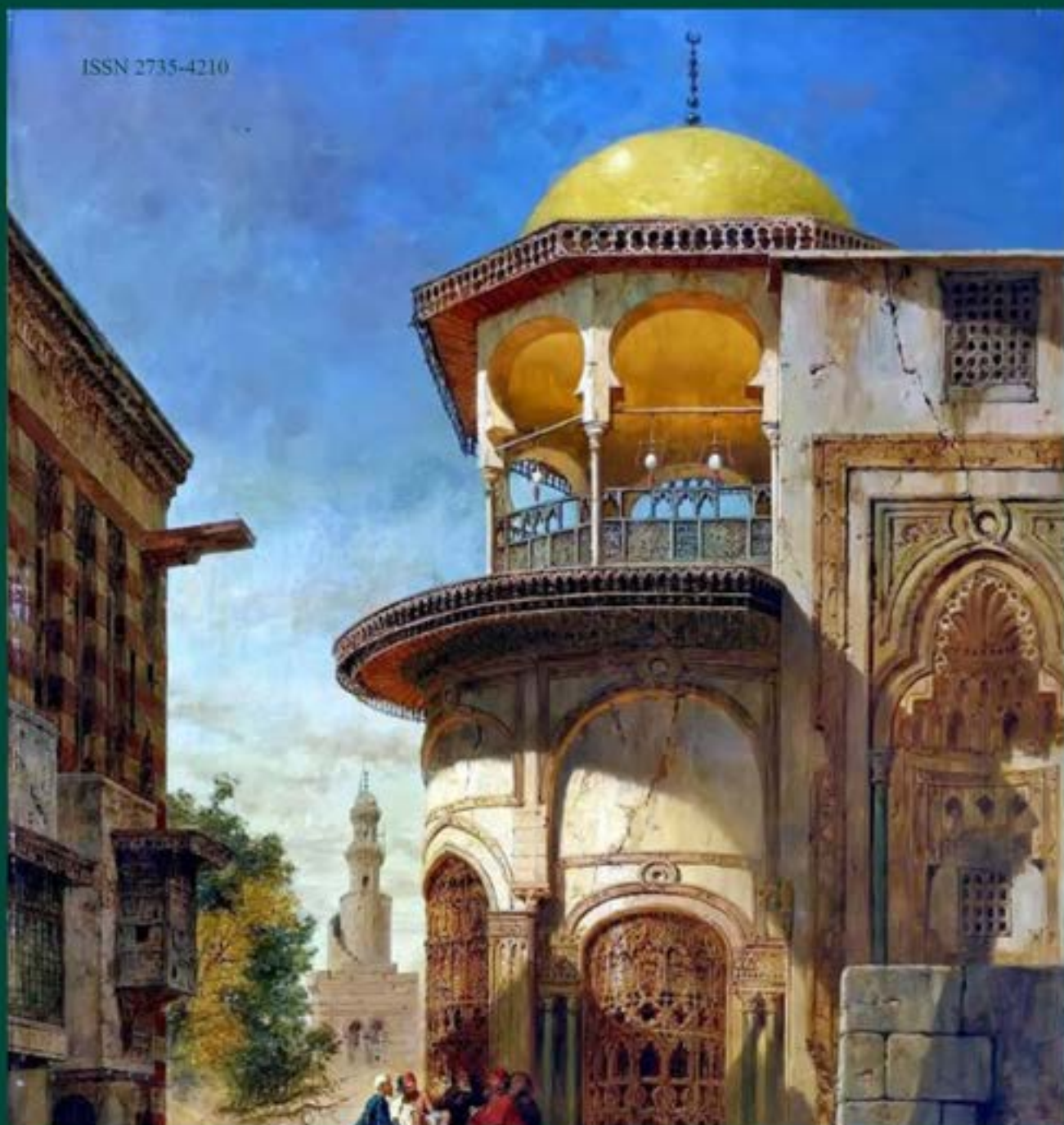


Peer-reviewed Journal - Seventh Edition - 2023

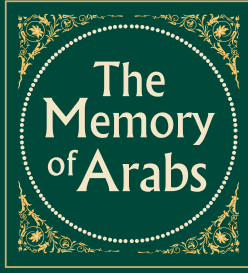
ISSN 2735-4210





دورية علمية مُحكّمة





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The Memory of Arabs is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal concerned with the cultural and historical heritage of Arab and Islamic countries. It aims to emphasize the importance of restoring Arab memory to the current Arab present. The Journal is part of the Memory of Arabs project, affiliated with the BA Academic Research Sector.

