

Timeless or Timely?

Vantage Points of Mosque Design

Books Reviewed: Azra Akšamija, *Mosque Manifesto: Propositions for Spaces of Coexistence*. Berlin: Revolver Publishers, 2015; Christiane Gruber, ed., *Islamic Architecture on the Move: Motion and Modernity*. Bristol: Intellect, 2016; Bernard O’Kane, *The Mosques of Egypt*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2016.

It may seem to some people that writing about the architecture of Islam and the mosque, the Islamic building *par excellence*, is an exercise in reiterating the past and earlier finds – possibly packaging what is already known in an attractive visual format. What these three books have in common is the effort to analyze these two subjects in a new way and in line with three very different methods. Azra Akšamija’s *Mosque Manifesto: Propositions for Spaces of Coexistence* is a collection of ten of her original research-creation pieces framed by ten articles. Research-creation is a hybrid scholarly approach that “supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation.”¹ Although she does not use this term, one should keep it in mind while reviewing the context and impact of her artistic work. Trained as an architect, she is also a historian and practicing artist, a designer and professor. Her productions critically review and express her proposed ten points of design. This vantage point is clearly unique, in that the material is primary and generative.

Christiane Gruber’s edited *Islamic Architecture on the Move: Motion and Modernity* compiles the voices of eight academics reflecting on specific aspects of the physical and ideological movement of Islamic ideas and forms. Some of the contributions rely heavily on previous research; however, three essays are original research. In *The Mosques of Egypt*, O’Kane showcases his photographs of over eighty mosques. His academic expertise and experience in editing the works of renowned Islamic scholars gives him a unique position, and his excellent book includes both contemporary and detailed documentation of well-studied buildings, several lesser known structures, and several modern mosques.

Tellingly, each book’s structure betrays a great deal about how its content is to be received, for those who practice and study the arts are well aware of an object’s power of visual and tactile qualities, even if that object happens to

be a book. Akšamija's easily held and full color *Mosque Manifesto* (10.3 x 4 x 19.5 cm) is complemented with color-coded page ends that denote each of the ten sections and the introduction. The manifesto concept is taken even further, for the cover drawing integrates the manifesto's ten points within the graphic of a *qiblah* compass often found on prayer rugs, thereby signifying that the book is an object that one can use to find one's own way. *Islamic Architecture on the Move*, a more traditional size for academic writing (17.8 x 2 x 22.9 cm) features some color and black-and-white images on glossy paper. However, both the images' quality and vantage points (some of which are taken from open source collections) are inconsistent. The density of the academic text also sets it apart from the other two publications.

The full color *The Mosques of Egypt* may easily be mistaken for a coffee table book due to its size (31.2 x 4.1 x 25.9 cm) and weight (2.8 kilograms). However, the author is following the successful format of K.A.C. Creswell's pioneering *Early Muslim Architecture* (vol. 1, 1932; vol. 2, 1940; vol. 3, 1969) and *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt* (vol. 1, 1952; vol. 2, 1959) – both of which continue to be referenced consistently in most scholarship in this field. Given that no other scholar has even attempted to measure and draw first-hand the comprehensive list of mosques that Creswell covered, his drawings are nearly always the basis for other scholarship. O'Kane's large format also serves two well-defined purposes: It allows accessibility to a wider, generalist audience that would enjoy the visuals, as well as to scholars who will recognize the new contribution to scholarship and reference to an immersive format. The authors of the three books reviewed in this essay clearly recognize the added value of communicating their message and position through the tactile qualities of their chosen formats.

Each of the ten sections of *Mosque Manifesto* includes images of Akšamija's original works. The book begins with a brief preface calling for change and action in how mosques are conceived today. Finbarr Barry Flood's forward notes the dangers of "self-Orientalizing" (p. 21) and the possibilities of hybrid coexistence. He critiques the political state of Europe for the inherent contradictions of the extreme marginalization of its Muslim populations as well as the outlandish self-Orientalizing chosen by some Muslims that further alienates other Muslims. This is followed by a brief introduction of Akšamija's works featured in the text.

