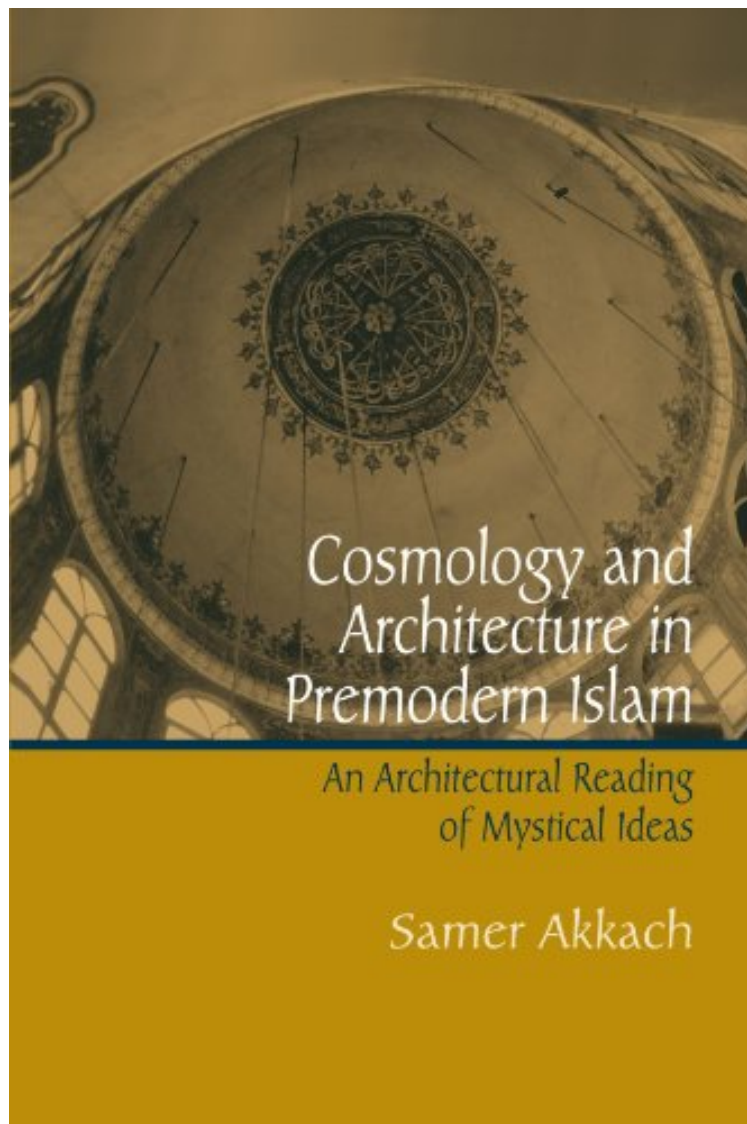


(Ebook free) *Cosmology And Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas*
(Suny Series in Islam)

Cosmology And Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas (Suny Series in Islam)