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- It should be between 6000 and 8000 words.
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Foreword

The Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) has made great strides towards implementing its multiple cultural and scientific roles at all local, Arab, and international levels by holding international seminars and conferences, and publishing scientific research and literature through its various academic centers in the fields of science, arts, and literature.

In this context, the BA publishes the Seventh edition of *The Memory of Arabs* journal as part of the “Memory of the Arab World” project undertaken by the BA Academic Research Sector. This edition builds on the Sixth edition’s topic focusing on “Cairo as the Crossroad between Cultures and Civilizations from Its Inception to the End of the Mamluk Era”. This comes on the occasion of Cairo’s selection as the capital of Islamic culture in 2022 by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) to showcase the cultural events organized by the BA, and made available to researchers and those interested through publishing scientific studies and periodicals.

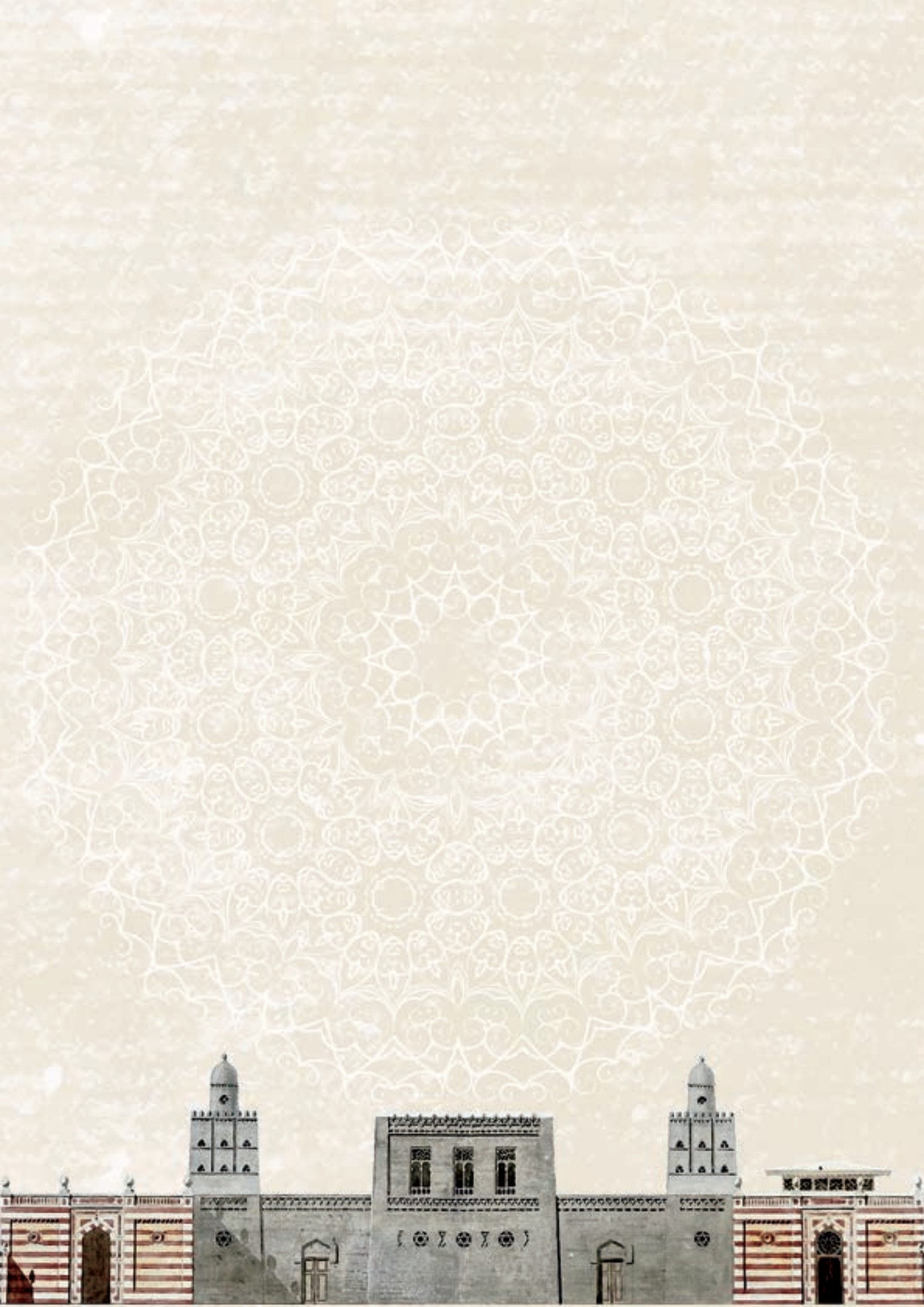
This edition includes researches that fall within the categories announced in the call for academic studies, such as: Islamic architecture and arts in European exhibitions, the political and social activities of the royal court in Qal’at al-Jabal during the era of the Mamluk Sultans, and an analytical study of the columns and architectural elements in the religious buildings in Cairo in the Circassian Mamluk era, in addition to the niches of the buildings established by Sultan Faraj bin Barquq in Mamluk Cairo, features of social life in Cairo in the Mamluk era through the market baths, and the cultural role of Cairo’s ponds and parks in the Mamluk era.

