A thesis on the subject of

Revival of Mamluk Architecture in the 19\textsuperscript{th} & 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries

by

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under the supervision of Dr. Bernard O’Kane
Dedications and Acknowledgments

I would like to dedicate this thesis for my late father; I hope I am making you proud. I am sure you would have enjoyed this field of study as much as I do.

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Abstract

Mamluk Architecture was renowned for its grandeur. It had characteristic features that distinguished it from other styles and added to its unquestioned beauty. Cairo saw a revival of the Mamluk style in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century at the hands of renowned European architects such as Antoine Lasciac and Mario Rossi, in addition to European-educated Egyptian architects, most notably Mustafa Fahmi. During the reign of Khedive Isma'il, Egypt witnessed a strong wave of European-influenced buildings, at the same time that the Mamluk style was being revived. The revived style was used in many buildings, not only religious ones. Domestic buildings were erected in that style for both foreign and Egyptian clients. The historical context in which the revival phase took place is a very important factor because it enables us to posit the reasons behind its revival.

The aim of this thesis is to argue that the neo-Mamluk style was the chosen style of Egyptian nationalism. Out of the many architectural styles that led up to it, it became prominent and persistent even in cases where more than one of these styles were fused.

To support this argument I will try to answer previously raised questions concerning this revival and address earlier scholarly arguments concerning this period. The second part of the thesis will deal with evolving examples from the late 19th century to our present day to support the hypothesis that the Mamluk style was the chosen style of Egyptian nationalism.
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Chapter One: Historical Introduction

Egypt witnessed several power struggles over the course of history. Islamic rule in Egypt was introduced in 640 under the command of ‘Amr ibn al-‘As during the Caliphate of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab. After several power struggles Ahmad ibn Tulun (809-904) founded his dynasty and built the city of al-Qata‘i in 870 relatively in close proximity to the first Muslim city al-Fustat. The Tulunid dynasty was succeeded by the very short-lived Ikhshidid dynasty (935-969), which was followed by the Fatimid dynasty (969-1171). Under the Fatimids Cairo was founded. The Fatimid dynasty started to lose ground and power after the first Crusade. Saladin eventually assumed control of Egypt and its provinces thus ending Fatimid rule in the region. The Ayyubid dynasty that he founded lasted from 1171-1250; during that period many changes in the internal structure of the army and the religious sector took place (fig. 1.1).

The Mamluks took over power in Egypt after being able to depose the last Ayyubid Sultan Aybak. They were first brought to the region as slaves by the Ayyubid Sultan al-Malik al-Salih, as recruits for his army. They were brought from Eastern Europe, Russia and the Caucasus. They lived within the households of the generals in the army and were educated and brought up as Muslims, cutting all ties with their past and origins. The Mamluk period in Egypt can be divided into two phases; the Bahri (1250-1382) and the Burji Mamluks (1382-1517). The Bahri Mamluks were originally located at the Rawda Island on Manial; the most prominent sultans from this period were al-Zahir Baybars, al-Nasir Qalawun, al-Nasir Muhammad and al-Zahir Barquq. The Burji Mamluks were based in the Citadel of Salah al-
Din. Their most notable sultans were Faraj ibn Barquq, al-Mu’ayyad Shaykh, al-Ashraf Qaytbay, and Qansuh al-Ghuri.¹

Mamluk rule over Egypt ended when the Ottomans were able to seize control of major cities (1517) and eventually the whole of the Mamluk domains. However, the Mamluk power struggle did not really end until Muhammad ‘Ali, the Ottoman Viceroy and later the semi-independent founder of Egypt’s 19th century dynasty, came to power.²

The Mamluk period in Egypt was marked by extensive architectural projects. Like earlier dynasties, the Mamluks asserted their power through architectural projects of grand scale and beauty. Mamluk architecture was very much related to the territory under their control; it was a fusion of existing styles as well as the evolution of basic architectural features to the finest form. However, various provinces under their control were able to retain their individuality.³

Amongst the basic Mamluk characteristics are “the ingenious adjustment of facades to the street alignment, and façade paneling.”⁴ When it comes to the domes (fig. 1.2), which were a basic characteristic of the period, the Mamluks built on the Fatimid and Ayyubid techniques of dome architecture with decorative additions that were intricately executed. The Sultans were able to maintain a privilege over other patrons especially when it came to the location and size of the buildings.

¹ Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 317.
² Behrens-Abouseif, Islamic Architecture, xvi, xvii.
³ Behrens-Abouseif, Cairo of the Mamluks, 65.
⁴ Ibid, 65.
Doris Behrens Abouseif summarized some of the characteristics of Mamluk architecture as follows:

Rather than being the implementation of a theoretical concept or an abstract vision generated in an architectural workshop, the religious monuments were essentially a flexible composition of modules combined ad hoc, according to the requirements of each site. Ideas were pragmatically subordinated to the particular circumstances of a building’s location and its patronage. Because each monument was designed to take account of a variable street perspective and other urban requirements, its layout was singular.\(^5\)

Most Mamluk patrons, especially the Sultans, preferred to build several medium sized buildings rather than build one colossal building within their reign. Some preferred otherwise such as Sultan Hasan, who however, died before witnessing the completion of the complex in his name. Furthermore, in some cases the buildings were left unfinished because the new rulers were not interested in finishing their predecessor’s projects.

Minarets and domes were basic features that were always present in Mamluk religious buildings. They shape the skyline of the city even to today. Each patron tried to surpass his predecessor in the beauty, and in some cases in the size and number of domes and minarets. According to historians such as Evliya Celebi almost every minaret and dome had their own individual pattern.\(^6\) Mamluk domes were in two forms, first the one that curves above the drum area immediately, and the second that curves above a cylindrical section one third

\(^5\) Ibid, 71.

\(^6\) Ibid, 71.
the height of the dome. The latter was more common. The beginnings of carved decoration on domes were in the form of ribs which then evolved to basic geometric patterns such as the zigzag then developed into complex geometric and floral patterns. The patterns passed through an experimental phase until it reached the level of perfection we now associate Mamluk domes with.

The architects were able to master the harmony between the elements of the building to avoid either one overshadowing the other. Also, they were able to play on the street perspective and the elements first seen from the main road. The layout also varied greatly by the architects and the final design was based on both aesthetics and convenience. However, the Mecca orientation was usually respected faithfully and the inner layout was set accordingly.

By the sixteenth century new forms of minaret architecture were introduced, such as al-Ghawri’s rectangular one. Furthermore, certain decorative elements were making a strong comeback, including the replacement of wooden ceilings with masonry vaults. Although this form of architecture was used earlier, it was being used more often by the sixteenth century.

The emphasis that was placed on decorating the portal is unmatched in the rest of the building. Portals (fig. 1.3 and 1.4) were sometimes aligned to be better seen from the main road. They were mostly built in stone and sometimes decorated with marble. By the fifteenth century the fashion of muqarnas hoods (fig. 1.4) died out to be replaced by tri-
lobed vaults with a squinch-like appearance. “There is a parallel between portal vaults and
dome architecture; the portal conch, being a semi-dome, was constructed to seem
supported by muqarnas pendentives or squinches. The portal seems, therefore, to have
became a miniature experimental field for the development of dome architecture.”

The façade was usually decorated with joggled lintels of ablaq polychrome marble: by the
fifteenth century they became elaborately decorated.

The interior decoration of Mamluk spaces was also an integral part of any
building. Mamluks used various forms of decoration; carved stone, stucco, painted wood,
marble and tiles. Each of these elements was carefully placed in order to survive the
natural climate. Stucco was reserved for the internal spaces while carved stone was used
on facades because of its greater durability.

Glass mosaics were sometimes used, as they had been in the Ayyubid, however, glass
paste was also used to fill in epigraphic marble panels and as decoration, as found in
Qijmas al-Ishaqi mosque complex for example.

Marble paving in the Mamluk period was one of the most thought out parts in the
building. According to Behrens-Abouseif:

There is a clear evolution in the design of marble pavements, Bahri designs consisted of
a variety of rectangular panels with broad geometric and braided compositions exclusively

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7 Ibid, 89.
8 Ibid, 91.
9 Examples include the madrasa of Qalawun (1285), the main mihrab in Ibn Tulun that was renovated by Sultan Lajin (1296), and the madrasas of Taybars (1309-10) and Aqbuga (1339) which are attached to al-Azhar mosque.
associated with pavements, but in the fifteenth century more delicate and intricate mosaic compositions appeared, which also included arabesques and other motifs borrowed from wall decorations.  

Even although Egypt in the Mamluk period went through economic and political struggles, its architecture maintained a consistent level of quality. However, the architecture was subject to a partial decline after the conquest of the Ottomans in 1517.  

When Egypt became an Ottoman province, the Ottoman Sultan took many artisans to Istanbul, which meant that there was a decline in the quantity and quality of architecture in Cairo. However, some high ranking Mamluks maintained their status and were able to build under their own patronage. However, “as a general rule, the Ottoman conquest did not disturb the evolution of Cairene architecture. The pencil-like minarets of the Ottoman period are the striking exception to the general rule that the monumental traditions of the Mamluk period held firm through the Ottoman period.”

Nevertheless, at the start of the eighteenth century more Ottoman influence was beginning to show, for example in the architecture of the sabils, where a curved façade such as in the Sabil of Muhammad ‘Ali on Shar‘i al-Muizz and the Sabil of Sultan Mustafa III in the area of Sayyida Zaynab, was being used. Furthermore, Ottoman architecture in Cairo incorporated some elements of pre-Mamluk styles that were present

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10 Ibid, 93.
11 Ibid, 73.
12 Sakr, Early Twentieth Century Islamic Architecture, 5
in Egypt, examples being cushion voussoirs, spherical pendentives and round arches. It has been argued that these forms were familiar to the Ottomans due to Byzantine influence in their heritage.\textsuperscript{13}

Once Egypt became an autonomous state paying sporadic to the Ottoman Empire, architectural influences changed more rapidly. Muhammad ‘Ali (1805-48), the founder of modern Egypt, had a vision of modernity in all public sectors. In his attempt to achieve this he forced large numbers of artisans to shift careers and work in factories which decreased the emphasis placed on traditional craftsmanship, resulting in a decline in the quality of their productions.\textsuperscript{14}

The nineteenth century also witnessed a decline in the conventional forms of architecture and the adoption of European forms. Eventually, traditional Islamic architecture was limited to religious buildings with Turkish influence. Muhammad ‘Ali espoused the Imperial Ottoman style when he built his mosque at the Citadel (fig. 1.5). It was described by contemporary travelers like Lane-Poole as being “too obviously a foreign importation.”\textsuperscript{15}

Muhammad ‘Ali had a very strict policy when it came to the growth of the traditional buildings; he encouraged people to build in the new style and avoid the traditional one. This was done through a system of inspection, and deteriorating buildings

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid, 6.
\textsuperscript{14} Nadim, \textit{The Building of the American University in Cairo}, 4.
\textsuperscript{15} Lane-Poole, \textit{The Story of Cairo}, 301.
were to be replaced with new ones. Furthermore, a law was issued that banned any new building to use *mashrabiyyas*.\(^\text{16}\)

During the reign of Isma‘il (1863-79) the Europeanization of Cairo was intensified. Isma‘il was educated in Paris and his dream was to create a similar city in Egypt (fig. 1.6). He hired Ali Mubarak, one of the reformists of the time and the Minister of Public Works, to take over the planning the new quarter of the city, Isma‘iliyya, which was named after the Khedive. Foreign experts where hired to execute the plans. Gardens with pavilions and man-made lakes were built in the Azbakiyya area that divided the old quarters of Cairo from the new. The projects also included bridges such as the Kasr al Nil (fig. 1.7) and al-Galaa connecting the new quarters with developing islands in the Nile. The Khedive was also responsible for the completion of Suez Canal project under the supervision of Ferdinand de Lesseps.

Most of the major public and royal projects were taken over by foreign building firms. The Opera House, built in 1862, was designed by the Italian architect G. Garozzo. A French firm was responsible for the Kasr al-Nil bridge, while an English one was responsible for al-Galaa Bridge; both were completed around the year 1869. French firms were also responsible for providing the new suburbs with water and gas lighting.\(^\text{17}\)

Khedive Isma‘il did not abandon the traditional style of Cairene architecture. During the celebrations for the opening of Suez Canal, the Khedive ordered the construction of a palace to host the royal guests coming for the event. Among the most

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\(^{16}\) Abou-Lughoud, *Cairo 1001 Years of the City Victorious*, 94.

