galleries & thence  
to the smaller semi-domes. These  
lead the eye on to the larger & the whole  
culminates in the great central roof  
Nothing probably, so artistic has been  
done on the same scale before or since.

If however the proportions of this church  
are admirable the details are equally  
so — All the pillars are of porphyry



or marbles of the most precious kind -  
 All flat surfaces are covered with  
 a mosaic of marble slabs of the most  
 varied patterns & beautiful colours  
 the dome, roofs & curved surfaces  
 with a gold-grounded mosaic.  
 relieved by figures.

This Greek Byzantine Church was  
 the model for the mosques to  
 follow such as these <sup>shown in the</sup> ~~short~~ ones  
 few slides.

Imperial Mosque of Shah Zadeh  
 as I couldn't find anything about  
 this one I wouldn't be a bit surprised



If it was Muhamaden <sup>for</sup> the  
 next one, which <sup>was</sup> built by Sultane  
<sup>in A.D. 1608</sup> ~~Mosque of~~ Aclimet  
 It certainly looks the same  
 to me — This one has  
 six graceful minarets while  
 Hagia Sophia has but four  
 and many only 2 —  
next —

The fountain of Aclimet —

This next is very beautiful —

The mosque of Solomon the magnificent  
 built 1555 and ~~for~~ the greatest  
 built by the Muslims themselves  
 even ~~comparing~~ favorably  
 with Hagia Sophia —  
next —



22.

next & finally for Turkey a  
view of Turkey Constantinople Hayreddin  
mosques

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# India

The Saracenic Architects  
 showed in India the same  
 pliancy in adopting the styles  
 of the various people <sup>among</sup> whom they  
 had settled which characterized  
 their practice in Turkey & Arabia.

But in India with so many  
 different segregated peoples we  
 find <sup>over a period of time</sup> there are about 15  
 different styles of Mahomedan  
 architecture.

So ————— Several  
 hours could be given to this  
 subject alone — I will therefore  
 pick out the more familiar groups  
 Mogul Architecture — which  
 surrounds the British cities



(24)

Indian Style of Architecture reached its greatest period in development during the Moslem tenure of India under the Mogul Dynasty, extending from 1526 to 1707 A.D. (Therefore we need must contain ourselves with this phase only) - This epoch marks a very splendid age of oriental culture when elements of the civilization of Persia were brought by virile conquerors from the North & planted amid new conditions racial & economic, during a time of comparative peace & prosperity, under this



Influence & inspiration of  
light & for that age, progressive  
ideas, there arose a state of  
culture previously unattained  
in India.

The finest & most extensive  
examples of the Architecture  
of the Modern Period in  
India are found in &  
about Delhi which was the  
capital of the Moguls & in  
the city of Agra & its vicinity.  
The world famous Taj-Mahal  
near Agra built by the  
Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan  
during the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup>  
century as the Mausoleum of his  
favourite wife without doubt



is the best known & most  
 admired building of that  
 epoch —

It was a custom of these  
 people, for their Princes to build  
 ing their own tombs in their  
 own life time. The usual  
 process for the erection of these  
 structures was to enclose a  
 garden outside the city, wall  
 it beautifully with one or more  
 elaborate doorways. Then  
 erect in the center a square  
 or octagonal building crowned  
 by a dome. This building  
 is generally on a a lofty  
 square terrace from which  
 radiate four broad alleys



generally with marble-paved  
 canals ornamented with fountains  
 the angular spaces are  
 planted with cypresses  
 & other evergreen & fruit  
 trees. During the lifetime  
 of the founder, the central  
 building is called Barrak  
 Durrie or festival hall &  
 is used as a place of  
 recreation & feasting by him  
 & his friends — At his  
 death its destination is changed  
 the founder's remains are  
 interred beneath the central  
 dome. Sometimes his favorite  
 wife lies beside him; but more



generally his family & relations  
are buried beneath the collateral  
domes - When once used as  
a place of burial its vaults were  
again resound with festive  
mirth -

We now have a few slides  
of India -

And the first is the greatest  
of all, these mausoleum, the  
familiar Taj Mahal at  
Agra - Built by Shah Jahan  
for his favourite wife -  
next detail of pavilion on corner  
of wall, nice place for basket  
party - Back to Taj -  
I would like to repeat word for



what Penney says about this  
 veritable ~~Swamland~~ -

"The Taj - Mahal combines  
 elements of Beauty of Composition  
 & setting. Built within & without  
 of the purest white jaspers marble  
 inlaid with Jasper, Lapis Lazuli  
 & other semi precious stones,  
 & placed in the midst of  
 a most beautiful garden  
 Luxuriant with richly  
 colored flowers & foliage intersected  
 by fountains & water ways - with its  
 inviting exterior portals &  
 Loggias, with its impressive  
 & imperial interior, it imposes  
 upon the visitor a feeling of



are mingled with joy & delight, of massive strength of structure & of purity of ideal that is quite beyond the power of words to describe —

In the Taj-Mahal one finds a combination of both spiritual & a natural beauty — a Symposium of the beauty of the spirit of Religion combined with a beauty which appeals to all that is human in man in his love of beauty in nature — Thus all of the craving of the heart for beauty, both of the spiritual & of a human nature is satisfied, & the soul of



of the visitant finds exquisite  
satisfaction & joy, enthusiastic  
travelers will describe the  
Taj - Mahal as the most  
beautiful temple in the world.

It seems a come down to  
to show any more slides  
after this queen of them all  
but we have a few

which I will merely name,



13 Tomb at Delhi Inlay white  
marble. Dome white marbles

14. Tomb at Agra

General type

15. Pearl Mosque at Delhi

very elegant & dignified has 3 Bulbous  
upper domes -  
Chambers 24 by 24

16. Perout Mohammedans

prostrate at prayer - The answer  
to what it is all about. Though  
black deeds have been done  
in the Prophets name, so have  
they been done in the name  
of Christ. So who are we  
to judge?