Mosque Manifesto traces more than a decade of Akšamija's work training as an architect; practicing as an artist and historian; and currently as assistant professor in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Art, Culture, and Technology program. Each section begins with a statement written from

the mosque's point of view, is followed by supporting research and references to other scholarship, and concludes with the research-creation artistic investigations. The first section, "Generic," proposes a mosque type based on two-dimensional geometric principles that folds out into three dimensions structurally and can be adapted, expanded, and modified. After critiquing existing scholarship for limiting analysis to the mosque's "main" elements (e.g., minaret, *minbar*, and dome), she proposes the "generative design principles" of prayer enactment, spatial cleanliness, directionality, volume of prayer, programmatic variability, and ephemerality. The project in this section, "Generic mosque," is a series of digital architectural drawings that investigate how the proposed design system can be adapted to different locations. This project dates back from her designs and research conducted for her 2004 Masters of Architecture thesis at Princeton.

The second section, "Flocking," outlines the flexibility of prayer and questions the minimal surface that a body needs for it while remaining social. This project, "Flocking mosque," is an art installation composed of 37 geometric floor elements that, when taken together, form a "flower circle" pattern, but when separated form 12 pairs of small hand rugs, 12 head pillows, 12 pairs of slippers, and 1 central bag with 12 sets of prayer beads. Minimally, the piece is a centralized geometric pattern and, when expanded into a prayer field, denotes the minimal floor surface required to perform the prayer.

The third section, "Individual," emphasizes that Islam is not monolithic and that it should be looking forward instead of backward in order to avoid being stuck in the past. The "wearable mosques" depicted here is a flowing garment that can be unzipped to create a prayer mat, one in front and one in back, so that a group of people wearing them can become a unified but non-homogenous community of worshipers. In the fourth section, "Local," the author focuses on Muslims' diverse backgrounds in order to identify and tackle the adaptation of prayer by modifying the idea of a wearable mosque into a localized project. She did this during a 2005 artist residency in Austria with her *dirdlemoschee*, a portable, wearable mosque that both uses and modifies the elements of a traditional Austrian dress, namely, the *dirdle*, found in the region. Designed to be generative and demonstrative, this creation critiques the issue and expression of one's commitment to Islam by means of an innovative engagement with contemporary contexts and issues.

In the fifth section, the "Fearless" tenant gives form to fearless speech: The author critiques the militarization, monitoring, and censorship of public space in post-9/11 America by outlining the idea of justice, access to public space, and the fear created when Muslims feel the need to camouflage their

identity. Arguing that art has the agency to offer a creative and critical response and that citizens and systems of power need to interact with each other, her “survival mosque” represents a reaction to the ongoing verbal and physical violence against Muslims. A large bag that folds out into a long cloth, the pockets of this hybrid traditional prayer rug and American flag contain the American flag, the Qur’an, speakers with the *adhān*, the Constitution, a gas mask, and other items necessary for Muslims’ survival in the United States. Of all of the research-creation pieces, this is the most provocative and non-literal one, for it intentionally highlights real issues revolving around the space and place of worship and those who utilize them.

The sixth section, “Egalitarian,” outlines the idea of a mosque as a mirror of what users and spectators want to see. Akšamija discusses perceptions of the hijab, which is often seen in hostile environments as a provocation. Her “Nomadic mosque,” a smart contemporary suit created in 2005 for women, features a head covering that rolls out from under the lapel and a prayer rug that zips out of the pant legs. Akšamija raises questions about how gender is constructed in the mosque and states that any divisions should allow for flexibility in terms of identity and numbers. The seventh section, “Liminal,” charts the need for sharing territory with boundaries as both a liminal space and as a frontier. The author asks if art can rescue what has been forgotten or eliminated with her “Frontier vest,” the product of a 2006 artist “liminal space” seminar held in the warzone of Palestine. She created this vest as a tool to decontaminate history and as a boundary object that captures the paradox of frontier conditions. The vest can be converted into either a *tallit* (Jewish prayer shawl) or an Islamic prayer rug.