\(^{17}\) Sakr, *Early Twentieth Century Islamic Architecture*, 10.
famous residents was the Empress of France, Eugénie. The Gezira Palace was built in an eclectic, mostly Andalusian Islamic style (fig. 1.8).

The royal espousal of local building traditions started to come during the reign of Khedive Tawfiq (1879-1892). The Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l’Art Arabe was founded in 1881 to oversee the documentation of Islamic and Coptic monuments working as a body under the Ministry of Awqaf. Its role then expanded to include the conservation and restoration of decaying monuments. Max Herz was the head of the Comité for many years, during which he was responsible for the restoration of major Islamic monuments.

Thus it is clear that royalty started to notice the state of the traditional local monuments and emphasized the importance of preserving them. Once the Palace gave attention to the local style other upper class Egyptians started to appreciate it, leading to a change in attitude that helped lay the foundations for revival styles.

In the early 19th century the world as a whole witnessed a revival phase in architecture. Various architects were going back to the roots of architecture and adopting earlier styles in their designs. This wave was evident in Egypt; many architects started using neo-Islamic decorative elements and forms of architecture in their work to counter the Ottoman style that was more common in Egypt. However, there was another style being revived at the same time, the neo-Pharaonic one which witnessed a comeback in many public buildings. Many architects “found it [neo-Pharaonic] to be a more prestigious style, particular to Egypt, as well as a more convincing style for both Muslims and Copts,
thereby expressing a principle idea of the 1919 Revolution.”\textsuperscript{18} The most prominent structure built in this style is the mausoleum of Saad Zaghlul (1928) (fig. 1.9) built by one of the prominent architects of the time, Mustafa Fahmi, who also worked on reviving the neo-Islamic style. He is also credited with the design of the Ministry of Endowment.\textsuperscript{19}

However, neither of the styles was able to be labeled as \textit{the} national style. Some contemporary architects “considered that a sensible national style was one which would derive maximum benefit of available building materials without imitating or sticking to traditional architectural forms.”\textsuperscript{20} Other architects argued that the national style would be a result of the fusion of traditional styles without highlighting any of the styles more than the other.\textsuperscript{21}

Nevertheless, Islamic styles witnessed a stronger and more long lasting revival than other traditional Egyptian styles. The Fatimid decorative style was revived in the portal decoration of the Coptic Museum (fig. 1.10) built in 1946 to house Coptic antiquities by the Christian Architect M. Simaika Pasha. The entrance façade is an echo of the façade of the Mosque of al-Aqmar (fig. 1.11) built in 1125. Some have argued that the influence of Fatimid decoration in the façade of the museum stems from the original influence of Coptic art found in Fatimid decoration: “The keel-arched niche with fluted radiating hood is a Fatimid variation on the late classical theme used widely in Coptic art.”\textsuperscript{22} The portal has direct Fatimid decorative motifs such as the fluted niches with medallions; however, the decoration was altered to fit the theme by the addition of crosses. In the place of the

\textsuperscript{18} Sakr, \textit{Early Twentieth Century Islamic Architecture}, 16.
\textsuperscript{19} To be addressed in chapter four.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 16.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 17.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 35.
stepped crenellations found at al-Aqmar mosque, crosses form the crenellations, again to emphasis the theme of the museum. But with the exception of a few elements including the human representation found on the lintel above the door the façade is an exact replica of the al-Aqmar façade and a clear attempt to revive the Fatimid style.

The most revived Islamic style was the Mamluk one. Some have defined the neo-Mamluk style as “a hybrid combination of Western European 19th century constructions principles and architectural influences derived from buildings erected during the Mamluk rule in Egypt (1250-1517), the latter being largely limited to decorative elements, through certain aspects of interior space design from this period were also incorporated.”23 In other words the revived style was based on the needs of the 19th and 20th centuries, yet adopted the decorative styles of Mamluk architecture. The ground plans of the typical 13th century house were no longer applicable to the needs of the 19th century household and thus alterations to the interior spaces were needed. For example, the qa’a form was used but in a greatly reduced manner. The neo-Mamluk style flourished for around 60 years (1870-1930), with the help of local and foreign architects. It has been considered a minor variation when it came to the general architectural forms that were present at the time; however, it represents a very important secular style of architecture present in these years.24 The Mamluk style was endorsed as the purest form of expression of the Egyptian identity, minimizing Ottoman influences.25 Many patrons adopted the Mamluk style as a way to represent their identity. Nevertheless, the neo-Mamluk style witnessed intense competition; the Ottoman identity was being imposed from the ruling class in most

24 Nadim, The Building of the American University in Cairo, 6.
cultural fields. Once Egypt became an independent state the competition subsided and the Mamluk style was combined in various ways with Ottoman style and Western styles.
Chapter Two: Revived Style

Defining the Style

In the earlier chapter the Mamluk revival style was briefly introduced. The aim of this chapter is to take a closer look at it and address certain questions that stem from previous scholarly discussions. This chapter will deal with defining the style, looking at the reasons behind its revival, the sponsors of the major buildings in that style and finally the demand for the style in private homes and public buildings.

As mentioned earlier, the revived Mamluk style thrived for more than half a century between the years 1870 and 1930. It was used for secular public buildings such as ministries, banks, museums, as well as for domestic architecture for both foreign and Egyptian clients. “The neo-Mamluk style, also known as ‘Islamic revival’, ‘neo-Islamic’ or, in one appropriately deferential article penned by a statesman, the ‘Fu’ad I style’ after King Fu’ad of Egypt (r.1917-1936),” was regarded in the 20th century as the national Egyptian style. According to Nasser Rabbat, “the neo-Mamluk style owed its creation to the confluence of various intellectual, architectural and political currents which developed over the course of the nineteenth century.” Rabbat noted the phases that helped in creating the style; he argues that

26 ‘Ali ‘Alluba, a minister around the 1880’s who was involved in a plan to create and maintain a traditional style naming it the “Fuad I” style (Jacques Berque, Egypt, Imperialism and Revolution, 486).
27 King Ahmad Fuad I was Egypt’s King from 1917-1936. Most of his early life and education were in Europe because he lived with his father Khedive Isma’il in exile. He returned to Egypt after his father’s death and was chosen as Egypt’s king by the British in 1917, succeeding Husayn Kamil. During his reign Egypt witnessed the first revolution led by Saa’d Zaghlul; part of the benefits of the revolution were the constitution of 1923 in addition to a certain degree of autonomy from the British. He died in 1936 and was succeeded by King Farouk I (Goldshmit, Biographical Dictionary, 59-60).
the first phase dates back to the French expedition under Napoleon, which began recording anything “Egyptian”. The second phase was considered a continuation of the French expedition, and was lead by Pascale Coste (1825-1829)\textsuperscript{30}, a French architect brought by Muhammad Ali to work on several projects. These two phases, which can be considered unrelated by some scholars, helped the Mamluk style make a comeback sixty years later when the question of an Egyptian architectural identity was being raised. Even during the time of Muhammad Ali, Coste used the neo-Mamluk style at first for his mosque but it was changed at the last minute; this incident will be discussed later in the chapter. However, the first royal building to be executed in the neo-Mamluk style was the mosque of al-Rifa‘i (fig. 2.1) built in two different stages because of architectural disputes between the patrons. The first was from 1869-80, designed and executed by Hussein Fahmi, and the second from 1906-11 finished under the supervision of Max Herz, the Austro-Hungarian architect who headed the Comité for a lengthy period of time.

The Riaf ‘i (fig. 2.1) mosque was commissioned in 1869 by Khushyar Hanem, the mother of Khedive Ismail. It was constructed to be the burial space for members of the royal family, a congregational mosque as well as an expansion of an already existing shrine of a Sufi Sheikh named al-Rifa‘i.\textsuperscript{31} However, it was not completed until 1911 during the reign of Abbas Hilmi II. There are many reasons for the long construction period of the mosque. Khedive Ismail argued that it was costing too much. Due to various disagreements the building was put on hold for almost 40 years.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{30} I will be touching more on his biography later in this chapter.
\textsuperscript{31} Rabat, \textit{Mamluk History}, 182.
\textsuperscript{32} Al-Asad, “The Mosque of al-Rifa‘i”, 108.
As argued by Al-Asad the mosque of al-Rifa‘i could be easily mistaken for a Mamluk mosque by someone outside of the field of Islamic architecture, due to the numerous similarities between it and Mamluk buildings, especially the clear echoes of style found in the adjacent Sultan Hasan Mosque (fig. 2.2):

Its Cairene Mamluk architectural features include its minarets, which are similar to the one found on the mosque of Asanbugha, among other fourteenth-century Cairene Mamluk mosques. The shape of the main dome’s exterior supports and the arrangement of its windows can also be found in a number of late Mamluk structures, for example, the mausoleum of Sultan Tuman Bay I (ca. 1500). More importantly, the mosque of al-Rifa‘i established direct references to the neighboring mosque of Sultan Hassan. Ever since the latter mosque was erected the two have come to be viewed as inseparable. They are, similar in their general massing, their use of materials, colors, and architectural details. It is therefore not surprising that the two are often conceived as contemporaries. The design of the mosque of al-Rifa‘i is an attempt to relate it to the golden age of Egypt’s Islamic architectural heritage. 33

As mentioned in chapter one, the Mamluks emphasized certain features in their architecture, especially when it came to mosque architecture, such as height. The dome and minaret were used to impress the distant viewer, while the portal was used to impress the visitor up close. This form of architectural tradition was revisited in al-Rifa‘i mosque. The western façade is used and considered as the main entrance and it is emphasized by the added height of the central bay and the monumental staircase leading to the portal. Nevertheless, the southern façade is also emphasized using the minarets, which are in the Mamluk cylindrical

form, and by a moderately sized dome. There are monumental stairs on that side of the building as well to highlight the second set of entrances.\textsuperscript{34}

The final point to be addressed is the relationship between the mosque of al-Rifa‘i and revival of the neo-Mamluk style. The royal espousal of the structure and choice of design show an attempt to connect with Cairo’s golden age and a turning away from Ottoman models. The Mamluk style was rejected by earlier royals like Muhammad ‘Ali as seen in his choice of design for his mosque. Nevertheless, a little later family members were trying to move away from the Ottoman influence and establish themselves as a continuation of an age when Egypt was a superpower and successfully defeated foes such as the Mongols and Crusaders. As al-Asad puts it “in sum, the mosque of al-Rifa‘i expresses three levels of association: to Egypt’s popular heritage, to its Mamluk past and to its recent history.”\textsuperscript{35} The choice of style is a clear indication in the shift from the Ottoman style favored by Muhammad ‘Ali to a style that can be considered a national or Egyptian one. The mosque of al-Rifa‘i is the structure that paved the way for the full acceptance of neo-Mamluk style that Cairo witnessed.

The opinion of ‘Ali Mubarak, a contemporary historian of the period when the style was being reborn, is a rather interesting point. According to him “a number of new buildings were made to ‘emulate older Arab ones,’ a practice introduced by Julius Franz (who he refers to as “Franz Pasha’), a German architect working in Cairo.”\textsuperscript{36} ‘Ali Mubarak argues that the origin of the neo-Mamluk style is a western influence rather than the continuation of Cairo’s pre-modern Islamic building traditions. He sees it as a product of the west and that it was an imported phenomenon because of the revivalism phase that Europe went through in the late

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid, 110.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 121.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, 116.
nineteenth century was transported to Egypt. It was supported greatly by the intense documentation process that Egypt witnessed on the hands of western enthusiasts beginning from the French expedition onwards.  

In support of Mubarak’s argument Asad notes that:

> When in the nineteenth century the Western world began to question the dominance of the classical revival and to search for alternative prototypes, the architectural heritage of the Islamic world provided a possible (though never widespread) source of inspiration. Also, for the first time a significant body of information dealing with Islamic architecture was accessible not only in the West, but, theoretically at least, in the Islamic world itself; the reintroduction to its own architectural heritage was achieved through Western mediation.

