

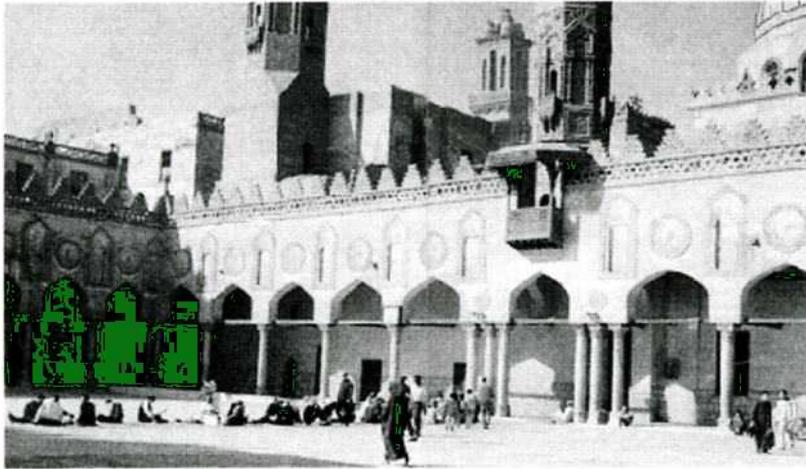


Al-Azhar Mosque



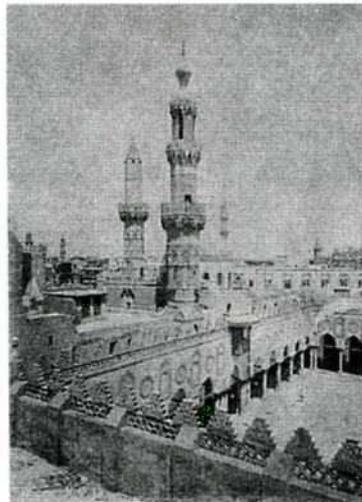
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Construction

Started in 969 A.D., finished in 971 A.D., and designed by Jawhar Al-Saqelli, this mosque was intended to be the center for prayers in Cairo. It was originally called Jami' Al-Qahira (Mosque of Cairo). It had one minaret and occupied half the area taken by the modern one. Its construction started just as the Muslims finished conquering Egypt. "Al Azhar" in Arabic means "the most flourished and shining" and refers to Fatimah Azahraa, prophet Muhammed's daughter.



Perpetuation



Al-Azhar has played a leading role in the religious life of Egyptians since its beginnings. In 975 A.D., classes for Muslims in Cairo were first offered. The mosque flourished and many improvements were made during the Fatimid period. During the control of the Ayyubids, Al-Azhar

was completely ignored. At the end of the Ayyubid rule, the people of Cairo rebuilt and restored the mosque to its previous religious importance. Over the years various modifications improved the mosque. The mosque was the center of many secular politics, and during the French invasion in the 1600's, Al-Azhar was a main point of resistance. In the Mamluk era, scholars lobbied against new tax laws. Many leading figures of Egypt graduated from Al-Azhar, and many ideas way ahead of their time were practiced there. The seminars were of purely academic nature were characterized by open discussions and a unique system of instruction



Relevance

 Since its beginning, the Al-Azhar mosque has become a leading role in the religious life of Egyptians. In 988 A.D., the mosque also became a university for religious, Arabic, and metaphysical sciences. The scholars taught Muslims all over the world Islam law, the Quran, and Arabic. It is a major center for Shiite and Sunni Muslims where prayers and sermons, but also court sessions and religious festivals were held. Women were allowed to attend some gatherings at Al-Azhar, showing the care Islam gives to educating women and putting them on an equal level. Many architectural improvements make it a masterpiece of Islamic architecture and worth seeing for its splendor and intricate detail. Al-Azhar has become the greatest center for Arabic and Islamic studies all over the world and is known as the oldest religious university in the world. Today it has about 90,000 students. The mosque is considered a treasury of Egypt's political and intellectual history. The mosque's history includes the names of a large number of famous intellectuals, scientists, and scholars throughout Egypt and the Islamic world.



Bibliography



<http://www.alazhar.org/english/about/index.htm>

<http://www.angelfire.com/al/Azharsilat/history.html>

<http://www.renaissance.com.pk/febnevi2y3.html>

<http://islamicity.com/Culture/MOSQUES/Africa/default.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/3191/egypt/azhar.html>

Related Standard(s):

- **SS2a – Culture:** Compare and contrast cultures.
- **SS3d - Time, continuity, and change:** Analyze attitudes, values, and behaviors of people in different historical contexts.
- **SS6c - Individuals, groups, and institutions:** Explain how groups and institutions influence and perpetuate people’s values, beliefs, attitudes, events, and culture.
- **SS10c - Global Connections:** Analyze how language, art, music, literature, belief systems, and other cultural elements can either connect people or cause misunderstandings.

What the work shows:

SS2b – Culture: *Analyze and describe how language, literature, the arts, and artifacts demonstrate beliefs and values and contribute to the transmission of culture.*

SS6a – Individuals, groups, and institutions: *Recognize cultural groups based on language, religion, family, and nation*

The student produced an authentic and engaging presentation that:

- Focused on a religious site that represents one of the five major religions.
 - Discussed the construction, perpetuation, and relevance of the site in an organized way.
 - Explained how the site reflects that culture and its significance in today’s society.
 - Included a graphic or visual representation of the site.
 - Five Internet secondary sources were listed.
- A. The student selected the mosque, Al-Azhar, that represents one of the five major religions.
 - B. In each of three separate sections, the student describes the construction, perpetuation, and relevance of the Al-Azhar Mosque.
 - C. The student explained that the Al-Azhar Mosque has played a leading role in the religious, cultural, and political life of the Egyptians.
 - D. A photograph of the Al-Azhar Mosque demonstrates the student understanding of the religious architecture of the Egyptian Muslims.
 - E. The multiple resources give evidence to the fact that the Al-Azhar Mosque contributes to the transmission of Islamic culture in Egypt.

Note: This work would have exceeded the standard if there had been evidence of analysis of the information.