Section 8, “Inscriptive,” seeks to create evidence of existence and coexistence through linked collective memory and specific territory. The author begins with the well-known quote from Victor Hugo’s *Notre Dame de Paris*, “every tradition was embodied in a monument” (p. 271), and proceeds to outline how this led her to study mosques in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina. She notes that the 1990s war, which destroyed over 1,200 (70%) of the country’s mosques in an effort to erase the collective memory, resulted in the culturally divided nation that exists now. The subject matter of this research comes directly from Akšamija’s PhD studies at MIT in the Department of Architecture, (the History, Theory, and Criticism section) and the Aga Khan program for Islamic Architecture, which was completed during 2011.

The accompanying art project, “Monument in Waiting,” is the result of Bosnian women weaving facts, data, legends, and personal accounts into a *kilim* (flat tapestry-woven carpets or rugs) whose patterns voice the destruction

of Bosnia's cultural heritage. Nine case-study mosques were studied with interviews and material objects including prayer beads collected and attached to the *kilim*'s incomplete edging.

In the ninth section, "Convergent," the author summarizes the need for a mosque to be a space for learning and creating intra-cultural connections. The specific history of Islamic communities in Austria is briefly described, and the Austrian concept of *heimat* (a sense of belonging and place; homeland) (p. 314) is integrated into the approach to designing a Muslim cemetery. The project, a "Shingle *Mihrab*," is the prayer hall that she designed in the Islamic Cemetery Altach in Vorarlberg at the request of Bernardo Bader, the designer of the overall complex. Her approach expresses her interest in territory, collaboration, with others and sensory communications. The *mihrāb* is a permanent installation of layers of wire mesh and wooden shingles, both made of local materials, that have been organized in such a way that they create a wall of dappled light and the words "Allah" and "Muhammad" in Kufic script. The rugs she designed, composed of the *kilim* woven by women, are arranged in strips of beige that grow progressively darker as they recede from the *mihrāb* wall, thereby underscoring the effect of metaphorical and literal light of belief. This project received an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2013.²

The tenth and final section, "Artistic," succinctly states that the mosque is to be a space for thinking and discussion. As a concluding note, this aptly focuses on the need for mosque spaces to contain places for dialogue and for art, as well as for artists and objects to have agency. Two artistic projects are outlined here. The "Kunstmoschee," an architectonic installation in the outdoor space of Vienna's Secession Art Gallery in 2007, is composed of 120 individual but connected triangular modules that users can convert into seating and fold into three-dimensional spaces. They were used for the lectures, workshops and film screenings about Islam convened by the museum. The project was woven by selected local Viennese from different backgrounds who were given back their pieces at the end of the installation. The other art project, the *Innenansicht sud-ost*, was a curated exhibition in Austria, in afo Linz in 2012 and in vai Dornbirn in 2013 with visuals outlining historical and local mosques. A different site-specific installation in each location displayed the hybridity of architectural elements and Islamic ideas of design. In the former site, a textile *muqarnas* was designed and temporarily installed in the Gothic arch; at the latter site, local lace was repurposed in order to create a *mash-rabīyah* effect on the windows.

The afterword, written by Nebahat Avcioğlu (associate professor of art history, Hunter College, City University of New York) reflects on the artist's re-

search and work: “[E]ach project is a stubborn battle against xenophobia toward Islam and Muslims” (p. 391). Avcioğlu notes that diversity is the most important aspect of Akšamija’s work, which was “decentering” and “ex-centering” (p. 402) points of formal fixation in the design of mosques.