Mubarak’s argument did not stem from a void. It is true that Western attempts ignited interest once again in the pre-modern style; however, it wouldn’t have been successful if the population at large did not relate to it. The Mamluk style resonated with a large segment of the Egyptian society even though the house of Muhammad ‘Ali tried to diminish this relationship in the beginning. However, it was during the reign of Isma’il that this style was thought of locally as being the most appropriate to represent the nation. It is true that the West is credited with the extensive documentation of the Mamluk architectural heritage; however, it was not solely by their patronage that the style in was revived in architectural projects in the nineteenth century.

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37 Ibid, 116-117.
38 The Mamluk style was used in the West, although not extensively, but it was adopted for several projects. Examples include the water pumping station in Potsdam, Germany (fig.2.3), and a tobacco factory in Dresden, Germany (fig. 2.4).
Another very interesting view of what the neo-Mamluk style is and how it came into being is that of István Ormos, the biographer of Max Herz, the Austrio-Hungarian architect and head of the Comité from 1896 onwards. Ormos sheds light on the origins of the style tracing it back to the extensive documentation done by the French Expedition. However, its birth can be associated with Pascale Coste. Furthermore, he mentions another French engineer Mougel, who was commissioned by Muhammad ‘Ali to build a dry-dock in Alexandria in the Moorish style. Although Coste, Mougel and Franz were pioneers in interest in the Mamluk style, I believe that the one who excelled in implementing the style in building form, Maz Herz should be the one who should be credited in making it reach new heights and a larger segment of the population. As an architect and the head of the Comité, he was able to understand the many layers of the style and make it come to life in the most effective manner. He worked closely with the restoration of Mamluk buildings and thus developed his own understanding of the style and how it could fit in the modern day context. As a private architect he built several domestic buildings\textsuperscript{40} in the neo-Mamluk style and was also the architect responsible for the completion of the Rifa‘i mosque:

The exterior of the mosque was modified only slightly. Herz Pasha designed the cornice, the minarets and the domes, and he completed the north-western façade including the monumental central door bay of the main entrance. He also designed the motifs of the north-western façade. The decoration of the interior was designed by Herz in its entirety because no designs existed.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{40} Examples will be mentioned upon later in the chapter.
\textsuperscript{41} Ormos, \textit{Max Herz Pasha}, 436.
As mentioned above, based on earlier scholarly arguments, Pascal Coste can be referred to as the igniter of interest in Mamluk architecture in the 19th century. Pascal-Xavier Coste was a French architect from Marseilles. He came to Egypt as a technocrat during Muhammad ‘Ali’s modernization phase. Coste lived and worked in Egypt as an architect and supervisor of various projects for ten years (1817-1827). He also designed and constructed irrigation canals, factories and mills around Cairo and the Delta. He was responsible for the telegraph line between Cairo and Alexandria. He also designed private palaces and pavilions for both Egyptian and European clientele, however, very few of his projects have survived.

His impact on the revival of the Mamluk style wasn’t through his building legacies; rather it was through his documentation efforts that he did when he was commissioned by Muhammad Ali to build the royal mosque within the Citadel in 1821 and another mosque in Alexandria. As Nasser Rabbat puts it “these projects anticipated and probably influenced a whole string of religious and public structures constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century in a style that was historicizing in its inspirations and the nationalistic in its aspirations.” In 1837 when Coste went back to France he published L’Architecture arabe ou monuments du Kaire measures et dessinés de 1818 à 1826. It had documentation of Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk structures with very detailed drawings.

When it came to the design of the mosques for Muhammad ‘Ali, Coste settled on Mamluk-inspired designs; however, neither of the projects was actually carried out.

Yet, the two designs for the mosques in fact reveal how Coste, with a concern for symmetry and clarity characteristics of his architectural background, manages to synthesise and order a basic vocabulary for a neo-Mamluk style. Both designs display the main characteristics

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42 Rabbat, Mamluk History, 176.
of all monumental Mamluk mosques: hypostyle plans, tightly composed facades with layered surfaces, elevated portals with trilobed conches and geometric decorative patterns framing the entrance proper, carved stone domes with high drums and tapered profiles, tiered minarets with bulbous finials and *ablaq* surface articulation.\(^\text{43}\)

From its drawings, the Citadel mosque had four hypostyle halls arranged around a central courtyard with a dome at each corner, with four pencil-shaped minarets, two at the ends of the peripheral aisles in addition to two on the longitudinal sides of the building. Such a composition would frame the square building. A huge funerary dome would have been projected from the *qibla* wall, echoing the Sultan Hasan composition. Two arcaded spaces would have extended from the entrance façade to form a forecourt; each of which would have ended with a sabil kuttab. The drawings show that the domes would have had Mamluk profiles, ribbed or ending with a chevron pattern; the drum area would have been stepped resting on four triangular corners. The citadel mosque was clearly Mamluk in style. It echoed Sultan Hasan in some aspects and Faraj ibn Barquq’s funerary complex in others.\(^\text{44}\)

Very similar in design was the mosque of Alexandria, however, the project was never started due to lack of funds. Yet, construction of the citadel mosque started during the last few months of Coste’s stay in Egypt and the current citadel mosque were erected on the same site. As argued earlier in chapter one, politics played a role in abandoning the Mamluk style and deciding to build the royal mosque in Ottoman style. Coste’s drawings might have been appealing; however, it would have given the wrong message by connecting Muhammad Ali to the Mamluk legacy, which he tried to eradicate completely in 1811 by massacring the last Mamluk emirs. Muhammad Ali thus adopted the Ottoman style to associate himself with the

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\(^{43}\) Ibid, 177.

\(^{44}\) Ibid, 177.
earlier more powerful Ottoman sultans. It has been suggested by some scholars such as Nasser Rabbat that the current citadel mosque adopted features from the Nuruosmaniye Mosque built by Sultan Osman III in 1755, and has a plan similar to the Blue Mosque built by Sultan Ahmet in 1609-1617; however, debatable.\(^45\)

Despite the fact that the projects were not built, it could be argued that Coste was indeed one of the major reasons in igniting interest in the Neo-Mamluk style. His drawings were used as a basis for future projects\(^46\), and unlike the *Description de l’Egypte* his publication focused only on Islamic monuments.

The second European architect that should be credited in reviving the Mamluk style is Max Herz. As mentioned earlier, Herz was a Hungarian engineer appointed as the head of the Comité who oversaw the restoration and preservation of many Islamic monuments in Egypt in the late 19\(^\text{th}\) and early 20\(^\text{th}\) centuries. His importance to the neo-Mamluk revival stems from the roles he took in his career in Egypt.

Max Herz was born in Hungary in 1856; by chance his family came to work closely with a family who were the directors of the Nile Hotel in al-Muski area in Cairo. He traveled with them through Europe and finally settled in Egypt in 1880. He met Julius Franz Pasha, who was the head of the Technical Bureau of the Waqf administration; Franz Pasha took Herz under his wing and appointed him as an architect for the bureau. In 1887 Franz Pasha retired and recommended that Herz should succeed him in all his positions. Herz replaced Franz Pasha as

\(^{45}\) Ibid, 178-180.
\(^{46}\) According to Rabbat, *Mamluk History*, (176-177), most of Coste’s work is conceived and presented in the grand tradition of the Beaux-Arts, where the architect trained. The drawings are prefaced with a concise historical introduction, and an explanatory paragraph.
the head of the Comité in 1888. From 1890 until the time he left Egypt he was chief architect of the Comité, a position of great importance. Herz also worked in the Arab Museum since the day he was hired by Franz Pasha and continued after his promotion. The Museum and its collection were entrusted in his care in 1892 and he was appointed as chief of the Museum in 1901.

Max Herz was granted the title of Bey in 1895 and Pasha in 1912 due to his great work in the civil sector. He was also elected as a member of many learned societies and awarded many decorations. However, at the eve of World War I he had to leave Egypt due to political reasons and died shortly after that in Zurich. He left most of his belongings in Cairo and very few items were retrieved later by his family.

The positions that Max Herz occupied enabled him to work closely with Islamic and Coptic monuments on many levels. As the Chief architect of the Comité, he had absolute control of surveying the monuments, recommending necessary repairs, and control of the negotiations with the contractors and artisans that performed the restorations. He also supervised the restoration process down to the most minor detail. During these conservation and restoration efforts he followed a very rigid school of conservation where he wouldn’t reconstruct a missing piece unless he was certain of its original look and material, trying to preserve a building as it was with only documented and essential additions. He resorted to restoration in cases where it was truly essential. He also favored removing any kind of building obstructing the view around a monument or for any damage related reasons; he also removed merchant booths that spoiled building facades.
Through his work in the conservation sector he was able to document much about each building. His scholarly work was also very influential:

Herz, however, was not only a conscientious restorer but also an outstanding scholar of architecture. In the course of his activities he examined the Islamic monuments of Cairo and the provinces, wrote several monographs in this field and also travelled around most neighboring Arab countries. His precise investigations in the field of the history of architecture, which also included the study of old construction techniques and that of Arab manuscripts, led to a substantial refinement of the restoration methods of the Comité. In contradistinction to his predecessor, Herz was considerably more cautious in his replacement of missing parts of decoration and had all new parts marked with the corresponding date. … As Franz was a pragmatic organizer, so Herz was unquestionably an outstanding scholar of architecture and restorer- perhaps one of the best of his time.  

Major projects include his restorations of Sultan Hasan and Qaytbay fort in Alexandria. In addition he extended the role of the Comité to encompass the Coptic monuments and not just the Islamic. He is also credited with the restoration of the White Monastery in Suhag, which according to Ormos was referred to as a masterpiece by modern scholars interested in the history and activity of the Comité.  

His relation with the revival of the neo-Mamluk style stems from his close work with the monuments. Based on a request by the Waqf Administration he supervised the restoration of the mosque of al-Azhar during the Abbas Hilmi period. Because they had a good relationship, Herz was able to argue in favor of a neo-Mamluk façade for the mosque with the consent of the

47 Ormos, “Max Herz (1856-1919)”, 164.
48 Ibid, 166.
Khedive. He had participated in the display of the objects in the Museum of Arab Art (fig. 2.5) since he came to Egypt, so when he was appointed as director he was already familiar with the collection. In 1903 a new building was erected for the collection and the museum and the Khedivial Library (fig. 4).\textsuperscript{49} Herz was not assigned to design the building; the architect behind the neo-Mamluk appearance of the Museum is Alfonso Manescalo.\textsuperscript{50} However, Herz’s role was evident in the furnishing and the design of the fixtures and fittings and the display of the exhibits.\textsuperscript{51}

His influence in relation to the neo-Mamluk style is more apparent when we address Max Herz as a private architect. According to some sources Herz designed more than 150 buildings around Cairo. Nevertheless, very few of these buildings survived to our day and very little documentation of drawings and plans survived due to the rushed manner in which he left Egypt. It has been argued by Ormos that no building was built in the Mamluk revived style without the approval of Herz Pasha, after all he was the highest architectural authority and specialist when it came to this style and had studied and documented it in detailed form.\textsuperscript{52}

Herz designed the palace of Count Zogheb\textsuperscript{53} built between the years 1898 and 1900 in Qasr el Nil street, but torn down in 1963. The palace was typically Mamluk revival in appearance with a European plan on the inside with decorative Mamluk touches. It has been recently argued that Herz Pasha was also responsible for the restoration of the American University in Cairo’s main building (fig. 2.6) on Tahrir Square. Ormos quotes Hend Nadim

\textsuperscript{49} Now known as Dar al-Kutub.
\textsuperscript{50} Sakr, \textit{Early Twentieth Century Islamic Architecture}, 22.
\textsuperscript{51} Ormos, \textit{Max Herz (1856-1919)}, 167.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid, 169.
\textsuperscript{53} The palace will be addressed later in the following chapter.
when she argued that “the architect who designed and supervised the work for Gianaclis is not known; however several coincidences seem to suggest that it might have been Max Herz Pasha.” The supposition was later confirmed by papers relating to Herz’s wife. As mentioned earlier Herz Pasha was commissioned by ‘Abbas Hilmi to complete the Mosque of al-Rifa‘i in 1904. His own house was once considered a masterpiece of the fusion of neo-Mamluk and modern architecture styles. It stood in the Qasr al-Dubara area.