Prof. Ahmed A. Zayed
Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina



Creating a Medieval
Cairo in Vienna: The
Representation of the Islamic
Architecture in the Vienna
World's Fair (1873)

Dr. Radwa Zaki



Creating a Medieval Cairo in Vienna: The Representation of the Islamic Architecture in the Vienna World's Fair (1873)

Dr. Radwa Zaki

Introduction: World's Fairs in the Nineteenth Century

World's fairs were among the dominant international events of the second half of the nineteenth century, beginning in 1851 in London. They were then held in many cities of Europe and North America, at which most countries would promote their industry, inventions, and culture.

As the Western world exported its industrial revolution to the rest of the world, it also began importing information about other cultures. Other cultures were presented as artifacts in pavilions that were in themselves summaries of those cultures. As early as the 1851 London World's Fair, replicas of parts of well-known buildings, such as the Alhambra, were showcased within the main display, and separate pavilions for different nations were built⁽¹⁾.

The main goal was to provide all nations the opportunity to represent themselves architecturally. In the design of Islamic partitions, special attention was paid to the

“authenticity” of architecture. World's fairs have become an important means of spreading the image of a particular country around the world in order to represent it⁽²⁾.

According to the concept that an exhibition is a microcosm and an imaginary journey around the world, foreign and especially non-Western societies were often represented in stereotypical images, defined by Western legacies. The exhibition premises reflect the social, political, and cultural trends critical to understanding the transformations of the nineteenth century in both, the West and the Islamic world. For example, the architectural styles of these pavilions embodied the colonists' concept of Islamic culture as well as the struggle of some Islamic countries to define a contemporary image, merging historical heritage with modernization. The issue of cultural self-identification for many Muslim societies during the nineteenth century is particularly interesting because of their struggle to balance modernization imported from the West with indigenous values and forms⁽³⁾.



Figure 1. Portrait of František Schmoranz the Younger, see Němeček.

Consequently, different nations have rediscovered, redefined, and showcased their identities to be able to present themselves to an international audience. Timothy Mitchell defines these great scenes as “The World as Exhibition”, referring to “the world conceived and grasped as though it were an exhibition”⁽⁴⁾.

Replicas were sometimes antiques on their own, serving their original functions and thus presenting social and cultural features of the represented country. As István Ormos stated: “It became common to erect copies of city quarters as temporary structures made of ephemeral building materials. These copies of town quarters were not intended for perfect precision; rather, they were intended to evoke the atmosphere of a particular city. The field of architecture practiced in these exhibitions was a means to recreate the monument in an ideal form that may not have actually existed at any time in history”⁽⁵⁾.

The mosque has been the focus of curiosity as a symbol for Islam that appeals to the religious sense of others that characterizes Muslim societies in the fairs of the Western world.

The first mosque was built in the 1867 exhibition by the Ottoman Empire in the Paris World’s Fair. Other mosques appeared regularly at subsequent fairs. The exhibition hall was not modeled directly on any known building but was designed to suit the requirements of a national display. Although the Islamic pavilions were often similar and were thus perceived as belonging to a single cultural tradition, their architecture actually differed according to the politics, culture, and wealth of a particular country⁽⁶⁾.

At the international fairs, the architecture of the main Islamic pavilions was based on the architecture of the homeland and its main landmarks, particularly mosques, and residential and commercial buildings. As Zeynep Çelik noted, in the nineteenth century, the overall impact of Egypt’s presentations at world’s fairs deviated from that of other “Islamic pavilions” that referred to the homeland by building a simulated model of “residential and commercial” structures of a predominantly “Islamic” architectural character⁽⁷⁾.

