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LES VILLES-PORTS HISTORIQUES DE LA MEDITERRANEE, ET LES  
OPERATIONS URBAINES DU 20<sup>E</sup> SIECLE.

### *Urban Architecture of The Beautiful Époque in Cairo- Egypt*

Urban cairene architecture was overwhelmed by different European styles from the mid of the nineteenth century up until the mid of twentieth century. Cairo witnessed architectural flowering with a variety of styles existing side by side.

Muhammad ‘Ali had been appointed as Ottoman Governor of Egypt on 11 July 1805 by an edict from Ottoman Sultan. During his reign ( 1805-1848) immense projects had been implemented and an industrial revolution began.

One of his major building is Saray Shubra, built 1808 with its unique fountain kiosk built in European and Oriental style.



Saray Shubra

Another phase of the Egyptian modernization began in the era of Khedive Ismail (1863-79) by the foundation of modern Cairo.

When khedive Ismail decided to host his visitors on the occasion of the inauguration of Suez Canal, he invited Barillet– Deschamps, the designer of Bois de Boulogne and horticulturist the Delcheval to design the Azbakiyya garden; the garden was furnished with restaurant and tea rooms, Chinese pavilion, a theatre and shops.

From the end of the nineteenth century up until the mid of twentieth century Cairo witnessed an architectural flowering with a variety of styles existing side by side: Neo baroque, Neo classic, Neo Renaissance, Gothic Revival, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Neo-Islamic and Neo-pharaonic revival. Altogether produced an unique ensemble of elegant buildings.

Some years later, eclectic Pharaonic motives were incorporated in the design of the buildings facades.

“ There was a time not long ago, when Europeans and Americans came to sunny and glamorous Cairo to escape their dreary northern cites; Cairo where electric trams;

needed tree-lined boulevards linking splendid mansions, hotels, arcades, bright-lit theatres and pleasure park”.

“Cairo, whose silky cotton and its economy attracted merchants, speculators, artisans, adventures and landless Italian peasants to build a new city. It was time when the corner grocer was Greek , the mechanic Italian, the confectioner Austrian, the pharmacist English, the hotelier Swiss and the department store owner Jewish. In Cairo’s headiest days the wealthy of many nations danced at dinner parties in flamboyant villas, and bet on horse races at exclusive sporting clubs”

In late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the façade’s formation with a mixture of European and Islamic architectural vocabulary characterized the architecture of the Arab World. The interest of the surface decoration could be a recourse not only to the Art Nouveau movement but also to the statement of some foreign architects such has been mentioned by Scott (1811-78 A.D.):“the basic objective of architecture is the decoration of the building mass” & also the statement of Ruskin (1819-1900 A.D):“*The building decoration is the most important part of the architecture*”.

Let us hope, to have a conciliation between the architecture which is the history and memory of the nation and the community to bring the Buildings and community to live together again in a peaceful and harmonious way, integrated with each other so that the sun can shine again on Cairo, the Mother of the World as it was called by Ibn Khaldun the great historian of the medieval period.