It would not be fair if we only credit European architects with the revival of the neo-Mamluk style. It might be true that their interest in documentation and restoration was the first spark on the road to the revival but many Egyptian architects also adopted this style. Among them was Saber Sabri. Sabri was probably born around the mid 1840s; he trained as an engineer in the years 1866-1870 in the Muhandiskhana (Cairo’s Polytechnical School) which means that his acquired skills and knowledge were all local. In 1881 he worked as a mathematics teacher in the Muhandiskhana. He is credited to have translated two manuals, one on descriptive geometry and the other on analytical geometry. Five years later he was able to head the department of mathematics in the Muhandiskhana, and in the following years he acted as the deputy-director. In the early years of 1900 he was teaching mathematics in the Egyptian University which was in its early years of establishment. He was a pioneer when it came to dealing with the errors created by the traditional way of surveying Egypt, known as the mishaiyyin [sic] proving that they could produce errors that total up to 15 %. He then went on to address these problems and suggest possible corrections. He was appointed chief engineer of

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54 The owner of the building prior to AUC.
56 In one of his biographies by his wife that the transformation for AUC’s building was one of his major projects. His other works also include al Bank al-‘Iqari al-Misri and the extension of the Austro-Hungarian Hospital in Abbasiyya in 1898.
57 Ormos, “Max Herz (1856-1919)”, 170.
the *Awqaf* in 1892 and he became a member of the Comité, working closely with them even during his retirement years. The years he was active in the Comité and the field were very much the same years that Herz Pasha was heading the institution and thus they worked closely together. Other members of the Comité described Sabri as an “erudite professional and a hard worker.”

According to several Comité meeting records, Sabri followed the doctrine of Viollet-le-Duc when it came to conservation and restoration of the monuments. In one incident it appears that Sabri opposed the choice of Herz’s Pasha concerning an interior frieze of the mosque of Barquq, “because he considered the colours chosen to repaint the wood as being too pale, while Herz’s concern was to get the old paint reproduced as faithfully as possible to its current condition.”

As for his relationship with the revivalism of the Mamluk style,

There is no evidence that Sabri’s revivalisms should be understood primarily as the product of the *muhandis* classical education in mathematics (which could have facilitated achieving the revival of historical models of architecture, concerning i.e the execution of stalactites) and of a committed concern for the conservation and restoration of Cairo historical monuments (that would have reinforced an interest in reviving such heritage).

However, I believe that his relationship with the revival style stemmed from his close work with the monuments as a member of the Comité and with his background in architecture. He was able to synthesize and absorb the style and adapt it to his time. Mercedes de Volait argues that Sabri was the deciding figure behind the technicalities, designs and addition of the Riwaq

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60 Ibid, 9.
al-ʿAbbasi attached to the mosque of al Azhar (1894-1898) with the help of Max Herz. The riwaq was added in order to “enhance the religious character of the mosque by giving it a larger façade.” The Mamluk style was chosen for political as well as aesthetic reasons. The design was very much similar to the design of a nearby old house that had been demolished to make way for street expansion for the expansion of the street in front of the new portal of al-Azhar.

Saber Sabri supervised several other projects and is credited with their completion. These include the Awlad Inan Mosque, now known as Sayyida Aisha mosque (fig. 2.7) below the Citadel. The mosque, built by the Awqaf under the supervision of Sabri, replaced an earlier mosque and shrine that was lost during the French occupation. Construction began in 1894 and finished in 1896, with a Khedivial order for the expenses of the Awqaf. An account of the project done by a French architectural magazine describes the interior decoration as extremely rich. The article and other reports (which have his signature on them) attest that the mosque was the work of Saber Bey Sabri.

The mosque was built in mushahar alternating layers of white and red stone. The plan shows a covered prayer hall with a central lantern, and an attached kuttab on the first floor. The dome of the mosque is carved intricately with interlacing geometric patterns; it resembles domes from the Qaytbay period.

The second project that was supervised by Sabri was the rebuilding of the Sayyida Nafisa mosque (fig. 2.8) in the southern cemetery, which was extensively damaged by a fire in

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61 Ibid, 11.
1892. The reports of the Awqaf show the signature of Sabri on the project drawings and documents. Parts of the original structure were surviving and had to be incorporated with the new structure which resulted in the current awkward plan of the mosque. However, the building underwent several additions over time; the minaret dates to 1972. The original minaret built after the 1892 fire was a clear replica of Mamluk models. It had a two storey balcony topped with a finial; it had a clear echo of the minaret of Qaytbay’s complex in the northern cemetery. Iznik tiles were added at a later date which changed the purely neo-Mamluk appearance of the building after the first attempt of reconstruction. The tiles were placed on the façade, which now resembles an inner courtyard after a later extension was built. The dome resembles that of the mausoleum of Barquq in the northern cemetery. “Another classical repertoire is played with is illustrated by the subverted use of the blazons on the external walls: rather than giving the name and titles of the patron of the mosque, the pseudo ranks bear here Quranic epigraphy rather, the shahada (la-allah illa Allah wa Muhamad rassul illah).”

The second Egyptian architect is Mustafa Fahmi, the son of Mahmoud Fahmi, the first modern Egyptian architect. Mustafa was educated in Paris and graduated from the Ecole des Ponts et Chaussées. Once he came back to Egypt he was among the first architects to be employed by the Department of Architecture and Design in the Public Buildings Service. He rose quickly through its ranks and eventually became the director in 1921; and by 1929 he was the Palace architect. He designed several modern buildings and held the position of lecturer in the Faculty of Engineering. Many of his works are inspired by the neo-Mamluk style, including the buildings of the Engineer’s Society (fig. 2.9), the Agricultural Society, the Huda Sha‘rawi

63 Ibid, 7.
Women’s society and the Doctors’ Syndicate. One of the buildings that shows his strong role in the revival of the Mamluk style in the Agouza Hospital. He is also credited the design of the neo-Pharaonic Mausoleum of Saa’d Zaghlul as mentioned in chapter one. He became the Minister of Public Works in 1949-1950. Fahmi was granted the title of Pasha in 1946 after serving the Palace for over 20 years. He was sent to Saudi Arabia and is credited the design of King Faysal’s palace in Riyadh and the reconstruction of the enclosure of the Ka‘ba.⁶⁴

There are several reasons for the revival of the Mamluk style at that time. Some consider it a political expression to counter the effects of colonialism and the huge wave of westernization that Egypt witnessed. It can be considered a form of a national movement to find a style that the population in general related to and accepted. With the Ottomans controlling Egypt after the end of the Mamluk dynasty, which was one of the most successful periods of rule in Egypt, Mamluk history was being neglected and Mamluk buildings abandoned. As mentioned earlier in chapter one Muhammad ‘Ali introduced western models of architecture to counter the traditional forms, and actually worked to minimize the effects of the traditional style and constrain it. Politically, people started to resent the ruling power and the European powers controlling their land, and in 1879-82 the Orabi revolt took place and a sense of nationalism was born which continued until the 1919 revolution led by Saad Zaghloul which was the peak of nationalism in this decade. People realized that their current circumstances were only getting worse and started combating the powers by returning to the powers prior to them and by 1919 Mamluk revival was in full swing and was almost over. After an uprising people start to realize a lot about their surroundings and try to find a style to adhere to. In this case the traditional style of architecture was popular on the street, and a new suburb was being

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developed by Khedive Ismail at the same time. Many buildings in the new section of the city, Isma‘illiya, were being built in neo-Mamluk fashion alongside western modeled ones. Many high profile Egyptians and Europeans working in the governmental posts started to adopt the neo-Mamluk style as well. An example of the former is Talaat Harb and the style chosen for the first the Egyptian bank, Bank Misr. Both the exterior and interior of the building are extremely rich in design echoing the Mamluk style. Among the latter was Count Zogheb who chose a Mamluk revival design for his personal residence.

A second reason for the decision to go back to the Mamluk style is that, Egyptians and Europeans realized that the traditional form of architecture was undergoing a threat of extinction and thus started advocating the reuse of the style in order to preserve it. Furthermore, the influx of European travelers to Egypt ignited an interest in the style, making it fashionable back home, for instance, Neo-Pharaonic and Islamic styled furniture was a statement in Europe. As argued by Hend Nadim, such a trend eventually filtered its way back to Egypt and the European architects who worked in Egypt found a vast number of published examples that they could use in their projects.66

A third reason for the revival of the Mamluk style was the establishment of the Comité de Conservation de l’Art Arabe in 1881. As previously discussed in chapter one, the Comité’s role was to document Islamic and Coptic monuments; their role expanded to include the restoration and conservation of the monuments. It helped with the revival of the style because it helped raise awareness among a certain group of society, the intellectuals and heritage enthusiasts, a group that included upper class Egyptians as well as Europeans working in Egypt. Thus they

65 Designed by Antoine Lascia.
66 Nadim, The Building of the American University in Cairo, 9.
started to build in the revival style and a domino effect took place within their circle and thus a larger group started espousing the style. Furthermore, the royal family eventually adopted the style when it came to public buildings which reassured the public that there was a shift in loyalty. The example of al-Rifa‘i mosque that was addressed above and the Mosque attached to ‘Abdin Palace, the Khedival Library and the Arab Art Museum all had royal patronage and all possessed neo-Mamluk elements.

Furthermore, with the conservation work being done by the Comité, local craftsmen were becoming oriented with the traditional methods of decoration and building and thus they were able to polish their expertise and understand their heritage on a completely different level.\footnote{Ibid, 10-11.}

Another reason, as argued by some, (very much related to the first reason) was a need to fight colonialism in its many forms, be it British or Ottoman powers. The Mamluk style was not a direct form of nationalism but rather an indirect one that affected the choices of people and their preferences, including architecture as well as other areas of social life. This allowed people to choose the style they related to most and thus the neo-Mamluk style made its imprint on society in domestic buildings, public buildings (such as privately founded banks and libraries) and in some cases governmental buildings (museums, ministries). The neo-Mamluk style was used so extensively that it became the national style within a few years. It has been argued that the choice of the neo-Mamluk style is a sign of backwardness.\footnote{As seen how Muhammad ‘Ali dealt with the traditional building style.} However, its emergence proves otherwise. Firstly, the Mamluk reign in Egypt and Greater Syria was one of the strongest and richest periods in the area’s history, thus it was a sign of development and an...
understanding of the circumstances of the time. The emergence of the revival style was thus another form of nationalism.⁶⁹

In sum, the neo-Mamluk style didn’t come from a void. It was a result of many factors, internal and external, which affected the process and speed of its revival. It might have started out as an interest of Westerners; yet it was the local society that embraced it as a national style, as shown in many examples of neo-Mamluk residences built in Khedival Cairo and beyond. The Royal family’s espousal of the style shows how popular it had become then and how it was able to assert itself as the “national” style.

This chapter will deal with the adaptability that the neo-Mamluk buildings underwent. On the exterior the buildings had a neo-Mamluk appearance but on the interior they were very much in the European style; in the sense of division of space and furnishings. This feature will be clarified through analyzing two of the prime examples of early neo-Mamluk domestic buildings, first the house of Count Zogheb and second the villa of Max Herz. Apartment buildings are a form of architecture that is worth analyzing. They were a relatively new form that wasn’t present in the Mamluk times (except in the form of a rab‘), so it is interesting to see how they adapted Mamluk features to fit in with the new building form.

The second section of this chapter will address the decline in popularity of the revived style after the 1952 coup. The understanding of nationalism was revised in all fields and applied to architecture as well. Thus there was a decline in the use of the neo-Mamluk style. The reasons behind this will be addressed in this chapter.

In the earlier chapter the neo-Mamluk style was addressed. However, it is important to see how this style, once it had established itself as a national style, adjusted to the needs of the time. On the exterior the buildings presented a neo-Mamluk style, while the interior was laid out with a purely European ground plan. In some cases the furnishings were also in the European style (fig. 3.6), yet some rooms were decorated to complement the exterior Mamluk style.

Our first example is the villa of Count Zogheb (1898) (fig. 3.1). It is one of the early examples of how both styles were able to complement one another for the needs of the time.
The palace was designed and executed by Max Herz, with typical neo-Mamluk revival features. Count Zogheb was the diplomatic representative of the Danish Kingdom in Egypt. His position allowed him to gain access to Egyptian royalty and its entourage, thus enabling him to buy the land where he built his palace in central Cairo, in the Isma‘iliyya district. His vision for the house according to his son was as follows:

Free from all Turkish influence – adapted to the necessities of modern life. It was, however, to be no blind imitation of a period house with all its defects and incongruities, but rather a building on the following lines: the owner of an Arabic dwelling, after travelling in Europe, decides to adapt his house to European standards; the main Arabic structure is to remain but certain rooms are to conform to European requirements thus avoiding the monstrosities flooding the bazaars of Cairo and Port Said.  