“Wiener Weltausstellung” or the Vienna World’s Fair (1873)

In 1873, the Austria-Hungarian capital Vienna held its fair with the participation of Egypt as one of the eastern Arab countries. The fair ran for six months from May until end-October, and its theme was “Culture and Education”. Due to its geographic location and the historical legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, situated between the East and West, the fair aimed to highlight all previous events of its kind in bringing together a richer and more comprehensive vision of the entire Orient⁽⁸⁾.



Figure 2. Sketch of the Egyptian pavilion at the Vienna World’s Fair, main façade, see Němeček.

The main exposition building was a longitudinal structure with a domed central section. Like previous world's fairs, the organization of these sections in Vienna's fair was arranged according to racial classifications and national hierarchies. The organization of these sections revealed the order of world cultures as defined by Europe, and referred to the power relations between the exhibiting nations. The European host nation occupied a privileged position at the center, independent Western nations surrounded it, and non-Western colonies were either reserved for smaller exposition spaces or transferred to the sidelines. According to the plan of the Wiener Weltausstellung or Vienna's Fair, China, Japan, Persia, Turkey, and other Islamic nations were condensed into several smaller exhibition halls. The Ottoman and Egyptian pavilions were in the southeastern part of the park in front of the main hall⁽⁹⁾.

The Egyptian Pavilion in Vienna's Fair

The Egyptian pavilion was one of the most impressive architectural objects of the entire Vienna Fair, and was located opposite to the Austro-Hungarian pavilion. Egypt's participation was primarily due to the diplomatic skill of the Austrian Consul General in Istanbul and Head of the Orient Department of the Vienna World's Fair, Hofrat Josef Freiherr von Schwegel. Being in the country, that still officially belonged to the Ottoman Empire, was in the interest of the Khedive (Viceroy) Ismail Pasha (r. 1863–1879), who believed that this event was not only for deepening economic and cultural relations with the West but was also an opportunity to prove his independence, which he generously supported financially⁽¹⁰⁾. The Egyptologist and German Consul in Cairo at the time, Dr. Heinrich Brugsch⁽¹¹⁾, appointed the Czech architect František (known as Franz) Schmoranz (Fig. 1) who was commissioned to design the Egyptian pavilion. Schmoranz closely studied Islamic architecture in Egypt under the Viceroy Khedive Ismail⁽¹²⁾.

Although Schmoranz created an eclectic structure by combining different building styles, elements, themes, and motifs, he

succeeded in giving an oriental touch to the entire complex. According to Brugsch, Isma'il himself had ordered the creation of a prototype of Arab-style buildings for the Vienna World's Fair and wanted to see elevations for such buildings in just a few days. Schmoranz was the brilliant architect who took on this commission. Brugsch was full of praise for him; Schmoranz, had developed a remarkable sense and understanding of the Arab architectural style within the abundance of its decorative details, so strange to us, that I do not hesitate to call him the greatest master of the field. In fact, Schmoranz provided many illustrations, among them images of major works of Mamluk architecture recalling the oriental Cairo architecture⁽¹³⁾ (Fig. 2).



Figure 3. The Funerary Mosque of Mamluk Sultan al-Ashraf Qaytbay, Cairo, see Victoria and Albert Museum online catalogue.

Different locations and buildings inspired Franz Schmoranz from his numerous trips to Egypt, which he recorded through reports, photographs, and illustrations. Furthermore, he worked as an employee in Egypt from 1867 until 1869, before he became the architect of the



Figure 4. The minaret and the dome of al-Ashraf Qaytbay Mosque at the Egyptian section, Vienna Fair, see Vienna Museum online catalogue.

Egyptian Viceroy Ismail in the following year. During his time in Cairo, Schmoranz had the opportunity to study Arabic architecture at mosques and he was able to produce numerous sketches and pictorial materials. The inspiring visits to the mosque or the mausoleum of Qaytbay had a decisive influence on the Egyptian pavilion of the Vienna World Exhibition⁽¹⁴⁾.

The Egyptian pavilion consisted of single sections arranged symmetrically around a central courtyard, consisting of several distinct parts. The display of the Egyptian structure was unified visually by elements of the Mamluk style. The dominant feature was the funerary complex of Sultan Qaytbay in Cairo⁽¹⁵⁾ from the late Mamluk period (AH 877–879/AD 1472–1474) (Fig. 3). According to Doris Abouseif, its minaret is considered a jewel of late Mamluk architecture, and carved masonry with twisted bands surrounding the neck of the bulb-like necklace. The dome's design is conceived around a central star that radiates from the apex down to the base. The basic geometric design is rendered in plain relief lines, whereas the Arabesque filling consists of grooved stems and leaves.