The second book, *Islamic Architecture on the Move*, collects the vantage points of eight primarily art history scholars on diverse aspects of physical and/or ideological aspects that have “moved” or crossed geographical borders. Ironically, the editor’s assertion that “not restricting themselves to a single scholarly method or intellectual model within humanities and social sciences” (p. 3) reveals the collection’s core problem: It relies too much on the broad, unstructured thesis of “mobility” to bind the material together.

The first chapter, “Islamic Architecture on the Move,” by editor Christiane Gruber, sketches out the book’s ideas but neither defines *Islamic architecture*, which is still debated³ as a term nor identifies the notions of *mobility*. This chapter then shifts to Gruber’s research on “Textile Metaphors: A Ka’ba in Motion” (p. 5). This highly descriptive, anecdotal, and sometimes incomprehensible paper shifts from the historical documentation of the *kiswah*, the cloth that covers the Ka’bah, to a collection of small replicas of the Dome of the Rock, tents, and so forth found in Turkey and in some American cities.

The second essay, Elise Kamleh and Katharine Bartsch’s “Karbala in Lucknow: An Itinerary of Architecture Mobility,” opens with the story of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, who left Calcutta in 1799 to travel with and translate for the East India Company. The authors’ posit that this journey coincided with a period of intellectual, diplomatic, and commercial exchange and that this traveler, upon his return, influenced the designs of structures in Lucknow. But the analysis remains confined to the façade, for no reference is made to the spatial qualities or organizations of the actual structures described.

The third essay, David Simonowitz’s “The Mobile Matrix: The Hijaz Railway Ritual Space and Generator of Space,” focuses on the 1908 inauguration of the Damascus-Madinah section of the Hijaz railway launched in 1900 by Sultan Abdulhamid III (p. 63). Although the segment to Makkah was never completed, Simonowitz describes the significance of this construction of movement by studying photographs of signage, locomotives, commemorative texts, maps, and the uniquely created “mosque wagon.” He concludes that the railway’s modern technology was sacralized for the destination via calligraphy and design.

The fourth essay, Ashley Dimmig’s “Fabricating a New Image: Imperial Tents in Late Ottoman Period,” outlines the history of these functional (used for travel and military campaigns) yet luxurious, almost “mobile palaces” (p.

103). She argues that the textile arts influenced the design of the Topkapı and other palaces in Istanbul. After referencing previous scholarship and historical photographs, she details the materials, techniques, colors, motifs, and structures of various Ottoman tents. Although Dimmig's research promises to break new ground, this is nowhere stated within the book's framework.

The fifth essay, Marwa El-Ashmouni's "Mobility and Ambivalences: Negotiating Architecture Identities during Khedive Ismail's Reign (1863-79)," claims that the khedive's "ambivalence" toward politics influenced his patronage of architecture. The author asserts that the khedive's travels to Europe and his imperial ambitions to move beyond Egypt's boundary created "mobility and ambivalence." Her broad strokes outline elements from the khedive's journeys and projects in Cairo, including the Khedival Opera House (1869), the Gezira Palace (1863), and the Abdin Palace (1863). But given that none of these structures have any sacred or religious functions, it is not clear why this article was included in a book on "Islamic Architecture." Oddly, a variety of sources (e.g., Wikipedia, MIT Libraries, *Life Magazine*, and others) are used for the contemporary photographs of extant buildings in Cairo. The descriptions skim the exterior's elements and say nothing of spatial organizations. The "ambivalence" posited in the thesis is not addressed beyond generalizations of the khedive's travels, and at times the writing is weighed down by many obtuse words.

The sixth paper, "In Absence of Originals: Replicating the Tile Work of Safavid Isfahan for South Kensington," is by Moya Cary, the Iran Heritage Foundation's curator for the Iranian collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum. She investigates the mobility of these nineteenth- and twentieth-century tiles through acquisition, display, imitation, and reconstruction in museums and then notes that they demonstrate two types of mobility – physical removal and design transfer – for from the 1860s onward tiles were removed "surreptitiously" for trade to public and private collections and so they could be replicated for education and dissemination. Cary considers the portability of arts and the museum's promotion of these tiles through exhibitions in the late nineteenth century that increased public interest and demand. Her paper is an original piece of scholarship with reference to the specific archives of this museum, including its works, methodologies, and photographs.