The best description of the house was done by Professor Creswell. As mentioned earlier the owner of the house didn’t want it to be a replica of a typical Egyptian house, but rather a fusion between the Egyptian style and the requirements of the day. Zogheb himself claimed that “the rooms are planned and arranged as a modern architect would plan and arrange them, but the dadoes, the inlaid doors, the ceilings and the surface decoration have been designed according to the practice of the fifteenth century. And the result is altogether charming, so successfully has Muhammadan technique been handled and adapted.”

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70 Count Zogheb, *Our Home in Cairo*, 6-7
71 Quoted in Count Zogheb, *Our Home in Cairo*.
72 Ibid, 24.
Max Herz was able to synthesise the style and built a masterpiece with his Zogheb project. The decoration of the facades was done in the typical Mamluk fashion of alternating red and beige stone, known as *mushahhar*. The crestings utilized on the façade were in two forms, stepped and trefoil (fig. 3.1). However, both were used in a way that complemented one another, and each crowned a different section of the exterior.\(^{73}\)

As a setting and in order to prevent the effect being spoilt by the blank side walls of houses to right and left, the architect has arranged two attractive facades to the right and left of the building. They have been executed in polychrome brick style of the Delta, such as one finds at Rosetta, Fua, Mehlla-el-Kubra, etc., and the rooms, which could be used as servant’s quarters, have mashrabiyya grilles and balconies.\(^{74}\)

On the right side of the entrance hall was a tiled dado (fig. 3.5) made in Italy but resembling a type that was popular in Asia Minor and Syria.\(^{75}\) As mentioned earlier, some rooms were in the European style from the decoration to the furnishing. Yet, strategic elements in the house were executed in the typical Mamluk way; this includes the decoration of the staircase to the first floor and its ceiling (fig. 3.2- 3.3). In Mamluk architecture, the staircase was never an integral part of the building worthy of decoration but, in this case the staircase had “four lattice windows each at a higher level than the previous one, so as to follow the rise of the stairs, quite in European fashion. But the windows themselves have stucco lattices and coloured glass in Oriental fashion, and the stone balustrades are pierced with designs taken from Muhammadan art”\(^{76}\) (fig. 3.2). The ceiling was decorated with the typical geometric patterns found on woodwork (fig. 3.4). It had an eight-pointed star that dominated the design.

\(^{73}\) Ibid, 26.
\(^{74}\) Ibid, 25.
\(^{75}\) Ibid, 26.
\(^{76}\) Ibid, 27.
Certain spaces were preserved for the lighting equipment in the form of lamps with pierced brass-work.

At the top of the staircase was a mashrabiyya screen which opened on a vestibule that overlooked a great hall. To enter the hall one passed through a pointed archway with alternating red and white voussoirs. The hall was also lit by a great triple-arched window on the northern side that overlooked the garden. Behind the windows was a balcony that rested on stone brackets that echoed minaret balconies with carved marble balustrades in old Cairo. The interior of the great hall was adorned with a fine titled dado capped with custom made Hispano-Moresque luster tiles. The upper part of the room was decorated with panels of painted stucco and the ceiling was painted and gilt wood. At the eastern corner of the hall was a wooden staircase that led to the second floor, which had a wooden gallery which ran on three sides and provided access to the bedrooms. 77 “On the fourth side of the hall, above the entrance arch, is a triple arched opening belonging to the vestibule of the principle bedroom. The vestibule has a ceiling of stucco with great glass bull’s eyes, exactly as in hammâms or hot baths.” 78

The rest of the house was a mixture of European and Mamluk style. For example the doors that divide the rooms had different faces depending on the side that they open onto. On the Mamluk side the door had geometric decorations of ivory and ebony interlaces that rested between little panels of arabesque.

Thus it could be said that the house of Count Zogheb was a perfect example of how the neo-Mamluk style was able to adapt itself to the needs of the time.

77 Ibid, 27.
78 Ibid, 27.
The second example is the private villa of Max Herz (fig. 3.8). The location of the house was on the modern day Simon Bolivar Square, behind the Hotel Semiramis, in Garden City (fig. 3.9). It was built in the late 1800s-early 1900s, however it was demolished in 1960 and was replaced by a modern cube-like apartment building.

Very few sources discuss the villa of Herz. Of the few that describe the villa it appears that, unlike the earlier example, Herz opted for a more restrained use of Islamic elements. According to Ormos, “In the photographs we see a modest, basically European-style, eclectic villa displaying some Mamluk elements such as polychrome bands and a minbar-like entrance in addition to elements of Art Nouveau.”\(^79\) This may support the argument that although Herz was one of the biggest advocates of the neo-Mamluk style he choose his house to be a more subtle use of Mamluk elements in strategic positions.

Several apartment buildings in downtown Cairo were built in the neo-Mamluk style; in addition to the ones in Heliopolis they show how the style adapted itself to new building forms. One of these examples was found in the Isma’iliyya district; it was built in the nineteen thirties, on the corner of Gumhuriyya and al-Maliki streets. The façade of the building is very much in the neo-Mamluk style, (fig. 3.10) with a horse-shoe arch framing most of it. However, the innovation in the usage of the arch is the space between the two columns supporting the arch which is used for the balconies with carved balustrades. The top part of the building which coincides with the round part of the arch is adorned with cresting. In between the arch and the cresting there is an open arched balcony. The building retains the use of Mamluk *mushahhar*. The window locations are well thought out and placed in positions that resulted in a geometric pattern; some of them were also decorated with carved stucco. The top floor was adorned with

\(^{79}\) István Ormos, *Maz Herz Pasha*, 403.
a wooden veranda-like structure (fig. 3.11). Throughout the façade there are geometric patterns that highlighted major parts of the building such as the entrance. *Muqarnas* was also used at regular intervals, giving the building a sense of unity.\(^{80}\)

Earlier in Heliopolis there were also apartment buildings that used the neo-Mamluk style in a decorative fashion. They were at times referred to as being in the Baroque Islamic Style;\(^{81}\) however, the Heliopolis Company apartment buildings are largely decorated in the neo-Mamluk style. The architect, Ernest Jaspar, was able to create a harmonious cluster of buildings exhibiting classical Mamluk revival style. Like the prior example the buildings show how the revival style was adopted while the living needs of the time were respected. Most of the building complexes were no more than three stories high, sometimes two stories, with one side of the street arcaded and the other left bare (figs. 3.12-3.14).

The exterior decoration included arches on several levels. The first level was for the promenade on the street level which had shops as well as the entrances for the buildings. The second level of arches was for the first level of apartments. This second level had carved balustrades with geometric patterns. The capitals of the columns supporting the arcade were also highly decorated, but not in typical neo-Mamluk motifs. It is clear that there was a combination of different styles, with some floral elements intertwining with geometric ones (fig. 3.13). On the corners of the capitals stalactites are found, in addition to a Mamluk star in the part from which the arch springs after the column. The Heliopolis building is a good example of the typical neo-Mamluk decorative style is the headquarters of the Heliopolis

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\(^{80}\) Sharaby, “*Mabna Sakani bi-Qahirat Isma‘il Pasha*”, 15.

\(^{81}\) Sakr, *Early Twentieth Century Islamic Architecture*, 63.
Company (fig. 3.15). The headquarters has a tower-like structure that resembles a minaret to a great extent. At the top of the tower there is a dome with a high drum with windows. The windows are decorated with stucco grills. There are crenellations at the intersection of the dome with the rest of the tower. Beneath the dome area, there is a decorative band that goes around the tower, and engaged columns on the corners. There is a set of horseshoe windows beneath the band.

The following section will deal with the declining phase of the revived style. There are several reasons for this decline; the most plausible argument is political. Egypt underwent a coup in 1952 and architecture was subsequently greatly affected. The leader of the coup was Gamal Abdel Nasser, who was radical in most of his actions. He forced “radical transformations in the country through equality in social rights and justice among classes, through the lessening of the disparity between poor and wealthy, through the promotion of free education and equal opportunity, and through the gathering together of the Arab states in pan-nationalism and unity.”82 One of his main goals was national liberation; this was achieved not only by gaining independence from the British but by fighting imperialism in all its forms, which included politics and social affairs as well as architecture. He was able to nationalize the Suez Canal and building of the High Dam at Aswan. However, he needed more than the nationalization of assets to gain the unquestioned support of the majority of the population. He used many means; political, social, cultural, academic and even artistic. He rallied against anything that was imported and linked it to the imperialist powers. His rejection included much that the previous ruling power installed in society; this included both the family of Mohammad ‘Ali as well as the Europeans who lived in Egypt and contributed in any way to the society and

82 Lesley Lababidi, *Cairo’s Street Stories*, 107
culture. Similar to the time of Mohammad ‘Ali, Nasser took decisive action to erase the past; he denounced titles such as bey and pasha and discouraged wearing the tarboosh (fez). Furthermore, many street names were changed to commemorate important incidents after 1952.83

Nasser supported the growth of the city and new suburbs with minimal urban planning. The city expanded towards the western bank of the Nile, and suburbs like Dokki, Mohandessin, Agouza and Imbaba started to spring up. With the diminished social gap, the population of greater Cairo increased dramatically and these new suburbs expanded to accommodate immigrants from the countryside. The buildings had very few artistic features and aesthetic appeal. With that came the rapid decline of the use of the neo-Mamluk style as a form of decoration. Its use was henceforth reserved for religious buildings. The style was rejected on several bases, since it was extensively used and introduced by Europeans and because it linked the culture to an earlier ruling dynasty that embodied many of the factors that the coup and Nasser himself aspired to eradicate.

Nasser strengthened his relationship with the Soviets in the political and ideological spheres; their influence was also noticeable in other segments of social life. Soviet-like buildings with minimal decoration and practical utilization of the space started to increase.

The first building built in the Soviet style pre-Nasser is the Mogamma building located in Tahrir square. It was a gift to the Egyptian people at the height of the Cold War (1950) (figs.3.18-3.19). If one takes a close look at the building minor neo-Mamluk details are evident, yet the building as a whole is stolid and crams in as many offices into its space as

83Ibid,116.
possible rather than focusing on the aesthetic appeal. This is most obvious when it comes to the internal division of the building where every floor is occupied by no less than 25 offices, with very little space for practical comfort of the people who came from outside to use the building. “That massive curve, like the beginning of an embrace; you step into it and into a different, darker universe: a huge lobby funnels upwards into a massive galleried tunnel soaring up eleven floors and swirling with solid noise, its air heavy with thousands upon thousands of forms and applications and stories and desks and chairs and paper clips and complaints and carbon paper and filing cabinets and cupboards, crowds of people are in a permanent stampede crossing and recrossing the giant lobby trying to find the right staircase the right corridor the right lift.”

Very basic neo-Mamluk details can be found on the capitals of the columns at the entrance of the buildings as well as on the lintels of the windows.

After 1952 the approach to architecture in Egypt evolved and intensified in the Soviet model. For example in Nasr City (fig. 3.17) the buildings are reduced to mere blocks. The streets are divided in a grid with no imagination or space for green and leisure areas. Unlike earlier parts of the city that were planned with wide streets where the needs of the people were taken into consideration, the new suburbs were built in a manner that crowded buildings into the space and utilized very basic urban planning. An example is the TV and radio building, Maspero (fig. 3.16), built in the late 1950s which clearly shows the Nasserist approach to architecture where everything is condensed in order to avoid any waste of space with very little attention to the aesthetics of the building. Even when Cairo was expanded in the earlier

84 Soueif, Cairo: My City, Our Revolution, 162.
decades and the medieval city and the modern City of Khedive Isma‘il intersected at Azbakiyya, public spaces for the people were provided.

To sum up, the neo-Mamluk style was rejected as the national style once the definition of nationalism changed with the circumstances of the historical period. In the eyes of the rulers it embodied what they rejected in their past and what they strove to eradicate from society. They didn’t look at the style from an aesthetic point of view but rather adopted a political stance against it and judged it accordingly. However, they permitted it for religious use.
Chapter Four: Early Examples (Late 19th- early 20th century)

In this chapter the buildings that will be addressed will highlight the use of the neo-Mamluk style in secular buildings between 1890 -1920. The list includes the building of the Ministry of Endowment (Awqaf) in downtown Cairo, the private palace of Sultan Husayn in Heliopolis and the palace of Amr Ibrahim in Zamalek. These buildings were chosen from among a number of other contemporary examples because they were built over a relatively long span of time and they exemplify various functions and uses of the neo-Mamluk style. It will also be argued that the use of the neo-Mamluk style at the time was in a manner of simple application of the style with no new additions or innovations to the decorative motifs.

