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**Assignment Topic: Islamic
architecture (fatimid
architecture)**

Submitted to: Miss Alina Babar

“Islamic architecture (fatimid architecture) “



Interior of the [Great Mosque of Mahdiya](#) in 2006



[Aqmar Mosque](#), Cairo in 2010

Here we will discuss the Islamic architecture (fatimid architecture)..

The Fatimid architecture that developed in the [Fatimid Caliphate](#) (909–1167 CE) of [North Africa](#) combined elements of eastern and western architecture, drawing on [Abbasid architecture](#), [Byzantine](#), [Ancient Egyptian](#), [Coptic architecture](#) and [North African](#) traditions; it bridged early [Islamic](#) styles and the medieval architecture of the [Mamluks](#) of [Egypt](#), introducing many innovations.

The wealth of Fatimid architecture was found in the main cities of [Mahdia](#) (921–948), [Al-Mansuriya](#) (948–973) and [Cairo](#) (973–1169). The heartland of architectural activity and expression during Fatimid rule was at [al-Qahira](#), the old city of Cairo, on the eastern side of the Nile, where many of the palaces, mosques and other buildings were built. [\[1\]](#) [Al-Aziz Billah](#) (ruled 975–996) is generally considered to have been the most extensive of Fatimid builders, credited with at least thirteen major landmarks including the completion of the [Great Palaces](#), the Cairo Mosque, a fortress, a belvedere, a bridge and public baths. The Fatimid Caliphs competed with the rulers of the [Abbasid](#) and [Byzantine](#) empires, and indulged in luxurious palace building. Their palaces, their greatest architectural achievements, are known only by written descriptions, however. Several surviving [tombs](#), mosques, gates and walls, mainly in Cairo, retain original elements, although they have been extensively

modified or rebuilt in later periods. Notable extant examples of Fatimid architecture include the [Great Mosque of Mahdiya](#), and the [Al-Azhar Mosque](#), [Al-Hakim Mosque](#), [Juyushi](#) and [Lulua](#) of Cairo..

Three Fatimid-era gates in Cairo, [Bab al-Nasr](#) (1087), [Bab al-Futuh](#) (1087) and [Bab Zuweila](#) (1092), built under the orders of the vizier [Badr al-Jamali](#) (r. 1074–1094), have survived. Though they have been altered over the centuries, they have Byzantine architectural features, with little trace of the eastern Islamic tradition. Recently a "Neo-Fatimid" style has emerged,[\[2\]](#) used in restorations or in modern Shia mosques by the [Dawoodi Bohra](#), which claims continuity from the original Fatimid architecture.

There are many Mosques, Palaces by Fatimid architecture.. It has his own beauty.. In my opinion this architecture is wonderful as I study about this Fatimid architecture I am very excited now to go out and see these type of buildings.

“Now we will discuss the architecture style of ([Fatimid architecture](#).)

“Architectural style”



Entrance gate of the [Great Mosque of Mahdiya](#). In this early structure the arch is round rather than keel-shaped.

According to [Ira M. Lapidus](#), public architecture under the Fatimids was an "extension of the ceremonial aspects of the royal court", and was also intricately made.[\[15\]](#) Fatimid architecture drew together decorative and architectural elements from the east and west, and spanned from the early Islamic period to the Middle Ages, making it difficult to categorize.[\[16\]](#) The architecture that developed as an indigenous form under the Fatimids incorporated elements from [Samarra](#), the seat of the Abbasids, as well as [Coptic](#) and [Byzantine](#) features.[\[17\]](#) Most early buildings of the Fatimid period were of brick, although from the 12th century onward stone gradually became

the chief building material.[18] The Fatimids combined elements of eastern and western architecture, drawing on Abbasid, North African, Greek and indigenous Coptic traditions, and bridged between the early Islamic styles and medieval architecture of the Mamluks. [19] The Fatimids were unusually tolerant of people with different ethnic origins and religious views, and were adept at exploiting their abilities. [20] Thus many of the works of Fatimid architecture reflect architectural details imported from Northern Syria and Mesopotamia, probably in part due to the fact that they often employed architects from these places to construct their buildings. [21] Fatimid architecture in Egypt drew from earlier Tulunid styles and techniques, and used similar types of material. [22] While also consciously adhering to Abbasid architectural concepts, the architecture is more influenced by Mediterranean cultures and less by Iranian. [23]

While Fatimid architecture followed traditional plans and aesthetics, it differed in architectural details such as the massive portals of some mosques and their elaborate façades. [23] Scholars such as Doğan Kuban describe Fatimid architecture as "inventive more in decoration than in broad architectural concept", although he acknowledges that the Fatimids contributed to a distinct style of mosque. [24] The Fatimids introduced or developed the usage of the four-centred keel arch and the *muqarnas* squinch, a feature connecting the square to the dome.

The *muqarnas* squinch was a complex innovation. In it a niche was placed between two niche segments, over which there was another niche. It is possible that this design had Iranian inspiration. A similar system was applied to window building.[25] According to [De Lacy O'Leary](#), the horse-shoe arch was developed in Egypt under Fatimid rule and is not of Persian origin as is commonly thought.[26] This architectural style can be witnessed in the North African Fatimid Mosques as well as Al Jame Al Zaituna, a mosque of which the central dome and the courtyard has been constructed long after the Fatimids relocated their capital to Egypt..

Now we will discuss a little bit of “[Fatimid Artwork](#)”.

Fatimid Artwork

- ❖ The artwork from this period exemplifies the creativity and ingenuity of Fatimid craftsmen.
- ❖ The technique of luster Ware on ceramic, developed originally in Iraq, was reviewed in Egypt and Syria.
- ❖ Some luster Ware pieces from this period are signed by their makers and indication of the esteem in which the craftsmen were held.
- ❖ Wood carving and jewellery were executed with equal skill and inventiveness.

❖ Fatimid artists created new decorative motifs and made greater use of figural forms, both human and animal.

❖ Figures were stylized but lively while traditional vegetal and geometric decoration maintained their abstract quality.



These are the examples of Fatimid Artwork.

THANK YOU