Figure 5. The other end of the Egyptian section marked by an entrance portal and a minaret inspired by the Mamluk complex of Farajilon ibn Barquq, see Vienna Museum online catalogue.

The dome and the minaret were placed above an al-Mushahar masonry structure with a Mamluk portal recalling the exact design of the Qaytbay complex⁽¹⁶⁾ (Fig. 4).

The other end of the structure was marked by a second square base minaret that was located above an entrance with a Mamluk portal in al-Mushahar masonry style (Fig. 5). Most likely, this structure was inspired by the Mamluk funerary complex of Faraj ibn Barquq (AH 802–813 / AD 1400–1411) (Fig. 6). The minaret has a rectangular first storey, which was unusual at that time, with a cylindrical middle section and an unusual upper pavilion with a bulb crown⁽¹⁷⁾.

In between was a street façade that enhanced the impression of imitating a Cairene oriental house with attached Mashrabiyyas (wooden window screens) rather than suggesting a single building (Fig. 7). On the other side of the house was a building imitating the Wikala (Fig. 8), a commercial building type, which played a very important role in medieval Cairo, until the beginning of the twentieth century, providing accommodation and storerooms as well as shops to the traveling merchants where they sell their goods. Despite its historical references, this building reflects the commercial life of modern Egypt, or Egypt of Isma'il Pasha. The Wikala consisted of two floors of arcades, characterized by pointed arches supported by stone piers and columns⁽¹⁸⁾.



Figure 6. Entrance portal and the minaret at the northeast façade, funerary khanqah of Mamluk Sultan Faraj ibn Barquq, Cairo, see Victoria and Albert Museum online catalogue.

A protruding Ottoman-style (Fig. 9) public drinking fountain providing water to the passer-by and *Kuttab* primary school for children, was located on either side of the Egyptian pavilion⁽¹⁹⁾. Each *sabil* consisted of two storeys where the first storey had marble lids and was covered with iron-grilled windows. While the second storey consisted of a semi-circular arched façade. According to Mitchell: “It was intended to resemble the ancient appearance of Cairo”⁽²⁰⁾. The building of the Egyptian section in Vienna erected by Brugsch recreated a replica of an ancient Egyptian rock tomb from Beni Hasan located behind the Mamluk minaret⁽²¹⁾ (Fig. 10).

The Representation of Mamluk Architecture: Branding an Egyptian Identity

Since the beginning of Egypt’s presence in world’s fairs, architectural elements have been used with an emphasis on a certain symbolism, with the aim to “create the desired image of oriental Cairo” and produce a version

of the ‘medieval’ city that was identified with Mamluk architecture. Ismail was always looking for opportunities to gain agreed international recognition and gave all the support to the project of the Egyptian pavilion at Vienna’s Fair. Experts were commissioned to create a set of buildings designed to achieve this purpose, as well as to attract the attention of the public.

Despite the presence of the Ottoman-style *sabil* in the Egyptian section and the small model of the ancient Egyptian tomb, the Egyptian oval dome, the slender Mamluk minarets and the al-Mushahar masonry façade, represented an oriental-Egyptian image in the world exhibition. Moreover, the traditional quarters of Cairo were still shaped in the nineteenth century by the *mashrabiya* attached to the houses. The finely crafted wooden windows became a symbol closely connected with the city, quickly becoming a “brand” of Cairo and indirectly of Egypt. One object could ultimately stand for a whole city and an entire country, and could even symbolize



Figure 7. A street façade imitating a Cairene house with attached *Mashrabiyas* at the center of the Egyptian pavilion, Vienna 1873, after Vienna Museum online catalogue.

the Orient as a whole. Thus, the *Mashrabiya* used in Vienna in 1873, was an indispensable decorative element and an effective guarantee of authenticity⁽²²⁾.

Although Egypt was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire during this period, the Egyptian section was unique and independent from the Ottoman pavilion. It was claimed that the Egyptian pavilion surpassed all other buildings in the East Asian department in grandeur, describing it as “a truly piece of Egypt aroused in the middle of the Vienna”. Egypt was the most prominent of the Ottoman Empire’s domestic rivals. It underwent a phase of modernization under the rule of Ismail Pasha. The first elaborate staging of the Egyptian-Ottoman competition took place in the 1867 Paris Exhibition, where the Sultan Abdulaziz and Ismail Pasha organized peerless displays. By this time, the exhibition became an occasion to display power and control over both countries, and in order to portray Egypt as a legitimate and modernizing leader of

the Islamic world, the Egyptian pavilion was designed to surpass every architectural feature that the Ottomans displayed in Vienna and the previous exhibitions. This was a challenge that, in terms of architectural scale at least, the Ottomans had no choice but to ignore this time⁽²³⁾.