The Ministry of Awqaf

Construction of this building began in 1898 and went through three different phases of construction until it was finished in 1921. The building occupies a whole block and overlooks two main streets; Sharif Pasha and Huda Sha'rawi. The architect credited for the designs of the three phases is Mahmud Pasha Fahmi, one of the earliest Egyptian architects who excelled in the field of revival architecture. The four facades of the building are adorned with recessed rectangular panels crowned with several layers of stalactites. The building as a whole is built in mushahhar stonework.

As was often seen in Mamluk architecture, it has several projecting portals. The main one has a pointed horseshoe arch with ablqaq masonry. The two stories of the portal are divided by a horizontal balustrade that is decorated with geometric patterns. The principal arch of the portal
has two circular engaged columns, which are decorated with intertwining geometric patterns, and has a capital adorned with stalactites (fig. 4.1-4.2). The central and largest portal has a pointed horseshoe arch supported on two engaged columns topped with stalactite capitals. On the top part of the portal is a pediment that is capped with three layers of stalactites. Running along the top of the building are trefoil crenellations.85

There is detailed vegetal decoration in the spandrels of the arches and circular bands of inscription bearing the name of Khedive ‘Abbas Hilmi II, the ruler when the building was inaugurated. The foundation inscription is found beneath the horizontal balustrade. Typical of the Mamluk architecture is the Qalawun set of windows that are found above the doorway in the balcony.86 The balcony is decorated with a pierced stone balustrade. The entrance is framed with a variation of the Mamluk “kurdi” arch (fig. 4.2).

As mentioned earlier the building went through three different phases of construction. The first phase dated to 1898 and included the main portal along with the façade that has the secondary portal. The secondary portal is flanked with recesses, each with two rectangular windows on two levels and adorned with a hood formed of three tiers of stalactites (fig. 4.3-4.4). A band decorated with geometrical and vegetal decoration is located between the two levels of windows; the band is also framed with two parallel mouldings connected with circles at regular intervals. In between the first and second floors the area is decorated with a rectangular band adorned with a cartouche decorated with vegetal motifs.87

85 Sakr, Early Twentieth Century Islamic Architecture 20.
87 Ibid, 20.
The second phase dating to 1911 consists of the rear façade; it is formed of a central keel-arched recess with a fluted hood and two chamfered edges. As was normal in Mamluk buildings, the overall appearance and symmetry were taken into consideration. Here we find that the central part of this façade, although is not the main one, is higher than the part on either side (fig. 4.5-4.7). This was done in order to balance it with the entrance portal of the middle section. The arched centre is flanked with elongated rectangular recesses crowned with three tiers of stalactites. The recesses have rectangular windows on two different levels.

The last recess to the right is handled differently to accentuate the right corner of the façade. It is approximately double the width of the other recesses of this section and has a different profile due to its chamfered edges. Moreover, the unrecessed verticals attending the recess are wider than those of the other recesses. The last module projects to accentuate the corner block. In this recess, the architect used a variation based on the stalactite theme of the narrower recesses. He also used joggled voussoirs and a small square panel within a rectangular geometric stucco panel to decorate the area between the upper and lower windows. 88

The third and final phase, the left part of the back façade, dates to 1929 (fig. 4.8). It bears great resemblance to the side opposite it; it has a monumental entrance portal, also with recesses on either side. The recesses are decorated with rectangular windows and crowned with stalactites that are divided by a small semi-domed niche. The entrance is also slightly projecting, with a circular arch supported on columns decorated with a chevron design. The hood of the arch is decorated with recesses and the centre has a geometric pattern with bulbous

88ibid, 21.
sections (fig. 4.8). As found on the opposite side of the building parallel to this one, there are windows on two levels, and below the lower level of windows is a balustrade decorated with a geometric star. The general decoration is very similar to the parallel side of the building which shows that even though the building was finished in three different phases there is general cohesion in its style and appearance.

Although each phase has its own motifs as well as its own width of recesses and types of stalactites, one must perceive them all as one unit because the architect respected definite rules of proportions and a general theme of mushahhar, recesses, the continuous trefoil crenellations, and the horizontal decorative band beneath the crenellations.  

In this example the Mamluk features were used as a prototype with very little change and imagination in their development. However, one must consider the fact that the building was erected at the early stages of the revival of the style. Later on we will see how the revived style evolved while retaining the essence of Mamluk architecture and decorative motifs.

**Sultan Husayn Palace**

The second example is the palace of an Egyptian Sultan who reigned from 1914 to 1917. It was built in 1908 before he became Sultan. The palace is known as the Sultana palace, named after Sultan Husayn’s wife Malak, or as the Sultan Husayn palace. It is located in Heliopolis overlooking Orouba Street. Heliopolis at the time when the palace was built was still a developing suburb.  

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89 Ibid, 22.
90 According to Samir Raafat the palace was built as a gift to Prince Husayn at the time because he was an intermediate connection between Baron Empain and the Khedive. (Personal Communication)
planned by the Belgium engineer Edouard Empain.91 His work with the tramway system facilitated the growth of the city to a very large extent. The architect behind the planning and the development of the style was Ernest Jaspar who was invited by Empain to develop his project:

“I want to build a city here. It will be called Heliopolis, a city of the sun… I want it magnificent. I wish that the architecture will conform to the tradition of this country. I am looking for a specialist of Islamic art. You like the mosques, you are an architect; would you submit a concept design?”92

Empain got the approval of the Khedival court and the British and began his project. The legal documents were signed by his Excellency Nubar Pasha, a renowned member of the Khedival court as well as a palace owner in the new suburb. Empain choose what is referred to as the traditional style to build the city and by 1906 the Heliopolis Oases Company was founded and work was under progress. As much as Empain loved and respected the traditional building style of Cairo he opted for a different style for his own palace. Empain’s palace was built in the Hindu tradition. However, just a few meters away were the palaces of Nubar Pasha,93 Sultan Husayn and Ibrahim Hilmi a member of the royal family,94 all built in the traditional style that Empain was advocating (fig. 4.9).

The palace of Sultan Husayn has a monumental entrance and is rich in decorative elements (fig. 4.10). It has a domed tower, resembling a large minaret that gives the impression

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92 Dobrowolska, Heliopolis, 37.
93 Currently used by the Military as offices.
94 Currently incorporated in the building complex of the Military Intelligence.
that it’s a mosque. In 1998 the building was registered as a historic monument. It is currently occupied by a secondary school for girls.

The palace is composed of two floors and has around forty rooms. The first floor was occupied by the reception halls and formal guest rooms. Although the building possessed a neo-Mamluk appearance on the outside it was quite Europeanized on the interior (Plan 4.1). Some sources mention that in some halls there were gilded panels which had naturalistic scenes and human figures.95 Other halls had columns and painted ceilings with landscape figural. The adjacent hall had a marble statue of a woman and was also decorated with naturalistic scenery. The only hall that possessed any kind of neo-Mamluk touches on the interior was the domed hall. It echoed the neo-Mamluk appearance of the exterior in the sense that the dome (fig. 4.11) was supported on several tiers of stalactites. The stairs to the second floor were decorated with a pierced balustrade pierced with arabesques (similar to that found on the exterior balcony as seen in fig. 4.14. The second floor was most probably the private quarters of the house. The rooms there also had a European feel to them and were decorated with paintings and mirrors.

The neo-Mamluk features on the exterior (fig. 4.12) include trefoil crenellations that run along the top part of the building. The main entrance portal has a triple arched passage (fig. 4.10). On either side of the main entrance is a tower-like structure. One has the dome and the other is plain; unlike the rest of the building it has a stepped cresting (fig. 4.10).

The side view of the palace that overlooked the palace of Baron Emepin had a large horse-shoe arch with geometrically decorated spandrels. The sides are decorated with chamfered

corners in the form of three quarters of a dome inlaid with several tiers of stalactites. The whole façade is also crowned with three layers of stalactites and a pierced stone balustrade (fig. 4.13).

The rear façade\textsuperscript{96} clearly shows the two storeys of the palace. The lower floor has a projecting balcony with keel arches that is adorned with a pierced balustrade. The upper storey is decorated with five rectangular windows crowned with a semi-dome (fig. 4.14). The whole set of windows is connected with two parallel moldings knotted at regular intervals. In the spandrels that are formed by these knots there is a repeated arabesque pattern. The windows are supported on two plain engaged columns; between the windows is a geometric design that triples on either side of the five windows as a whole section. Above this section are trefoil crenellations (fig. 4.15).

On either side of the projected section is a set of windows very similar to the one decorated above. The division between the windows above the projected section and the other set is a small stalactite detail. Above these windows is a semi-circular arch that is outlined with the parallel knotted moldings mentioned earlier. Above this whole section of the palace are the remains of stepped crenellations that can be seen on other sections of the palace (fig. 4.14).

A very minor shift in the style can be found in this example when compared to the examples addressed earlier. This can be traced in the manner in which the revived decorations were used. The decorative elements are true to the revived style, yet their application is a slight move towards addressing the architectural plan of the palace and accommodating the features accordingly. Because the plan of the building was very European the external

\textsuperscript{96} Currently it overlooks a mosque named after the patron of the Palace.
decoration and some of the architectural features had to be applied differently in order to accommodate the plan (plan. 4.1). This is noticeable in the main façade, which had the typical concept of projection, yet it was not a carbon copy of the traditional projection. As seen in fig. 4.10 it has a balcony projection that highlighted the entrance rather than a façade projection. Furthermore, the building has a dome but not in the center of the building; it is a domed corner tower thus applying a decorative and architectural feature non-traditional manner.

**Palace of Amr Ibrahim**

The Palace was built in the early 1920’s by Prince Amr Ibrahim in the new suburb of Zamalek. It is located a few meters away from the Gezira Palace built by Khedive Isma’il on the eve of the opening of the Suez canal. It is currently located on Zakariya Rizk Street and al-Gezira Street. The palace was built on a spacious plot of land and had a modestly sized garden.

The building is composed of two floors and a basement which was originally used for the servants and the kitchen. The first or ground floor was occupied by the formal reception rooms and dining halls. The second floor was the private quarters of the house and included the bedrooms.

The main entrance has marble steps leading to a covered arched projecting passage and the main portal. The façade is decorated in familiar Mamluk fashion with knotted molding and recessed niches with a stalactite hood on either side of the covered area (fig. 4.16). On either side of the entrance section is a Qalawun set of windows, crowned with a line of stalactites. On

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97 The palace/museum is currently being renovated thus a visit was not allowed. There are many features that should have been addressed but due to the circumstances I wasn’t able to include them because of the lack of access.
top of the entrance and running along all of the top part of the palace is trefoil cresting (fig. 4.17).

Inside the entrance hall, a fountain, whose centre is reflected in the ceiling by a dome with a high drum, ribbed on the exterior (fig. 4.18). The interior of the dome is decorated with floral and geometric patterns. The walls on the interior once\(^9\) had a marble dado (fig. 4.19); some of the rooms retain this feature. At the end of this hall is a tiled chimney (fig. 4.19). Around the upper level of the hall runs a balcony with a balustrade pierced with geometric patterns. The interior was divided in modern fashion with a few Mamluk features including the marble floors with geometric patterns and the ceilings adorned with woodwork; in some areas it had Quranic inscriptions and in other inscriptions with the name of the patron of the palace (fig. 4.20).\(^9\)

After the 1952 coup the palace was confiscated from its owners and turned into a youth centre for the needy. However, in 1970 the Mohammad Mahmoud Khalil\(^1\) collection was displayed in the palace at the order of President Sadat. Under Mubarak the palace was turned into the Ceramics Museum, as it remains today. The basement is now used as a gallery for the display of various modern art and architectural works.

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\(^9\) The building is currently the Gezira Ceramics Museum. It has been much altered, especially on the interior, to fit the current purpose as well as earlier ones.