The seventh paper, Olga Bush's "Relocating to Hawai'i: Dwelling with Islamic Arts at Doris Duke's Shangri La," concentrates on the fifth largest collection of Islamic art in the United States, which is located in the tobacco heiress' private home: Shangri La. Set amidst the picturesque Hawai'ian coast within a modernist designed home, the "Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic

Art” is named for the first major female collector of Islamic art outside the Islamic world, a fact that the author terms “matronage.” Bush contends that Duke’s “creative persona” outlet was that of an interior decorator, collector, and builder who emphasized the mobility of objects over permanent architecture. The relocation of objects created a new locus and dwelling place for and with Islamic art outside of the Islamic world.

According to Bush, Duke shifted women from object to subject and created Shangri La as a utopian community and paradise inspired by James Helton’s 1933 novel *Lost Horizons*. Contemporaneously, there was a growing American interest in collecting Oriental art, specifically at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which had 6,000 objects in 1932. Duke was a rival collector. Bush analyzes the differences between their ways of collecting and exhibiting works. Duke’s exhibition blurred the lines between interior and exterior, for she not only lived with the works and allowed others to touch and “cross the threshold,” but also mixed replicas (commissioned and found) with historical objects together with “high” and “low” objects.

The author cites the few publications on this collection, including the highly visual *Doris Duke’s Shangri La: A House in Paradise: Architecture, Landscape and Islamic Art* (2012), edited by Thomas Mellins and Donald Albrecht. Bush argues that the heiress’ ability to collect was supported by her extensive travel and interests; that she expressed her creative persona by mixing, organizing, and reorganizing the objects within her home; and that she was far ahead of her time and ahead of curatorial approaches. This is a compelling argument of mobility in Islamic art and design with respect to the objects’ physical relationship, and the influence on design showed the living, constant use of material arts unparalleled at the time. In fact, Bush remarks, this is the first major example in the West of such a large collection of historical Islamic objects in use and not just on display.

The final essay, Sam Bouker’s “The Urban Fabric of Cairo: *Khayamiya* and the *Suradeq*,” focuses on Egyptian tents composed of appliques, colorful fabrics that have had a 150 year presence in Cairo. The Arabic term *khayyām* (tent; pl. *khaymīyah*) refers to the tents that are temporarily located and relocated in groups to form vast street tents (*suradeq*) used for both religious and secular celebrations and rituals, a vital part of Cairo’s urban visual culture. The author theorizes that the study of these *khaymīyah* as “architectural textiles” (p. 234) and that the *suradeq* revealed the country’s rich and complex history. Very little scholarship exists on the subject, and even Cairo’s residents have never considered the *khaymia* an art form. Using scarce historical photographs and early 1900s watercolor paintings, Bouker analyzes these tents’

form and design. He finds that there is some influence from Ottoman tents, but that it is difficult to find a typology before 1850 that directly influenced the highly localized Egyptian motifs and designs.

Bouker also makes a considerable effort to study this dying art form, documenting the innovation of imitation machine-printed *khaymīyah* developed by an Egyptian tent-making family in the 1980s. Cheaper, easier, and faster, this form of *khaymīyah* has overwhelmed the use of the traditional crafted form, and craftsmen now create smaller applique panels in the same style for tourists. Little attention has been paid to traditional *khaymīyah* works, however, and they are not displayed in any Egyptian museum. Today, users for the most part consider the imitation and hand-crafted *khaymīyah* interchangeable, and thus this art form has become invisible. Attention from international groups such as the American Quilt Society, an Australian-funded film, and some publications and exhibitions may preserve this art form. But according to the author, this important vernacular architecture is threatened.