As a semi-independent province, struggling to detach itself from the Ottoman Empire and looking for a stronger alliance with European powers, the Egypt of Ismail Pasha emphasized its national self-image and historical heritage in Vienna’s Fair. Egypt also sought to represent its identity and express its political independence from the Ottoman rule by using the Mamluk architecture as a national style of Islamic architecture⁽²⁴⁾.

In a way or another, this Exhibition was an elaborate symbolic contest between the Ottoman Empire and Egypt over cultural and political leadership in the non-colonial Islamic world. Realizing the Khedive’s desire to invent and confirm a dynastic history of



Figure 8. A building imitating the *Wikala* at the other side of the center of the Egyptian pavilion, Vienna 1873, see Vienna Museum online catalogue.



Figure 9. An Ottoman-style *Sabil-Kuttab* at the Egyptian pavilion, Vienna 1873, see Němeček.

his own, the Egyptian structure linked the architecture of modern Egypt to its medieval and even ancient past, carefully bypassing the period of the Ottoman rule and highlighting a local tradition art based on the Mamluk style. The Egyptian section is designed to stand out as the rightful inheritor of a medieval Islamic tradition to stand out from the glory of Arab Art⁽²⁵⁾.

In this regard, the Mamluk architecture, a personification of Arab art in 19th-century Egypt, became a source of reference for self-representation. When Europeans began referring to Mamluk art as “Arab Art” they were echoing an eighteenth and nineteenth-century Ottoman imperial point of view concerning the Circassian elite, a view that depicted them as “Egyptian” rather than “Turkish”. This “Egyptianization” of the Mamluks began in the Middle Ages, but continued throughout the nineteenth century⁽²⁶⁾.

The emerging Egyptian nationalism in the nineteenth century, in the context of both European and Ottoman imperialism, contributed to the emergence of new views of the Mamluk style as a local Egyptian art form.

As the architectural historian Nasser Rabbat demonstrated, interest in Mamluk and neo-Mamluk architecture was part of new symbols of power in Egypt in the nineteenth century as Muhammad Ali’s descendants (who constituted the ruling family of Egypt until the 1952 Revolution) sought to express political independence from the Ottoman Empire through the patronage of neo-Mamluk architectural projects. Thus, the “Egyptianization” of the Mamluk art throughout the nineteenth-century architecture was understood and came to be synonymous with the category of the Arab Art of Egypt⁽²⁷⁾.

During the reign of Khedive Ismail, Egypt witnessed a strong wave of European-influenced buildings, simultaneously with the revival of the Mamluk style. The name refers to the peak of Egyptian Islamic art under the Dynasty of Bahri and Burji sultans who ruled Egypt from 1250 until 1517, and dedicates an architectural aesthetic recognizable by its formal qualities. The Mamluk period in Egypt was marked by extensive architectural projects. Like earlier dynasties, the Mamluks asserted their power through architectural projects of



Figure 10. A replica of an ancient Egyptian rock tomb from Beni Hasan at one side of the Egyptian pavilion, Vienna 1873, see Vienna Museum online catalogue.

grand size and beauty. In the early nineteenth century, the world as a whole witnessed a revival phase in architecture. Many architects were going back to the roots of architecture and adopting earlier styles in their designs. When this wave appeared in Egypt, many architects began to use neo-Islamic decorative elements and forms of architecture in their work to counteract the Ottoman style that was more common in Egypt. The Mamluk style was admired more after the Western lifestyle in the reign of Khedive Ismail and as we mentioned earlier, this national style of architecture was closely linked to the concept of nationalism that was developed during the struggle for independence of Egypt at that time⁽²⁸⁾.

Some have defined the neo-Mamluk style as “a hybrid combination of Western European nineteenth-century construction principles and architectural influences derived from buildings erected during the Mamluk rule

in Egypt (1250–1517), which were largely limited to decorative elements”. In other words, the revived style was based on the needs of the nineteenth century, yet it adopted the decorative styles of Mamluk architecture. The Mamluk style was endorsed as the purest form of expression of the Egyptian identity, minimizing Ottoman influences. Many patrons adopted the Mamluk style as a way to represent their identity. However, the neo-Mamluk style witnessed intense competition; the Ottoman identity was imposed by the ruling class in most cultural fields. Once Egypt became an independent State, the competition subsided and the Mamluk style was combined in various ways with the Ottoman style and Western styles⁽²⁹⁾.