\(^1\) Mohammad Khalil (1877-1953) was an important figure in Egyptian society, a sculptor. One of his most famous works is the statue of *Nahdat Masr*.
Summary

The neo-Mamluk style was applied in these buildings for simple decorative and architectural features, with little in the way of innovation. The examples show that the decoration and architectural features that were used were in accordance with the needs and fashion at the time, with neo-Mamluk elements being applied faithfully, and almost exclusively, on the exterior, while the interiors were divided according to the needs of the modern functions of the building. The use of the decorative elements in the previous examples was very close to the original, including the forms of the motifs their location on the building and in some examples the technique in which they were manufactured. In the next chapter we will see how the style was able to evolve from being a typical Mamluk form into a more abstract version of it.
Chapter Five: Evolution and Continuity

As seen in the earlier chapter, the buildings that were using the neo-Mamluk style adopted it in a very consistent manner and did not changing the decorative forms into modern versions. However, as time progressed the neo-Mamluk style became infused with more modern forms.

Mashyakhat al-Azhar (early 1990’s)

Mashyakhat al-Azhar (fig. 5.1) is the headquarters for the Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar (currently Sheikh Ahmad al-Tayyibi) and various offices of the Azhar religious institution. Built in the early 1990s to replace the old headquarters on al-Azhar Street opposite the mosque of al-Husyan and al-Azhar University campus, the new headquarters was located on what was al-Darasa dumpsite similarly to that of al-Azhar Park. It currently overlooks Salah Salim Street and a section of the Northern Cemetery. The building possesses many neo-Mamluk features on the exterior but once inside it is very plain. The neo-Mamluk style was chosen perhaps in order to echo the old headquarters101 in style.

From a close perspective the building looks like a very awkward cube. However, according to several Sheikhs and staff members102 of the institution the idea behind it is to resemble an open book with a mosque projecting from it. The Azhar institution portrays itself not only as a mosque but also a university.

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101 Was built in the 1930’s and had many neo-decorative features. It is currently used as an office building by various departments under the umbrella of the Mashyakha.
102 Personal Communication.
The section of the building that represents the mosque is a projecting octagon with keel arches on each side supported on two columns with stalactite capitals (fig. 5.3). The spandrels of the arches are decorated with radiating lines resembling the sun. The keel arches of octagon are filled with mashrabiyya grills outlined with blue mosaic. There is a very small line of muqarnas beneath the tiled section of the arch (fig. 5.4).

The corners are chamfered with small arched niches (fig. 5.5). They have ribbed hoods supported on two columns; the section beneath the hood is decorated with an interlacing geometric pattern. There is also a geometric pattern that looks like a belt that holds the building together. The top of the building has what resembles chimney crenellations although they are not in a continuous line (fig. 5.2). There is a dome in the centre of the building which is only visible from a distant view. It has a chevron design on the exterior (fig. 5.8).

The section of the building that represents the open book and thus the university aspect of al-Azhar institution is relatively plain compared to the mosque section (fig. 5.6). The top part also has a line of interrupted chimney crenellations (fig. 5.1). The corners of the building are chamfered but are left bare with no decoration. An intertwining molding forming a cartouche frames the top part of the building. A small geometric design beneath the cartouche is located on the section of the building that resembles the University where the section of the mosque interlocks with the former. The rest of the facades are decorated with windows and mashrabiyya grills. The division of the windows lacks symmetry; some of them are in the form of keel arches, others are rectangular. They are topped with shallow stalactites. The whole building including the “mosque” section was built with alternating bands of stone in order to give a mushahhar effect, but in lighter hues.

The ashraf (nobles, singular: sharif) are those Egyptians who can claim that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is their ancestor through his grandsons al-Hasan and al-Husayn. A member of it is called a Sharif or Sayyid (Master). They were organized in a guild (Niqbat al-Ashraf) headed by a Naqib al-Ashraf. It is an institution that is found all over the Muslim world and sustained by its members.\footnote{http://alashraaf.tripod.com/}

The building was erected in 2003-2004 by the collective effort of the members of the syndicate; their earlier headquarters were in an apartment in Zamalek. The building is located on Salah Salim adjacent to Mashyakhat al-Azhar.

The exterior is decorated using the mushahhar technique with very little decoration apart from around the entrance area (fig. 5.9). The entrance is projecting with two indented sections on either side, surrounded with two more projecting sections. On either side of the door is a ribbed hood with stalactite elements on the lower part (fig.5.11). The first line of stalactites is plain and painted, the second one is carved with floral and geometric patterns. The stalactites continue to frame the entrance until it reaches the other side where it meets another identical hood.

On the secondary projecting side are roundels typical of the Mamluk period (fig. 5.10). In Mamluk times they usually held the name of the sultan and his titles, here they give the name of the institution. Above that there is a similar roundel with geometric patterns in the centre.

The rest of the building façades are decorated with windows with mashrabiyya elements. On each façade the geometric roundels are repeated. In the centre of the building there is a
dome (fig. 5.12) with windows in the drum area. The dome is covered in green\textsuperscript{104} tiles. The crenellations are unusual; instead of being perpendicular they project horizontally (fig. 5.13) from the top of the building. Similarly to the prior building they are not in a continuous line but in certain sections only.

As seen in the above examples the elements of the neo-Mamluk style were used in a manner that is more discreet than the examples addressed in chapter three. The main concept of the building shows the essence of the neo-Mamluk style and the decorative aspects clearly echo it, but it was done in a modern way. The 	extit{mushahhar} appearance of the building clearly partakes of the neo-Mamluk style and so does the emblem on the syndicate. The domes also are an echo of neo-Mamluk style, the chevron design of the Mashyakha’s dome being seen in Mamluk examples such as the mausoleum of Tarabay at Bab al-Wazir and the funerary khanqah of Faraj ibn Barquq; the green dome was seen in al-Nasir Muhammad’s mosque in the citadel. The geometric pattern that decorates the facades of the syndicate are similar to the ones found at the entrance of Sultan Hasan and at the wikala of Qaytbay behind al-Azhar. Also the epigraphic roundel with the syndicate’s name can be found, for example, on the entrance of the Wakalat al-Ghuri. Thus, although the building does not apply the motifs and decoration in the same exact manner as the Mamluk style it adapted the neo-Mamluk style in a more modern way.

\textsuperscript{104} The green color here is symbolic because it was the chosen color of the Prophet, as well as the color of the dome at the Prophet’s mosque in Madina.
The following examples are another step in the evolution of the style and are even more abstract than the ones addressed earlier. However, the style no longer represents a national identity at this stage. The national identity represented by the neo-Mamluk style was established at an earlier point in the revival timeline, but by now the style is well established and no longer needs to fight for a place as an Egyptian identity. The following buildings are good examples of how modern architecture was fused with the revived style and other Islamic styles for a more modern representation.

**Azhar Park (1990-2005)**

The Azhar Park was a project between the Cairo governorate and the AKTC\(^{105}\); it is located below the Muqattam Hills (fig. 5.14), on the peripheries of both Historic Cairo and the Mamluk Northern Cemetery. It had been a rubbish dump for a very long time, from the Fatimid period onwards. Waste and garbage piled up and formed a huge mass that swallowed the remains of the Ayyubid wall that separated the inhabited part of the city from the dump. Finally an agreement was reached between the Cairo governorate and the AKTC that the location for the garden would be the Darasa site. However, there were some reservations on behalf of the governorate, concerning the inability to move the drinking water tanks for the city that were built there. The project was delayed for a couple of years but the tanks were eventually incorporated in the plan of the park.

Due to the close proximity between the park and the Ayyubid wall, excavations were done and the wall as a monument was incorporated in the bigger plan of the park. Furthermore, the AKTC took over the responsibility for restoration of historical buildings in the area of al-Darb

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\(^{105}\) Agha Khan Trust for Culture.
al Ahmar. The Mamluk features in the plan (plan. 5.1) of the park are more than just decorative elements. “A central feature of the park’s landscape is the ‘spine’ formed by the water channel (fig. 5.15) and accompanying walkways starting at the northern wall above the central water tank and pointing towards the Citadel in the distance.”¹⁰⁶ The way in which the water element is introduced in the park resembles the way water fountains were used in Mamluk architecture. As seen in the Maristan of Qalawun with the water channel running across the hospital courtyard and extending from one iwan to the one opposite, there is a clear link between the way the water channel in the park echoes the way in which water was used in earlier Mamluk buildings.

The central axis of the park is anchored at each end by the two main landmarks: the hilltop restaurant at the northern end and the lakeside pavilion at the southern. The architectural language of the two buildings reflects the desire to maintain a creative relationship with the built environment of Old Cairo.¹⁰⁷

The Hilltop restaurant (fig. 5.16) has more direct neo-Mamluk and some Fatimid and Ottoman features in its layout and design. The architects, Rami el-Dahan and Soheir Farid are both Egyptian and they were able to synthesize the styles of these periods. The building has an almost symmetrical layout (plan. 5.2), with a central north/south axis that cuts through a palm tree court. It has a shaded sitting area (fig. 5.17) that leads to a terrace overlooking a garden and a water channel. The second story of the building also has many features of neo-Mamluk features (plan. 5.3). The balcony (fig. 5.18) has a slight projection and is arched with wooden

¹⁰⁶ Bianca, The Projects, 48.
¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 48.
balustrades. On the side that overlooks the rest of the park there are three arches, and on the side that overlooks medieval Cairo there are two arches. The inner space of the balcony is divided into two recessed seating areas with minor decorative details. There are recessed panels on either side of the seating which are decorated with hanging ornaments. The rear of the seating area has three arched windows topped with semicircular openings that form a pyramid-like form. Furthermore, this section of the building clearly resembles a typical Mamluk *sabil-kuttab*, with the upper section slightly projecting from the rest of the building. The Ottoman influence is subtle in the right section of the building, presenting itself in the curved line of the roof (fig. 5.17). This echoes Ottoman buildings such as the ablutions fountain found in Sokollu Mehmet Pasha complex at Luleburgaz and the roof of the mosque of Izzet Pasha at Safranbolu.108

Other Neo-Mamluk features of the space include the open abstract for of a lantern ceiling (fig. 5.20) at the entrance to the restaurant from the rear side that has some resemblance to Mamluk ones such as the funerary mosque of Qaytbay in the Northern Cemetery, the funerary complex of Sultan al-Ghuri and Azbak al-Yusufi aound al Saliba street. This entrance to the restaurant consists of a triple arch (fig. 5.21) leading to the space covered with the lantern ceiling. In the centre beneath the lantern ceiling is a marble fountain (fig. 5.22). On either side of the fountain is an entrance leading to the second floor. The entrance façade (fig. 5.19) has two sets of windows on two levels with a projecting centre, typical of Mamluk architecture. The projecting section of the façade is decorated in a different manner than the

typical Mamluk facade; it lacks marble elements; however, it is decorated with a *mashrabiyya* window with geometric designs and arabesque woodwork.

The second restaurant known as the Lakeside Café and Pavilion (fig. 5.23) has a few Mamluk touches but the plan (plan. 5.4) can be associated more with the Iranian four-iwan plan, although it is one that was also used in Cairene architecture, especially in the Mamluk period. This has been interpreted in a different way by Bianca: “On the east side of the complex, the pavilions enclose a square palm court with a central fountain and crossing water channels, inspired by the classical Islamic gardens.”¹⁰⁹ There are many wooden screens that echo the *mashrabiyya* work. The general theme of the space is a fusion of Islamic architectural heritage.

Although the park as a whole does not copy the neo-Mamluk style, it can be considered to be a modern adoption of the style.

**The American University in Cairo’s New Campus (New Cairo)**

The aim of this chapter was to show that through time the use of the neo-Mamluk style evolved into a fusion with modern architectural forms. In simpler words the AUC new campus reflects, to a certain degree, revived features not necessarily purely neo-Mamluk but rather in a conceptual Mamluk style. AUC acquired the land for the project since the mid 1990s, however the project started in 2001 and the campus was ready for use by mid-2008.

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There were many architectural firms, local and international, hired to carry out the task of designing the new campus. This included an American firm, Sasaki Associates and an Egyptian one, Abdel Halim Community Development Collaborative. This was to avoid the limited vision of one firm over the new buildings. “The architects chose to include strong references to AUC Tahrir Square in the form and color of entrance gates and arches in New Cairo. Traditional Arabic “mashrabiya [wooden window screens] for privacy and sun-protection, malkafs [wind catchers] on roofs to capture prevailing winds and circulate fresh air into buildings, and shukshaykhas [vented domes] to remove hot air appeared in modern expression at the new campus, too,” said library architect Stephen Johnson (fig. 5.27).  