A well-written, original, and compelling essay, this paper links the tents' mobile structures to architectural spaces and connects to their "Islamic" aspect to the rituals housed within. However, the "moving" aspect is not just with respect to the tents' temporal and transient nature, but also with the evolving changes and threat to loss in Cairo's living culture. The clarity, structure, and original scope of the book's last three papers should have been framed by a better designed argument (and title?) to open up readership of the book.

The Mosques of Egypt can be considered Bernard O'Kane's singularly greatest contribution to this subject. Having lived and taught in Cairo for thirty-five years, he has published extensively. For example, he edited *The Treasures of Islamic Art* and *Creswell Photographs Re-examined* (2006) and authored *The Illustrated Guide to the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo* (2012).

The book under review, a decade in the making, is an encyclopedic, chronological, and relentlessly full documentation of the buildings studied within a large and immersive format. All of the color photographs are his own; black-and-white photographs belong to K.A.C. Creswell. Like Creswell, each building is fully described with scaled and clear architectural drawings. For the most part, these drawings were created by the notable local expert Nicholas Warner, who also created the architectural plans for Peter Sheehan's *Babylon of Egypt: The Archaeology of Old Cairo and the Origins of the City* (2010) and in Doris Behrens-Abouseif's *The Minarets of Cairo* (2010),⁴ a comprehensive work in its own right. Despite the author's advanced, original, and often primary scholarship, the text remains clear and accessible to experts and novices alike.

The detailed introduction frames how this book is to be understood by outlining the history of mosque construction in Egypt and highlighting the examples presented. He opens by asking “What is a mosque?” and goes on to note its typical qualities and elements as found in the country, as well as its associated types and programs. The six-section introduction, followed by a conclusion, organizes the book, for the examples that follow are not divided into sections. O’Kane discusses the development of early mosque architecture in “Early Islamic Egypt to the End of the Ayyubids (640-1250)” and “Mamluks (1250-1517),” the latter of which highlights this period’s cross-cultural influence on design and decoration. His brief “Artifacts in Mosques” analyzes lighting, Qur’an boxes and stands, *minbars*, and other elements.

“Ottoman Egypt (1517-1805)” relates the country’s shift from a reigning center to a province and analyzes the resultant hybrid architecture. This next section, “Muhammed Ali (r. 1805-48) to Mid-Twentieth Century,” traces the shift of politics paralleled in Cairo’s patronage of architecture and the use of foreign architects to design prominent neo-historicist mosques, including Mario Rossi (260 mosques) and Julius Franz. In the introduction’s final section, “Modern Mosque,” O’Kane uses the first person to reveal his personal excitement and interest in this field. However, he notes his frustration with the disappointing (p. xxxix) choices to study. He cites the lack of modern Egyptian mosques in any comprehensive publications on the subject and in the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. The exception is the work of Hassan Fathy.

This is followed with notes on the exuberant taste for historicist designs patronized by the Egyptian government and official bodies that modify the proportion and combination of historical elements with illogical plasticity. O’Kane concludes on an optimistic tone: Egypt and Cairo have long been at the Arab world’s geographical and cultural center and have a rich collection of mosque structures from the major historical eras. And yet there is no mention of gender and little mention of the ad hoc local and systematic government-sponsored modifications of historic mosques.

The remaining 400 pages are dedicated to ninety sections of two- to six-page studies, including individual sections on “Three Minarets” and “Mamluk Mihrabs” and eighty-eight sections on specific buildings. Of these, twelve are from the Early Islamic to Ayyubid eras highlighting the mosques of Amr ibn al-As, Ibn Tulun, al-Azhar, and al-Hakim, as well as mausoleums and examples from all over the country. The Mamluk era, which occupies one-half of the book, comprises forty-one sections, including the funerary complexes of Qalawun, al-Nasir Mohammed, Sarghatmish, and Sultan Hassan along with many other prominent and lesser known Mamluk structures in the country.