The expression of cultural identity was a primary theme in Islamic architecture for the nineteenth-century exhibitions, which in turn helped to differentiate national identities, to challenge the term “Islamic” as a unifying

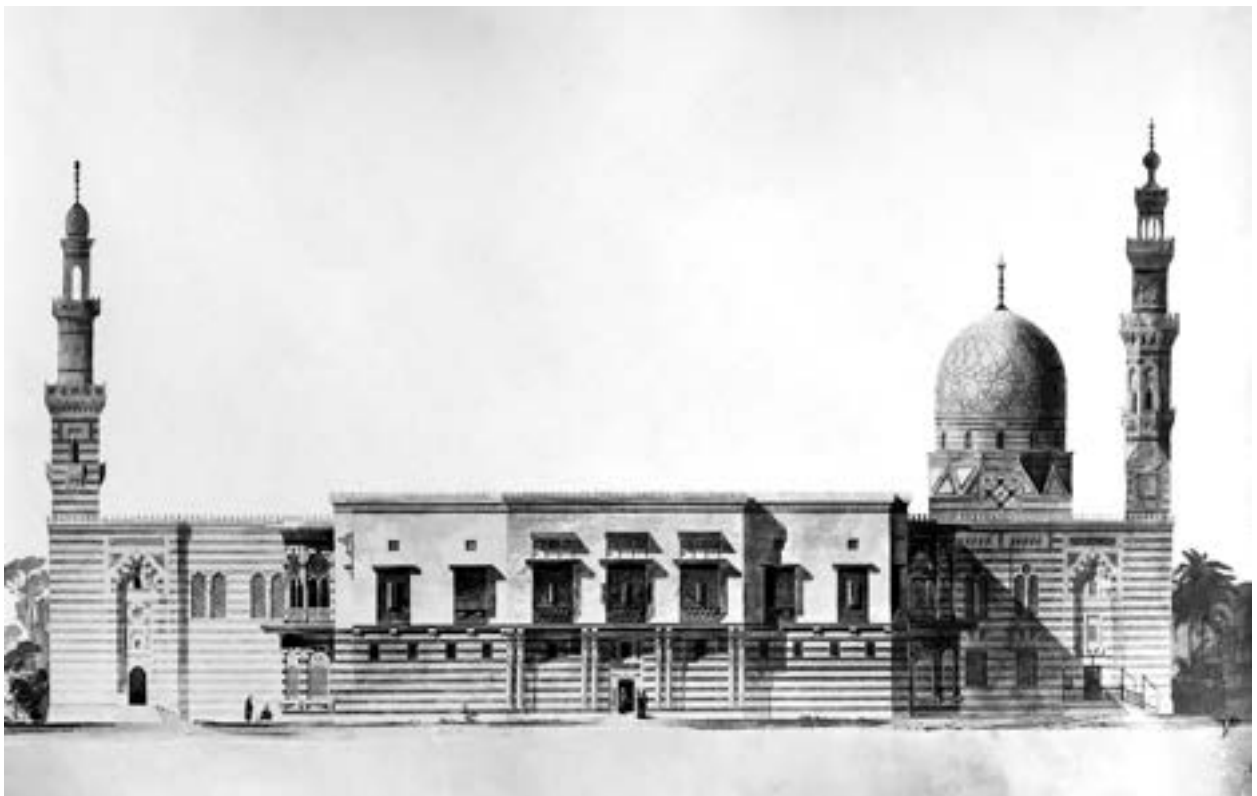


Figure 11. Sketch of the Egyptian pavilion at the Vienna World's Fair.

term. The insistence on national identities in the architecture in the world's fair was a reaction to both: the European tendency to consider Islamic civilization a single entity and to Ottoman suzerainty. When the viceroys attempted to establish their independence from the central Ottoman administration, they looked to local elements to define their cultures.

Lastly, participation in the world's fairs had an impact on architectural practice in Muslim countries; the search for a representative image in the exposition pavilions promoted the development of a neo-Islamic style. These countries were concerned with developing an architectural style appropriate to the new era that would also reflect their historical heritage. With regard to the representation of the Egyptian section, as described in the official book on the world fair: among the buildings in the oriental section, the Egyptian pavilion is undoubtedly the most important and interesting. The architect wanted to give a comprehensive view of the oriental architecture, including a mosque and a palace; he wanted to give an impression of the traditional way of construction and decoration, which has survived in many buildings in Cairo⁽³⁰⁾.