The revived style can be noticed in several sections of the new campus. First is the choice of the color palette of the exterior of the buildings; the stone used to cover up the exterior of the buildings was brought from one mountain quarry in Kom Ombo north of Aswan. Apart from the fact that it creates a unity of material for the central-campus building walls, the bi-colored stone echoes both the neo-Mamluk style and the AUC downtown campus. Similarly, even though they weren’t all built by the same firm the stone dressing of the exterior of all of the buildings is done using this color palette.

The green spaces on the new campus reflect the general theme found in Mamluk water usage in the sense of design and water flow. At the main entrance to the campus grounds (fig. 5.24), a water channel runs parallel to the main spine of the campus. The water channel (fig. 5.25) has different fountain-like elements, for aesthetic as well as functional purposes. As mentioned above in the Azhar park example, the water channels that are found at AUC are similar in function as well as design to earlier Mamluk examples, and are also fused with the

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Andalusian garden tradition. The latter is reflected in the channel behind the main gate; on either side of the water channel fruit trees and fragrant plants are grown, and by the jets that spurt vertically into the central channel from each side. Closer to mainstream Mamluk style is the waterfall at the end of the water channel close by the food court, reminiscent of the shadirwans of Mamluk palaces (fig. 5.29). The water channel is used for aesthetic reasons as well as the practical use of the water element to cool the open space of the campus. Furthermore, throughout the campus grounds, there are several courtyard and open plazas that help in maintaining a cool breeze running through the campus.

The main portal (fig. 5.24) is slightly projecting in the Mamluk style. Above the portal is what is supposed to be the transitional zone of a dome. However, being an abstract implementation of the style, the dome is missing and is left for the imagination of the visitor (fig. 5.26). In this example the style reached a level of fusion that allowed it to borrow from other architectural heritages; the zone of transition here has clear similarity to that of the dome of the Great Mosque of Cordoba.

The mashrabiya-like screens that are located around the library building perform two functions. They provide shade for the interior of the library building by screening out the sun, at the same time allowing natural light to fill the space (fig. 5.28).

The AUC buildings show how the Mamluk architectural and decorative elements were taken and used in an abstract manner. The neo-Mamluk elements include the water channel that runs through campus and the abstract mashrabiyya grills, which do not look much like mashrabiyyas but perform the same function nonetheless. The Azhar Park is another good
example of how the style can be reminiscent of the original yet be evolutionary. The buildings found in the park as discussed earlier show how the style was able to fuse modern day requirements with the original elements of Mamluk architecture. The water channel that runs along the spine of the park is reminiscent of Mamluk architecture, yet the way it was designed and carried out shows how well it fits in contemporary architecture.
Chapter Six: Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to trace the evolution of the neo-Mamluk style and the developments it underwent from the beginning until the mature stage that it presents itself in nowadays. This was done through addressing a number of examples, highlighting and comparing the features that exhibit the change that it went through. The thesis also argued that the neo-Mamluk style is the style that represents the Islamic identity of Egypt. Even though Mamluk rule was not the last period of Islamic dynastic rule, it was the longest and the most influential when it comes to architecture and culture. Egypt in the nineteenth century lacked a coherent architectural identity. Several attempts were made to use one of its historical periods as the face of the nation, yet they never lasted. On rare occasions the Pharaonic heritage asserted itself yet, it didn’t appeal to the larger segment of society. The Coptic and Roman styles also didn’t last. The Islamic rule being the last pre-modern reign was able to survive and overcome the challenges it faced. As seen earlier an attempt to revive the Pharaonic heritage was done at the mausoleum of Saad Zaghloul, yet it wasn’t utilized again until early 21st century with the Constitutional Court on the Maadi Corniche. There was also at attempt to intertwine the Coptic and Islamic heritage with the façade of the Coptic Museum but this also wasn’t very long lasting.

The first section of the chapter argued that the neo-Mamluk style was the most representative style of the Egyptian Islamic identity. It was followed by a discussion of the evolution of the style from its early start until it reached the stage of being an abstract implementation.
Mamluk rule was over with the Ottoman conquest but it was never totally uprooted from society. Ottoman culture was only influential in the upper section of society where there was a lot of contact with the ruling class, yet the middle and lower factions of society clung dearly to the Mamluk roots and culture. The peasant class was only affected by the regulations and laws because they had a deeply rooted that was rarely affected by the changes or imports of values. Thus it could be said that because Mamluk rule was one of the longest surviving dynastic periods in Egyptian history, its culture and value system, even though partially imported, was one of the most influential on the Egyptian culture.

Mamluk art and architecture did not witness a period of decline; and until 1517 Mamluk buildings continued to be of the best quality with innovative decoration. Many Ottoman governors and local officials opted for the Mamluk style with very little Ottoman touches, e.g. the Mosques of Mustafa Shurbagi Mirza (1698) and ‘Uthman Katkuda (1734) whose only Ottoman features are ceramic tiles and the pencil-shaped minaret.¹¹¹

The royal family in the nineteenth century had an ambivalent relationship with the Mamluk Revival style. It was used for both religious and secular structures, such as the Mosque of al-Rifa‘i, the Museum of Arab Art, the Khedival library and the Ministry of al-Awqaf. Yet they opted for European-influenced buildings when it came to their domestic architecture, for example Abdeen Palace and Khedive Isma‘il’s “Paris along the Nile project”. Also, when buildings were erected to honor the memory of members of Ahl al-Bayt and

¹¹¹According to Sakr, Early Twentieth Century Islamic Architecture,5. “as a general rule, the Ottoman conquest did not disturb the evolution of Cairene architecture. The pencil-like minarets of the Ottoman period are the striking exception to the general rule that the monumental traditions of the Mamluk period held firm through the Ottoman period”
members of the Prophet’s family, the Mamluk style was used, for example the mosques of al-
Sayyida Aisha, Sayyida Nafeesa and al-Sayyida Zaynab.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the neo-Mamluk style was used as a political and
nationalistic statement; for example, an important member of the political and social scene
such as Huda Sha’rawi112 opted for a neo-Mamluk private villa (fig. 2.8) located in the new
Isma‘iliya quarter of Cairo. As the city grew and expansions took place even foreign architects
looked towards the neo-Mamluk heritage during the nationalist movement. For example Baron
Empain developed the new city of Heliopolis based on the style. In the early 1990s al-Azhar
opted for an abstract idea of the revived style to represent its administration. The American
University in Cairo’s new campus stayed true to its old campus and its heritage by designing
the new campus was built in an abstract manner of the revived style.

Based on the points addressed above it could be safe to say that to a large extent the
neo-Mamluk style is both the most representative style of the Islamic period of rule in Egypt
and the most representative of Islam. Some other Arab nations even opted for the abstract
revived style when building their embassies, such as the Sultanate of Oman in Zamalek, the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Giza, and the State of Qatar in Mohandessien. This shows that
how widely the style is accepted and representative of Islam as well as the Egyptian Islamic
identity.

The following section (chapters 4 and 5) dealt with evolution that the style went through
to reach the mature stage. As was seen earlier the first supporters the revival of the Mamluk
style were Europeans who found that it filled an architectural gap. This period was followed by

112 Huda Sha’rawi, a pioneer in the feminist movement in Egypt and a had a lead role in mobilizing the women
during the 1919 revolution.
interest from the ruling class which greatly increased its popularity. The style was very flexible and could be easily used on different types of buildings adapting itself to the shapes and functions of new building types.

When the style was first used it was with a direct application of the decorative motifs, even though the architectural design of the building was not necessarily loyal to Mamluk architecture, e.g. Count Zogheb’s villa. Soon after the style evolved to adopt certain architectural features alongside the decorative features, in the Ministry of Awqaf building with the addition of the projecting portal. Even though both examples were built closely in date the addition of the projecting portal suggests that the architects realized that some Mamluk architectural features could still be retained. The same concept was adopted in the Sultan Husayn palace where a monumental entrance was also incorporated in the general plan, in addition to a dome. Crenellations started to be reused in Sultan Husayn and Sultan Amr Ibrahim palace that were built in the early 1920s. The revived style was slowly adopting architectural features alongside decorative one as seen in the earlier discussion.

The second set of buildings that were studied show major development. There were many buildings erected between the two periods that possess an intermediate style being neither a simple application like the early stages or as abstract as the latter ones. The intermediate phase includes many syndicates and informal youth centers located in downtown Cairo (fig.2.7a-7b).

In the first of the modern examples studied, Mashyakhet al-Azhar, the building was used to portray an abstract concept of what the Azhar institution stands for namely a mosque ad university. The architecture of the building portrays the concept that they were trying to
exhibit. The decorative aspects of the building that are to a great extent a direct application of modernized neo-Mamluk decorative features. The other buildings that were analyzed, the Azhar Park and the AUC new campus, show the evolution that the style went through. It was adopted in a way in which the conventional use of motifs and neo-Mamluk concepts were altered to become abstract and an echo of the original style.

To sum up the neo-Mamluk style evolved in as a faithful and direct application of the original, and then it went through a growth spurt in which it was adapted to the needs and taste of a larger audience. It moved from a level of adopting motifs and decoration to applying architectural concepts no matter what the context is. This would have never been the case if the original style did not resonate with the public. Its flexibility and familiarity allowed for its continuity and for architects to use their imagination and skill to develop it in accordance to the needs of the time.
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\textsuperscript{113} Extracted from, Andre Raymond, \textit{Cairo, City of History}, 81.
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\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{114} Extracted from, Doris Behrens-Abouseif, \textit{Cairo of the Mamluks}, 82.
\end{footnotesize}
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115 Extracted from, http://www.flickr.com/photos/mitopencourseware/2989220619/
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\textsuperscript{116} Extracted from, http://www.triposo.com/poi/N__370299580
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117 Extracted from, http://www.flickr.com/photos/bentaher/4864705908/
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119 Extracted from, http://www.flickr.com/photos/96884693@N00/999636876/
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123 Extracted from, http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docid=ft1w100463&chunk.id=s1.4.9&toc.id=ch4&brand=ucpress
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126 Extracted from, Mohammad al-Asad, *The Mosque of al-Rifa’i in Cairo*, 118.
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\textsuperscript{130} Extracted from, http://members.virtualtourist.com/m/p/m/199d98/
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\textsuperscript{131} Extracted from, http://www.flickr.com/photos/flamingosatu/4722269517/
\textsuperscript{132} Extracted from, http://ocw.mit.edu/courses/architecture/4-615-the-architecture-of-cairo-spring-2002/lecture-notes/lec19/
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\textsuperscript{135} All images are from; Count Zogheb, \textit{Our Home in Cairo}.
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136 All images are from; István Ormos, Maz Herz Pasha.
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137 Images by author
Heliopolis Suburb and the Heliopolis Company Headquarters

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\textsuperscript{140} Image by author.
\textsuperscript{141} Photos from, http://www.egy.com/landmarks/98-12-10.php
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\(^{142}\) Images by author.
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143 Images courtesy of Adham Abuel Enin
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144 All images by author apart of Image number 9.
145 http://www.egy.com/landmarks/
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\textsuperscript{147} http://www.eternalegypt.org/EternalEgyptWebsiteWeb/HomeServlet?ee_website_action_key=action.display.site.details\&language_id=1\&element_id=1033

\textsuperscript{148} Image by author.
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149 http://sobreegipto.com/2008/07/14/el-museo-de-ceramicas-islamicas/

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\textsuperscript{151} All images by author unless stated otherwise.
\textsuperscript{152} Extracted from http://www.panoramio.com/photo/18118779
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153 Extracted from
d4YKo2Ym7M:&imgrefurl=http://everydaytrash.com/2009/03/03/al-azhar-park/&docid=qgsi-
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155 All images by author unless stated otherwise.

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157 Extracted from http://www.flickr.com/photos/24676290@N07/2999795297/
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All images by author unless stated otherwise.
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\textsuperscript{160} Extracted from, Dobrowolska, \textit{Heliopolis}, 133.
Chapter 5 Plans

Plan 5.1 Azhar park plan

Plan 5.2 Hilltop Restaurant ground plan

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161 Extracted from, Rashiti and Sinto, Converting a derelict site, 15-35.
Plan 5.3 Cross section of the Hilltop restaurant
5.4 Lakeside restaurant ground plan