Samer Akkach

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Samer Akkach : Cosmology And Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas (Suny Series in Islam) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Cosmology And Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas (Suny Series in Islam)*:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A Seminal Text on Islamic Architectural Theory By faris akbar Akkach's 'Cosmology and Architecture in Pre-Modern Islam' is a unique work because it maybe the first text that rigorously and in a sustained fashion that seeks to recover a Theory of Islamic architecture. Unlike other texts that get caught in the development of historical forms, typologies, symbolisms and structures of Islamic Architecture, Akkach's work attempts to unpack the spatial sensibilities within the Islamic tradition, specifically from the vantage point of one of its greatest thinkers Muhiyiddin Ibn Arabi. Islam offers very little in the way of Architectural Theory as it is understood in the West. It lacks a Vitruvius, Alberti or Filarete. But here we come to Islam's consciousness of Space, Place and Time as a student whose interest in Medieval Architecture is enthralled in reading a St. Augustine or Pseudo Dionysius. The traditional world, with its meaningfully inter-related cosmology offers much in the way of architectural education, in marked contrast to Modern architectural discourse and practice (e.g. see *Precis of the Lectures on Architecture: With Graphic Portion of the Lectures on Architecture (Texts Documents)*). In this 'limited' construct, the human is bound to the transcendent and immanent continuously, and the role of architecture is offered up as an intermediary between the heavens and the earth. In that way Akkach's 'Cosmology...' is not a contribution only to Islamic Architecture, but also to Architectural discourse as a whole. It is a scholarly work that introduces hitherto unexplored terrains and hopefully a signpost for further adventurers to begin their journeys.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. *Cosmology and Architecture in Pre-Modern Islam* By Mysterium Ineffabile Samer Akkach's "Cosmology and Architecture in Pre-Modern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas" is a work that anyone interested in the interplay between Islamic cosmology and traditional Islamic architecture should pick up. Insofar as the spiritual economy of Islam is concerned the Absolute is postured as pure 'Object', and so cosmology is an integral part of its metaphysical dialectic. The inner cosmology, or the world of the psyche, is an aspect of Sufi metaphysical discourse--how could it not be--but it is the cosmological that is given the emphasis. Understanding how the cosmos was envisaged by the luminaries of the Islamic tradition is a most important step in "breathing" the air of that dispensation of sacred names and forms commonly known as Islamic. Akkach seeped himself in the study of metaphysics, cosmology, and symbolism at the hands of Adrian Snodgrass and Peter Kollar of Sydney. He has also a great familiarity with the exposition of traditional doctrines by Rene Guenon, Frithjof Schuon, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and others. These interests have led him to pen a work which is amazingly erudite, and fascinating. He has divided the work into four sections: 1) the discursive order, which deals with the study of symbolism in academia, and the various interpretations lended it by various modern academics, which is juxtaposed with the position of Traditionalists authors, 2) the metaphysical order, which discusses issues related to Sufi metaphysics, such as: Being and Presence, Primodality, the metaphysics of the cosmogonic Word, the geometry of Being, and so forth, 3) the cosmological order, which deals with Archetypes, creation and the hierarchy of Being, and 4) the architectural order, which deals with the ordering of space in the Islamic architectural tradition, and how the Archetypes, and Sufi metaphysics in general are reflected in Islamic architecture. It is complete with diagrams and lengthy explanations of the sacred logic behind the Ka'ba, the Umayyad Dome of the Rock, Sufi Shrines, gardens, and Mosques. He also pins down the reductive tendencies in academia which attribute little or no spiritual significance to the motives behind the fashioning of Islamic art and architecture; some of whom even question whether or not the term "Islamic" applies to the traditional architecture that decorates the Muslim world. To these inanities Akkach sends forth the argument of those who make up the traditionalist school, and kindly disposes of the modern/post-modern hermeneutics of symbolism and architecture which tyrannizes the academies and "educated minds" of today. He also examines how certain scholars such as Otto and Eliade have interpreted sacred symbolism, and offers a few adjustments to their appraisal. However, the main value of this work lay in its precise exposition of metaphysics and cosmology--as communicated through the prism of the Islamic symbolic economy--and how these not only inform Islamic architecture, but also how those sensitive to the geometry of the sacred might behold them through it.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Samer Akkach's *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam: An Architectural Reading of Mystical Ideas* By Ahmad Sukkar A highly disciplined reading, from both the historical and theoretical perspectives, of Islamic mystical and cosmological ideas in relation to architecture. Akkach's eloquent reading reveals premodern spatial sensibility, and reflects his special sensitivity to, and profound understanding of, the holistic world of the traditional Islamic mysticism, wherein architecture was inseparable from cosmology.

This fascinating interdisciplinary study reveals connections between architecture, cosmology, and mysticism. Samer Akkach demonstrates how space ordering in premodern Islamic architecture reflects the transcendental and the sublime. The book features many new translations, a number from unpublished sources, and several illustrations. Referencing a wide range of mystical texts, and with a special focus on the works of the great Sufi master Ibn Arabi, Akkach introduces a notion of spatial sensibility that is shaped by religious conceptions of time and space. Religious beliefs about the cosmos, geography, the human body, and constructed forms are all underpinned by a consistent spatial sensibility anchored in medieval geocentrism. Within this geometrically defined and ordered universe, nothing stands in isolation or ambiguity; everything is interrelated and carefully positioned in an intricate hierarchy. Through detailed mapping of this intricate order, the book shows the significance of this mode of seeing the world for those

who lived in the premodern Islamic era and how cosmological ideas became manifest in the buildings and spaces of their everyday lives. This is a highly original work that provides important insights on Islamic aesthetics and culture, on the history of architecture, and on the relationship of art and religion, creativity and spirituality.

About the Author Samer Akkach is Associate Professor in History and Theory of Architecture at the University of Adelaide, Australia, and the Founding Director of the Center for Asian and Middle Eastern Architecture (CAMEA).