Conclusion

Although Ismail Pasha westernized his capital locally, he was representing an oriental image internationally. Egypt's pavilion in the European world's fairs showcased two main historical periods: mainly the Islamic period, and to a lesser extent the Pharaonic period. At a time when European nations were eager to demonstrate industrial progress, the Egyptian pavilions did not only exhibit the cultural and historical heritage but also rediscovered and represented their national identities and collective past. Moreover, the architecture of the Egyptian pavilion refers to an attempt to portray Egypt as a culturally and politically independent country, and a strong competitor for the Ottoman influence at the time.

As this study has showed, representation of Islamic architecture was showcased in Vienna's world fair for certain purposes. First, it was a "brand" of oriental medieval Cairo, and Egypt in general, in a fair of the Western world. Second, this Islamic style of architecture was based on local traditions and elements, acquired from the Mamluk style, to distinguish itself from Ottoman rule, thus confirming the national identity of Egypt during the reign of Khedive Ismail. The study also aimed to explore the symbolism for the use of the Mamluk style as a national form of Arab-Islamic art of Egypt throughout the nineteenth century. Finally, exploring national pavilions as a representation of the nation is important as it illuminates a key aspect of Egypt's national culture during a period of political transition in the nineteenth century.

Endnotes

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- (9) Daniel Fulco, "Displays of Islamic Art in Vienna and Paris Imperial Politics and Exoticism at the Weltausstellung and Exposition Universelle", *MDCCC 1800*, Vol. 6 (2017): 51-52; Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*: 63.
- (10) <http://www.wiener-weltausstellung.at/aegyptische-bauten.html> [accessed 23 October 2021].
- (11) Brugsch played central roles in organizing Egyptian exhibits at several world fairs. His appointment as Egyptian commissioner for the 1873 Vienna Fair due to his effort in Egyptology in Egypt. He was also responsible for the Egyptian tomb there; Donald Reid, *Whose Pharaohs?: Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002): 117-118, 125.
- (12) Rudolf Agstner, "Dream and Reality: Austrian Architects in Egypt 1869-1914", Mercedes Volait, *Le Caire-Alexandrie : Architectures européennes, 1850-1950*, (Le Caire: Centre d'Études et de Documentation Économiques, Juridiques et Sociales, Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 2001): 142; Diego Caltans, "Frantisek (Franz) Schmoranz", *Architektenlexikon, Wien 1770-1945*, <http://www.architektenlexikon.at/de/1347.htm> [accessed 16 October 2021].
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- (14) Elke Pflugradt-Abdel Aziz, *Exhibiting Islamic Architecture*: 208-209; Agstner, *Dream and Reality: Austrian Architects in Egypt*: 142.
- (15) The Sultan Qaytbay's funerary mosque was also displayed in the Egyptian pavilion "Cairo Street" in Chicago World's Fair (1893), and it was designed by Max Hertz Pasha. For more information, see Ormos, "Between Stage Décor and Reality": 124-125.
- (16) For additional information about the complex of Sultan Qaitbay, see Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks: A History of the Architecture and Its Culture*, (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007): 273-278.
- (17) For additional information about the complex of Faraj ibn Barquq, see Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*: 231-237.
- (18) Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*: 64; Milan Němeček, "František Schmoranz le Jeune (1845-1892)" in Mercedes Volait (ed.), *Le Caire dessiné et photographié au XIX^e Siècle*, (Paris: Publications of the National Institute of Art History, Picard, 2017): 114-115.
- (19) It is worth mentioning that merging the *Kuttab* with the *Sabil* is a Mamluk tradition. Late Mamluk mosques continued the *Sabil-Kuttab* at the building's corner to provide primary education and to supply drinking water to their neighborhoods, like the *madrassa* of Uljay al-Yusufi and the funerary *Khanqah* of Faraj ibn Barquq. Behrens-Abouseif, *Cairo of the Mamluks*: 19, 232.
- (20) Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988): 1.
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- (22) Agstner, *Dream and Reality: Austrian Architects in Egypt*: 142.

- (23) Ahmet A. Ersoy, *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2016): 50-51, 86.
- (24) Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*: 119.
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دورية علمية محكمة - العدد السابع - ٢٠٢٣

ISSN 2735-4210