The fifteen-section Ottoman era features the Malika Safiya and other mosques. The next four sections discuss the partitioning of mosque under Muhamed Ali until the mid-twentieth century. The book rounds out with six sections on examples of modern mosques, beginning with Hassan Fathy's New Gurna congregational mosque and moving on to others from around the country. The encyclopedic tome relies on its comprehensive introduction to frame the book, and thus there is no conclusion.

Each book has a different focus in terms of historical and contemporary design as well as a distinct strategy of investigation. *Mosque Manifesto* is a provocative and well-researched read that features highly relevant action points directed at the contemporary mosque. Instead of dwelling nostalgically on exterior aesthetics, it questions the principles and notions of defining and creating mosque spaces. The author uses the mediums of artistic creations to physically express and create agency. Most of these works are installations, some of which are challenging and meant to create more questions and dialogue. This mix of scholarship, imperative provocation, and artistic expression is aptly expressed by this highly qualified author, who dwells in the worlds of architecture, art, and history as a scholar and a practitioner. The language is clear, without jargon, and highly accessible. Complemented by images and graphics, the book is for both specialists and those interested in Islam, art, and architecture.

Islamic Architecture on the Move, unfortunately, has no consistent method, system, or rigor to bind the articles together. Eight works of varying levels of scholarship are placed next to each other to cover types of "mobility," but there is little connection and no conclusion. Thus the reader is left wondering why they were collected into one volume in the first place. Any text on *Islamic architecture* should define both it and the subject in clear and consistent terms by using the most appropriate mediums, such as images and architectural drawings. The latter element is absent, a serious oversight if the author expects the reader to gain an understanding of spatial relationships of the many buildings described.

In addition, the variety of voices presented is frustratingly inconsistent: Detailed, critical, and accessible works of original scholarship are mixed with obtuse tertiary descriptive texts with poorly supported theses and with (the majority of the work) a collection of highly specific exploratory pieces that deserve a publication with far better structure and organization – for example, exclusive sections on tent structures, physically relocated structures, the mobility of ideas and influence of design, and so forth. Although the last three sections are among the collection's strongest, as they are well-written (and therefore accessible) and interesting advanced original research, the reader is

left without a conclusion or an epilogue. In fact, the majority of essays require that one be a specialist who is specifically interested in the topic in order to fully appreciate the content.

The Mosques of Egypt is unmistakably set up as an accessible reference for both the novice and the specialist. Its chronological organization, excellent images, consistently high quality drawings and brief text for each building all come together to form something more than a compilation that just extends Creswell and Abouseif's pioneering efforts. The new and highly detailed photographic documentation and inclusion of little studied buildings from around the country and modern buildings make it a reference in its own right.

Although very different in approach, the primary research by Akšamija and O'Kane both acknowledge and cite previous established scholarship while making significant new contributions. The edited collection contained within *Islamic Architecture on the Move* contributes far less primary research, except for the essays, among others, by Carey, Bush, and Bouker. Each book shows that the architecture of Islam is a living, dynamic, and ever-growing area of scholarship: specific studies of particular aspects (*Islamic Architecture on the Move*), advanced visual coverage of examples involving primary research (*The Mosques of Egypt*), and with the hybrid scholarship of research-creation such as the investigative and provocative installations and architectural designs of Akšamija (*Mosque Manifesto*). The varying vantage points of studying this broad field are freed from the shackles of static orientalist and colonialist historical models of study and are expressive of these buildings' timeless qualities and the necessary timely critique of them.

Endnotes

1. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx.
2. Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 2013 cycle, www.akdn.org/architecture/project/islamic-cemetery.
3. Martin Frishman and Hasan-Uddin Khan, eds. *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development, and Regional Diversity* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994).
4. See my review essay "Palimpsest of Cairo," *AJISS* 29, no. 2 (summer 2012).

Tammy Gaber
Assistant Professor, McEwen School of Architecture
Laurentian University, Sudbury, ON, Canada